

Young Voices: Reflections on 2018-19





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RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

1. FOREWORD:



The Rio Ferdinand Foundation has established itself as a credible provider of youth, community and employability services in our core delivery areas of London and Manchester since our foundation by Rio in 2012. With a focus on supporting young people to develop skills and access opportunities and pathways into education, training and employment, promoting social mobility, and addressing a range of social and economic issues within our work, the Rio Ferdinand Foundation is now an established charity working across national strategies and priorities.

Over 8000 young people were engaged within our first five years of activity, and our services and programme offer have been supported by a wide range of funders from the grant making, government and private sectors on a local, regional and national level.

Throughout the evolution of the Foundation and its services, the voice of the young person has always been central to our work, both in terms of informing and advocating for our services, and this approach has been key to the success of the Foundation to date.

As with all charities, the Rio Ferdinand Foundation operates in a changing social and economic environment, and in 2018 the organisation has taken time to revisit our structure and our services to reflect the environment in which we now operate.

Alongside the recruitment of new trustees and advisors to the board and, the appointment of a senior management team, the board felt it important to take stock of our services and impact for young people as part of a wider review. To aid us in this process we appointed an external agency, Activate Together Ltd, to undertake an independent consultation with participants and staff on our London and Manchester programmes to inform our ongoing development.

What follows is a summary of the feedback we have received from young people highlighting 'what works' in our programme, case studies to highlight how our work operates in practice, and how we are using this feedback to inform a new theory of change for our work from April 2019.

I would like to thank all the project participants, volunteers and staff who gave their time in this process - your input is highly valued. To our existing and new partners and supporters - we hope you enjoy hearing the voice of participants and reading how the Rio Ferdinand Foundation is making a positive impact on communities and lives in the UK.

Gary Stannett MBE
CEO, Rio Ferdinand Foundation



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2018 has been a busy 12 months for the Foundation, helping our young people to respond to the rapidly changing world and empowering them to affect youth-led change in their lives and their communities. We have taken time to listen to our young people and understand how the unprecedented societal and political changes we've seen over the last year are affecting them. They've told us about challenges relating to inequality of opportunity, the dominance and backlash of social media, growing divides between people from different backgrounds and a growing skills gap.

We've continued to focus on enabling young people to become independent, socially mobile individuals by tapping into their talents and potential through a variety of innovative leadership, work ready and youth-led social action programmes. With each young person's journey being as unique as they are, our work has helped to create confident and skilled young people who can build a brighter future for themselves and their communities. Young people are our greatest asset and the Foundation has worked with some truly inspirational individuals throughout the year, as demonstrated by some of the case studies in this report.

There are many achievements through the year that we are immensely proud of.

Our Inspiring Youth Leaders programme has seen young people grow as leaders, delivering their own social action projects using sport, drama, dance and film to connect people, build confidence and develop new friendships. Many have gone on to represent the voice of young people in their fields of interest, addressing some key issues such as mental health and working with professionals and practitioners to improve services for young people.

Linking young girls with female role models and mentors from the world of sport, our #GoGirl programme has supported vulnerable girls suffering from low self-esteem, mental health issues such as self-harm, anxiety and depression, to get involved in sport. We've seen them grow in confidence and deliver their own multi-sports events, inspiring other inactive girls from their communities back into sports.

Through our Brighter Futures initiative in Lambeth our young people have delivered a number of high profile community events including community sports tournaments, black cultural heritage events, involvement in the Grime Live event, and a Music Industry Seminar with London South Bank University (LSBU).

We've continued to build our relationships with voluntary sector colleagues, statutory organisations and key corporate partners, recognising the value in bringing different sectors together to help young people achieve their full potential. Our partnership with BT through our 'Work Ready'

programme has flourished and was recognised for its innovation at the Business Charity awards when it won the Charity Partnership- Telecoms and Technology Award in London in May 2017.

But we know that there's a lot more to do. Working with our young people we have developed a core set of values for the Foundation which represent the underpinning drivers for our people and our work moving into 2019 and beyond.

Youth-Led – young people are the heart of everything we do, inspiring us to evolve and adapt so we can support them to realise their full potential.

Empowering – enabling young people to recognise their skills, giving them ownership to achieve their individual goals.

Connector – bringing young people and communities together, valuing diversity and creating a shared sense of belonging.

Resilient – Bouncing back with enthusiasm and fresh solutions, continually learning and taking the time to actively 'listen' and respond to the world in which we work.

Courageous – With a 'can-do' approach, open, supportive and honest we are not afraid to do things differently.

These values sit alongside a refreshed theory of change which we have developed alongside our young people (see Appendix B). The theory of change will inform our future programme development which will see us further embed our flagship leadership programmes as well as develop into new areas of work. 2019 will see us working with new partners to build access to new skills and careers pathways, as can be seen through our recent engagement with Tameside Hackathon exploring how we can build digital and technology skills development into our work. Our digital Platform 5 will play an increasingly important role in our future work, providing a platform driven by young people to showcase their creativity and achievements and provide a vehicle for young people's voice and influence.

We have also taken time to review and strengthen our structures as the Foundation moves into this exciting period of growth. 2019 has seen us appoint a new leadership team bringing a strong background in corporate governance and leadership, and a wealth of knowledge across many sectors. With the formal appointment of Gary Stannett MBE as our Chief Executive joining an experienced senior management team, the Foundation is looking forward to taking on the challenges ahead alongside our amazing young people.

3. ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

HISTORY

The Rio Ferdinand Foundation was founded in 2012 to enable Rio to have a closer relationship with his charitable work and to tackle social issues important to him. Recognising that sports, media and the creative arts are great motivating factors for young people our work utilises these mediums, and Rio's passion and connections within these industries, to provide a pathway for youth development.

The Foundations work is guided by the belief that with the right support, role models, and opportunities, young people can achieve great things. To this end, our work unites the efforts of a host of partners, who share our vision, offering a range of education and employment pathways for young people.

MISSION

Since 2012 the Rio Ferdinand Foundation mission has been to inspire young people and give them the tools they need to tap into their talents and reach their potential. Our vision is to help create confident and skilled young people who can build a brighter future for themselves and their communities. To achieve this we offer a continuum of progression pathways designed alongside the young people we support. Each young persons' journey is as unique as they are and based on their individual skills and motivations. Appendix A illustrates our co-designed approach to working with young people developed through years of practical experience, consultations and sector research.

VALUES

The Rio Ferdinand Foundation is a value driven organisation and pride ourselves on using these as the foundation for our people and our work. We have developed these core values with input from young people:

- Youth-led - young people are the heart of everything we do, inspiring us to evolve and adapt so we can support them to realise their full potential.
- Empowering - Enabling young people to recognise their skills, giving them ownership to achieve their individual goals.
- Connector - Bringing young people and communities together, valuing diversity and creating a shared sense of belonging.
- Resilient - Bouncing back with enthusiasm and fresh solutions, continually learning and taking the time to actively 'listen' and respond to the world in which we work.
- Courageous - With a 'can-do' approach, open, supportive and honest we are not afraid to do things differently.

IMPACT

The Rio Ferdinand Foundation works collaboratively with our young people. During 2018 we have taken time to reflect and understand how we can achieve the greatest impact for young people. Our programmes are flexible and adapted to suit each individual young person we work with.

In 2018, during the consultations that have informed this report, young people have reported to us that our programmes have helped them to achieve the following:

PERSONAL OUTCOMES

- Improve confidence and self esteem
- Improve emotional well being
- Identify personal goals and progress pathways to achieving them
- Improve skills for life and work

INTER-PERSONAL OUTCOMES

- Build new friendships and increase connections with others
- Build positive relationships with peers and the wider community

SOCIETAL OUTCOMES

- Develop a sense of control of their lives
- Become youth leaders in their communities
- Positively contribute to their communities and share their learning with others

Over the last year, we have predominantly achieved these through five flagship youth programmes summarised in the following pages, with case studies and feedback from young people and partners involved in the programme in 2018/19.

4. RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION: SERVICES & IMPACT

A. INSPIRING YOUTH LEADERS

The Inspiring Youth Leaders programme empowers young people to recognise the skills and qualities they already possess by building their confidence and resilience through 1-2-1 mentoring, coaching and leadership development. Within the programme young people set their own goals to achieve and learn key entrepreneurial skills by designing their own social action project for the community using arts, media, drama or sports and utilising local places and community spaces.

The young people involved in Rio Ferdinand Foundation projects represent their communities. They are from diverse backgrounds and include young carers, those disengaged from education or training, young people in care, and young people struggling with their self-esteem or with mental health issues. They all share a common desire to do something positive for other young people either from their estates or with a specific group of participants.

Whilst developing their projects, Youth Leaders build new connections and come together to talk openly about issues they are currently facing, sharing experiences and forming positive relationships to help create a greater sense of belonging and friendship.

During the programme Youth Leaders are offered free accredited training to increase their skills and raise their mindset to progress. With solid referral routes and support networks in place young people are empowered to take control of their lives, make informed decisions about their next steps into further training, volunteering or employment and are supported to reach their full potential.



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

CASE STUDIES:

MARIA, AGED 19, has been involved in our Youth Leaders programme in Manchester:

“When I first heard about the Foundation I was living in a hostel. I wasn't really doing anything. I had a lot of problems mentally with confidence, self-esteem, depression, and panicked going outside. Pretty much very reserved in myself. So I thought well maybe this might be more flexible around how I work. So I took a chance with it.”

Maria is a singer/songwriter with a passion for music she's had since the age of two. She found music to be a form a therapy and was keen to use that to help other young children who might be experiencing mental ill health or bullying. Working with the Rio Ferdinand Foundation, Maria developed her own music project for children with special educational needs, designing fun and engaging music sessions. She then went on to put on a musical performance for a charity working with other young people helping them overcome confidence issues.

“My favourite thing about my work with Rio Ferdinand Foundation has been seeing the kids faces light up. See them understand things that probably they never have before and seeing them have fun....Connecting with each other on something so different and something that is such a world-wide thing. Seeing how happy it makes them puts a smile on my face and makes my heart happy.....which makes my self-esteem rise so much.”

Maria is now planning to do another project to address mental illness and diversity working with 7 to 11 yr olds using her talents and passions and drawing on her own experience of this being an age when stereotypes are forced on young people. She hopes to raise awareness and reduce the incidences of bullying through her work. She's planning to move into her own home to which she says the Foundation staff who have helped her are always very welcome.

“Before working with the Foundation I just wasn't there. I wasn't well mentally. I was not there really.....struggling. Since being involved with Rio Ferdinand Foundation I am stable. I am a lot more confident in myself. I'm no longer timid. I'm more boisterous. More loud. Not afraid to be outside and not afraid to be within the world. I'm not afraid of people. I'm more myself now and developed more to who I am. That is something I love about it. My recovery is pretty much almost done. I don't even class myself as having a mental illness. I have a diagnosis and that's different”.



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

JOHN, NOW AGED 21, is a young carer who first joined our youth leaders programme in 2016:

“The Rio Ferdinand Foundation are very helpful because they’re very confidence boosting and supportive. Right now, they’re helping me with my CV again. They’re also very open minded – if you want to do anything, they’ll try to find a way to make it happen. The Foundation is not an organisation that says “no we can’t do it”; it’s more like “what way can we do it...”

John had ambitions to be a dance teacher but had had to drop out of college because the inflexible timetable and learning environment didn’t offer the right path for him. He lacked confidence and didn’t feel very supported at the time especially when he was told that if he left college, he’d never do anything in dance ever again and never fulfil his ambition of becoming a dance teacher.

John has now completed two of his own dance projects supported by the Rio Ferdinand Foundation. He organised and filmed a flash mob at a local unused open space to show how young people could use the space. Boosted in confidence he then went on to plan, fundraise and choreograph a performance addressing stereotypes, teaching other young people dance and building their confidence.

“My favourite things have been delivering the projects ...and seeing not only the experience and confidence that it’s helped me improve on but also seeing other young people benefit from it as well. It was a big achievement seeing all these children performing.”

John is now studying for his final exams to become a qualified dance teacher. He plans to teach other young people in Salford and support them through dance exams.

“When I started with Rio Ferdinand Foundation I wasn’t as confident at things, I didn’t like speaking to people like this. But now I see kids coming to my classes who are not confident and see them grow and see them be able to perform and get better and that’s what I like to get out of it.”

BECCA, AGED 15, is living in foster care and came across the Foundation through a taster session at her school

Becca had personal experience of mental ill health. She saw that people found it difficult to talk with her about it and had an idea to design and deliver a project that would break down the stigma of mental health and get people talking.

“I wanted to show people that it’s a bigger thing – it’s the same as breaking your leg, you still need help. You still need to recover and get the help even though you can’t see it, it’s mental”.

The Foundation helped her to make her idea a reality, working flexibly and at a pace that Becca felt comfortable with. Over time the Going Sane project took shape, using video to post and a workshop bringing young people and professionals together to talk about mental health.

Becca has ambitions to be a child psychologist using her own personal experience to help others.

"Since I've gone into care, like so many people in care are struggling with their mental health... children in care need that extra support. So, I want to be that support."

"The best thing about working with the Rio Ferdinand Foundation is that it's given me confidence. They've built my confidence. I wouldn't have been able to do this [workshop] without them in the room knowing that they're there to give that little push. They've given me my independence... They've talked me through everything, and I understand like costs and budgeting and all the things and life skills that you need".



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION YOUNG VOICES: **REFLECTIONS**

B. #GOGIRL

The #GoGirl programme supports inactive females aged 14-21 from Salford, Moss Side and Hulme through a personal and social development programme. With unique training and mentoring opportunities, #GoGirl has supported vulnerable girls suffering from low self-esteem, mental health issues such as self-harm, anxiety and depression and a general lack of social awareness, making it more difficult for them to form positive relationships. We supported the #GoGirl participants to deliver their own all-girls multi-sports events in Manchester, inspiring other inactive girls from their communities back into sports.

Developed following the successful pilot initiative in London, the #GoGirl programme offered accredited training and mentoring from professional coaches and athletes who inspire and encourage the girls' development.

This year has seen inspirational female athletes and role models such as Jo Calvino (British Senior Champion and GB Weightlifter), Brogan Crowley (British Bobsleigh and Skeleton Champion for GB) and Jessica Fullalove (Commonwealth Games Finalist in Swimming) inspiring our young people through the #GoGirl programme through workshops, training and mentoring sessions.





RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

CASE STUDY:

MIA, CHLOE, AND NENE, AGED 14

Before joining the Rio Ferdinand Foundation, Mia was quieter, Chloe wasn't very confident, and Nene didn't like taking part in sports she hadn't tried before. Through a partnership between the Foundation and their school, they got to take part in the #GoGirl programme.

With the help of our staff the girls collectively chose, alongside some of their peers, which activities they would all take part in. Boxing, dance and gymnastics came out top. They spent six weekstaking part in the activities followed by classroom-based learning. The girls then had the chance to deliver their own coaching sessions at the City of Manchester stadium with other young people, achieving an accredited Community Sports Leaders Award in the process.

"I thought the four days of lessons was going to be dead boring but actually it wasn't. I want to do my level 2 sports leader award now"

"I now want to do more sports out of school. In Spain I did more sport out of school but here I couldn't find anywhere to do sport out of school. Rio Ferdinand Foundation has helped me think about things I could do out of school"

"The biggest difference I have notice in the girls is confidence..... they seem to have really come together since they did the programme. They get on a lot better with each other, can communicate better and listen to each other's ideas in a more positive way" – Miss Leigh, PE Teacher.

"It's an experience and you get a qualification out of it" - Mia

"It makes your CV look great and you make new friends" - Nene

"It was fun" - Chloe



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

C. BT WORK-READY PARTNERSHIP

Building on a strong and established partnership between BT and Rio Ferdinand Foundation, the Work Ready programme is delivered by BT to prepare young people aged 16-25 outside of education, training or employment, for work.

Following a preparation period with the Foundation, participants attend a 1-day Bootcamp that offers an opportunity to meet BT staff members from various departments and geographical locations and develop young people's awareness of the work place.

Young people start to plan and set goals for the future, linking in their skills and passions into potential job roles. Interview techniques, online awareness/safety, presentation skills and CV tips are shared throughout the day. The Bootcamp then leads onto a three-week work placement within engineering and business administration, incorporating both classroom and 1-2-1 work shadowing off site. Participants are then offered a mock interview and continued support/mentoring post the programme to help them into further training or employment.

Our partnership work with BT was recognised for its innovation at the Business Charity awards when it won the Charity Partnership- Telecoms and Technology Award in London in May 2017.

CASE STUDY: PATRICK, 24

"Without Rio Ferdinand Foundation I would still be in my bedroom! ... and although I have not known the Foundation long it seems like there are many ways of getting support and further opportunities for me to look into".

Originally from Lincoln, Patrick moved to Salford 5 years ago to pursue a career in music and producing. He dropped out of University after failing his course and took on several short-term jobs that didn't really work out for him. Patrick has been involved in other programmes aimed to support him to find work before becoming involved with the BT programme.

"BT Work Ready course helped to give me a reason to get up every morning and leave my house. It helped me get into a routine. At the moment I am not doing anything, I don't have the income to do a lot as I don't have a job."

The experience has now helped him think about different careers and consider a job in engineering or communications, whilst enabling him to pursue his love of music in his own time.



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

D. BRIGHTER FUTURES

Funded by Comic Relief's Brighter Futures initiative, this programme has run in Lambeth since 2016. Targeting young people aged 14-21 years who are at risk of or already engaged in youth crime, the programme utilised community spaces and places and provided support and mentoring from local role models.

Over the three years, this programme has helped to shape our delivery model and has enabled the Foundation to build strong networks with young people in Lambeth. The Brighter Futures programme supports young people to:

- Take more control of their lives
- Become more confident and resilient
- Improve their employability

As part of the programme, the Foundation's young people delivered a number of high profile community events this year including community sports tournaments, black cultural heritage events, involvement in the Grime Live event, a school's road show and a Music Industry Seminar with London South Bank University (LSBU).

CASE STUDY: **GONCALO, 17**

"My confidence has grown so much because I have been exposed to different opportunities. I was nervous at the start as it would mean meeting new people but once I was engaging with everyone, I felt more confident in my ability, which has helped me in other routes of life in general!"

After being a regular fixture volunteering at our Friday evening football session, our youth workers tried to support Goncalo to rebuild his relationship with his mum following ongoing conflicts which came to a head when he was expelled from his sixth-form college.

Goncalo was a talented young man but struggled managing his temper and showed signs of anxiety for his own personal wellbeing. Our team put some safeguarding measures in place and held some personal safety workshops. We then explored some positive interests our young people had which unanimously included the vibrant local music scene.

Goncalo was key in pulling together our Music Industry seminar in partnership with LSBU and took a lead role in the Grime Live event we supported. He then became a peer mentor in his role within our schools' road shows initiative.

Our youth workers supported Goncalo to pull a CV together and as part of our Employability and Enterprise training course, helped Goncalo prepare for interviews.

"I'm working at HMV and at least it's something I'm interested in. I may have messed up college but I'm on a good path now. I'm applying to do Graphic Design and that's something I can do for myself... that's what I want...doing a mix of stuff working just for me not someone else".



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

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E. #ACHIEVERS

Our Achievers programme is part of the UK-wide #iwill campaign in partnership with the National Lottery Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which strives to make involvement in volunteering and social action part of life for more young people by 2020.

The #Achievers' programme works with young people across South London, and has developed a cohort of 20 young people as youth leaders. Each #Achiever was matched with a mentor from an area/industry which inspired them. The #Achievers then worked together to consult with other young people in their communities and build relationships with them by uncovering local issues and designing activities around common interests. Throughout the year, our mentors and youth workers held a series of ongoing workshops and sessions to develop the #Achievers' leadership skills and support them to turn these ideas into real community social action.

This included sports matches and tournaments, clothing design competitions and community fashion shows, a street photography campaign and roaming reporter style video and media projects which will feed into our Platform 5 initiative.

CASE STUDY: DELANIE, 17

"I have enjoyed seeing my creative efforts come to life, to help others and myself at the same time. Because we young people have a lot of good to give in society, given the chance"

Delanie was a participant with the Foundation on other programmes for a while but it was thanks to our Achievers project that we were able to devote the focused time this year to Delanie and develop his skills and confidence through volunteering. Delanie was a keen member of the #Achievers' team.

Speaking on how he feels about the volunteering programme from Rio Ferdinand Foundation and the development he feels he has made from it, Delanie states,

"From my experience with the Foundation staff team who identified my qualities and passions, it's just about sharing and exposing potential young people to opportunities. Never second guess a young person's character, we all have potential. Personally, I have become more confident to meet new people, and take on new challenges presented to me outside my usual comfort zone".

F. PLATFORM 5

From 2019, we are showcasing our work on a new youth driven media platform.

Funded by the People's Postcode Lottery, Platform 5 is a new youth-led social action channel. Young people receive practical arts and media training and are supported to create their own digital storytelling and issue-based content which is then shared via Platform 5. This project is aimed at connecting young people and providing opportunities for collaboration on creative projects, giving young people a voice and creating a safe online campaigning space for them. At the same time, with the emergence of the new gig economy and the shift and growth of the creative industries as a whole, the project aimed at showcasing talent and building young people's creative portfolios.

We are very excited about what's to come and the further development of this innovative digital project which will enable us to tie all of our work together.



5. LESSONS LEARNT

THE CHANGING EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:

Through talking to young people, policy research and experience gained working in communities, we have seen a number of changing economic and social issues that are having a significant impact on the lives of young people. The Foundation understands the need to continue to evolve as an organisation and adapt our programmes to meet these ever-changing issues that confront young people on a daily basis. Conversations and research informing this impact report have highlighted:

- a growth in youth loneliness,
- the dominance and backlash of social media,
- the polarisation of generations,
- changing expectations of young people,
- a growing skills gap e.g., digital and technology
- the rise of the gig economy and Artificial Intelligence,
- the retreat of the state and youth services,
- increasing poverty and growing inequality,
- different types of crime,
- growing mental health crisis,
- growing geographical divides,
- growing racial tensions and territorial or gang violence

Rio Ferdinand Foundation pride ourselves on the genuine involvement of our young people in everything we do. Our services are informed and led by young people, with the Foundation acting as an enabler to guide them towards the outcomes identified. We have tested some of our ways of working with key stakeholders, including young people, to consider how we can continue to improve our work with young people facing these increasingly challenging issues.

In September 2018, Foundation staff facilitated focus groups with help from our youth leaders from diverse backgrounds. The young people took part in a series of fun activities, offering their views and opinions on both existing and future work.

The following shows some of the words that young people used to describe the Rio Ferdinand Foundation:



Some of the defining qualities of the Foundation that came out of the session were:

- We help young people who have 'dropped off the radar' of other agencies
- We are agile and responsive, using creative ways to engage young people
- We are led by what matters most to young people
- We listen and work at each young person's own pace
- We enable young people to progress along pathways based on their own personal ambitions and goals

RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US:

"They were very very flexible. Supported you on your journey through your project".

"They're dead supportive. They'll try to work around you. If you've got an idea they'll try to work a way to make it possible".

"Rio Ferdinand Foundation have been there when I need a chat with stuff going on in my head (random crap in my head). Just sat here talking. That is therapy in itself. Usually for me it's someone to listen to me. That's what the Foundation does for me".

"If I struggled with anything, if I went into a session a bit upset, they were like you're ok, we don't have to do this today if you're not feeling it".

"Every time I've got an idea, I know who to go to. They ask further questions that I haven't thought of and put an action plan in place. They referred me to Princes Trust for business advice. Now I have a professional mentor and literally helping me to start my own business and to pitch it to others for funding".

WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAID:

The Foundation has worked collaboratively throughout the year with a whole range of statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations. Here's what some of the partners said were the best things about working with us:

"Their projects are always youth-focused".

"They are empowering. I've seen our young people become more confident since doing work with Rio Ferdinand Foundation".

"Their willingness to help".

"Being local was important. The Foundation team work in this area so know the community and straight away they got our kids. They worked really well with them and spoke to them at a level they like".

We will be taking this learning and feedback into account as the Foundation moves into our new strategic cycle.



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

6. MOVING FORWARD

The insight, feedback and learning we have taken from our young people has enabled us to review our services and programmes and to focus our work on four key areas of development:

1. **Engagement and early intervention youth programmes that are locally relevant, free at the point of access and delivered in a safe and accessible environment.** These initiatives will be designed to allow young people to participate at their own pace, build relationships with peers and staff and to determine what activities are relevant to them – including sports, arts, media and cultural activities.
2. **Personal development and mentoring programmes that tackle issues that are impacting on young lives – such as mental health, substance use and misuse, bullying, crime and violence (including gangs) and social exclusion and isolation.** Within this element of our programming we will also support young people to improve their resilience by developing coping strategies, sharing issues and solutions and working with adult mentors and peer groups to address key issues. The themes of these programmes will not be prescriptive as social issues evolve differently in various geographies and in response to personal circumstances – the young people involved in our programmes will work with staff to identify what matters to them.
3. **Volunteering, citizenship and social action projects that can create a sense of team and collective effort in delivering a positive social outcome.** These initiatives will support participants to build skills, engage with civic society (and older generations), build networks and relationships across postcodes and geographies and expose young people to a greater breadth of opportunities through the delivery of youth led projects.
4. **Training, skills and careers programmes that allow young people to develop transferable skills, access employment pathways and enhance their potential to be socially mobile.** Within this theme of work, we will focus on digital skills and employment opportunities to prepare participants for the emerging job market, and to expose young people to employers to understand what employers look for in employees.

We have also revisited and worked with young people, trustees, staff and volunteers to update our theory of change to underpin our work (see APPENDIX B). With this in place, Rio Ferdinand Foundation is now at an exciting stage of our development. The new strategy for 2019 – 2021 will see us further embed our flagship leadership programmes as well as develop into new areas of work – including working with new partners to build access to new skills and careers pathways, such as our recent engagement with Hackathon as part of our digital technology programme .

CASE STUDY: TAMESIDE HACKATHON #HACK6

In February 2019 some of our young people supported Tameside council in delivering its sixth Hackathon – a phenomenon that’s growing in popularity each time they run it. The Foundation also sponsored a prize signed by Rio Ferdinand for the Most Improved Hacker. The Tameside Hackathon was attended by around 90 young people who were set technological challenges by businesses such as Brother UK and Purple WiFi.

Digital skill development is an area that young people are saying that they want to do more of and the Foundation is already starting to explore how it can help them to achieve these ambitions.

The Hackathon provided a great opportunity for our young people to see how it works. Here’s what they said:

#HACK6 DAY 1 HARMONIOUS HACK!

When we came here today, we were expecting to see a lot of havoc and screaming kids. We were pleasantly surprised by the organisation of the event and participants concentration. We have a little bit of knowledge of coding but not as much as the people that are taking part. As Rio Ferdinand Foundation volunteers, we were given the task to support and help the participants to HACK a solution to a digital problem set by local businesses and help around the event generally. We wanted to get involved with Tameside Hack Event to boost our confidence and digital skills, meet new people and gain some amazing work experience for our CV’s.

The overall event was diverse and welcoming. Even though it’s a competition, the participants were friendly towards each other, accepting the age difference and working in teams to compete for amazing prizes! We wish we could’ve entered because of the incredible opportunities presented which really astounded us as volunteers and the mentors wandering around. The talent spread throughout the event was impressive- ESPECIALLY for us! It exceeded our own and even taught us a thing or two about the coding world! Not only were the participants talented, but there were a variety of ages from 11-18. This was a great way to bring the age groups together- but don’t take our word for it, here are a few quotes from the participants;

“It’s a wonderful experience” -Cameron, Age 15

“It’s great for teamwork, it brings different age groups together and work on a project developing new skills along the way” -Curtis, Age 19

“We came here to learn new things on coding!” – Amelia, Age 11

RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

"It's a great opportunity to showcase our talent" -Dominic, Age 12

Tomorrow will be the final day and all groups will present their digital solutions to the businesses and win prizes- we're looking forward to it!

#HACK6 DAY 2

Today we found the atmosphere at Tameside Hack event Day 2 was a lot more relaxed, as people knew what they were doing and concentrating on the tasks they had to do in the certain time frame. Participants seemed to be more independent today and really excited about the prizes. The judges will be going around and interviewing hackers about the development of their projects and the final solutions to the challenges presented to them. Each group will pitch their ideas and businesses will select the winner depending on how creative and close the product is to the brief. Hackers have been monitored throughout the 2-day process. Lunch was at 11:30 and was great, the cupcakes weren't stolen this time!!! Which is always a bonus. Hackers worked hard finishing up their projects and anxiously awaited the results...

Again, we asked Hackers of their experience over the past two days and whether the second day was easier than the first. It was clear their projects were progressing drastically;

"Fun! I have learnt how to use the new website and we can program other websites!"

"It's cool. We have made an app that helps with your mental state"

"The hack program has been hard, but overtime got easier. The best day was today, it was really fun!"

We were even more impressed at the rate of work throughout the event; in just two days hackers have managed to create whole functioning apps on the tasks they were given as well as websites. Each of their projects were unique and creative – one hacker created a WHOLE device from a tablet, speakers and cardboard! It was extremely impressive to see such talent between these different ages!

Victoria, National Programmes Manager for the Rio Ferdinand Foundation presented 'Most Improved HACKER' award to James T for leaning new coding skills and finding cool solutions to any problems that arose!

Congratulations to all winners and HACKERS for taking part in #HACK6 in Tameside, RFF would like to thank our funders at Big Lottery and partners at Tameside Council for allowing us to come and volunteers for the past two days. We've learnt so many new skills and will be entering in our own team in Manchester's HACK in March 2020. Well done everyone!!!

Written by Rio Ferdinand Foundation volunteers Charlotte, Paige and Madison.



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION REFLECTIONS

In commissioning this independent review of how young people, participants and partners view our work, we have been given an insight into the needs of young people and how our model and approach has been most impactful. It has also informed our theory of change and allows us to tweak and grow our programmes as we confront uncertain times politically, economically and socially – with young people increasingly facing new challenges and insecurity about their future.

By putting young people, their voices and their journeys at the heart of our work, the Rio Ferdinand Foundation will reflect those needs and challenges, but also work with partners and supporters to provide practical and real solutions to support our young people into a better future.

Everyone at the Foundation and all of the young people impacted by our work are grateful to our partners, supporters and funders.



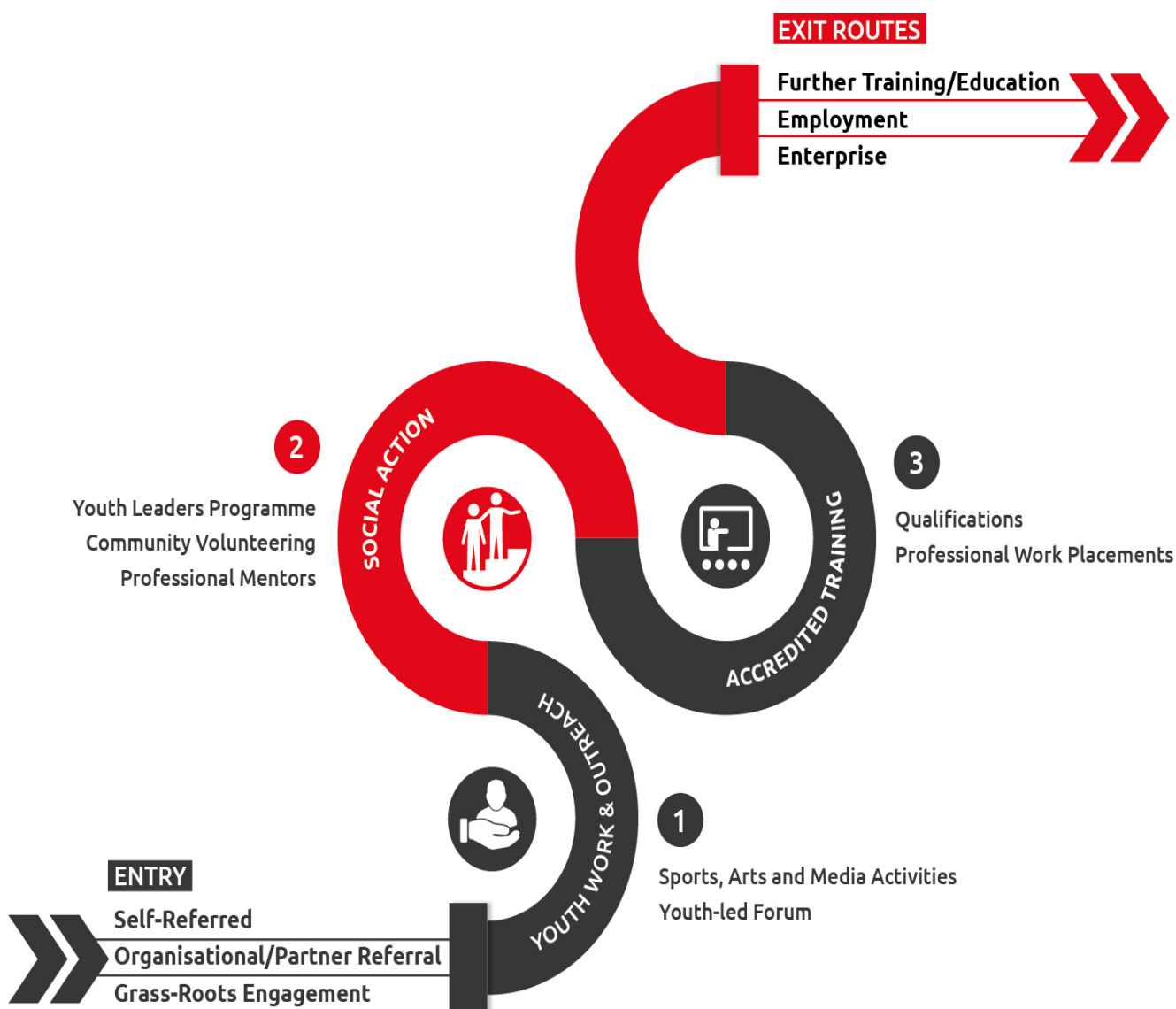
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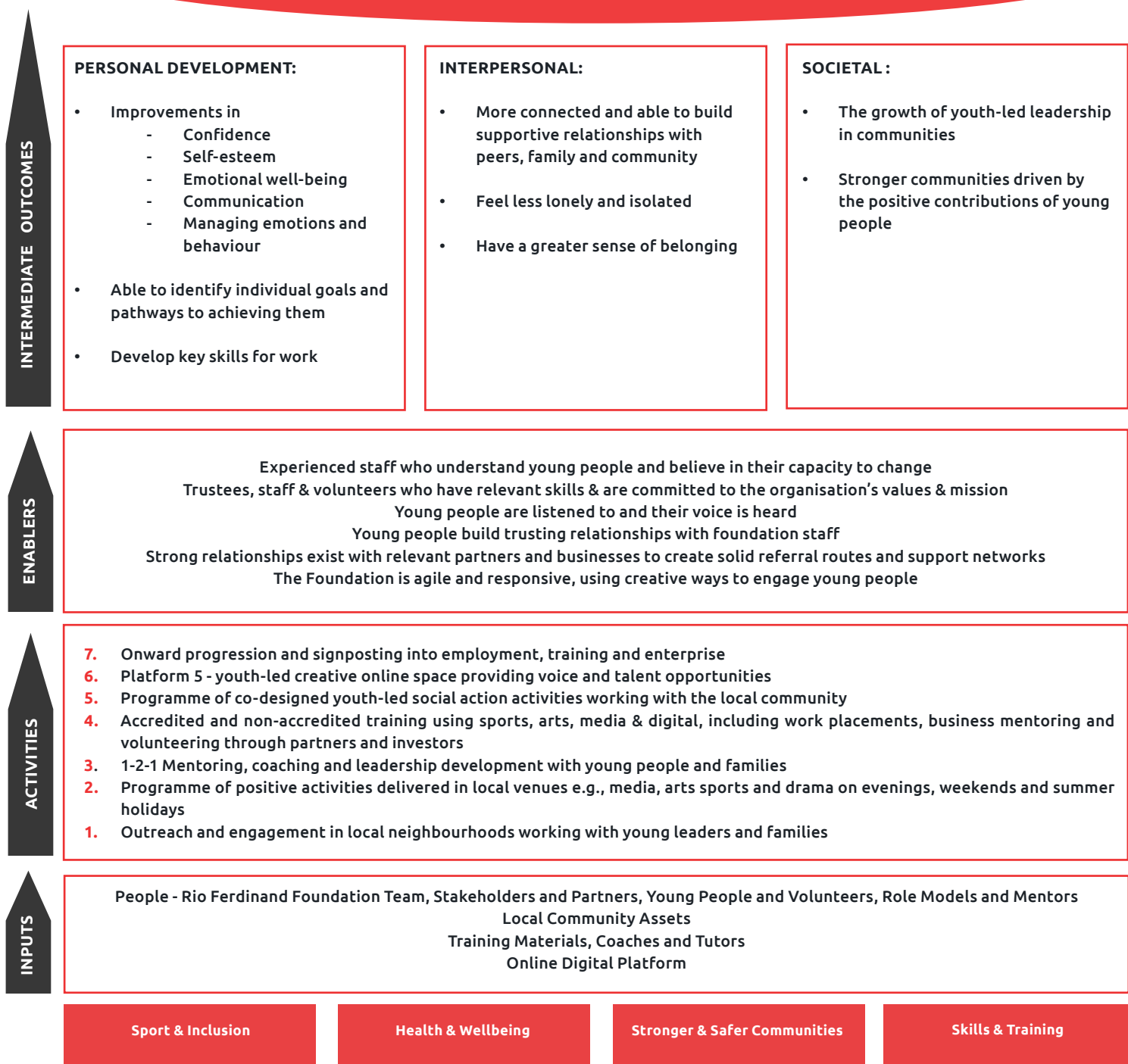
RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION YOUNG VOICES: REFLECTIONS

APPENDIX A: YOUNG PERSONS JOURNEY



APPENDIX B: THEORY OF CHANGE

Young people are socially mobile and empowered to be independent, take control of their lives and achieve their full potential





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