

MOTORVATIONS PROJECT LIMITED

Brief description

Motorvations delivers an alternative education programme to young people aged 13 to 17 who are deemed 'at risk', have special educational needs, physical or mental health problems or are not well served by any other educational system. It uses a broad based approach to engage young people in constructive activity including training in motor mechanics in purpose-built workshops, basic skills and a range of life skills. Between 2004 and 2007 it took part in the three-year pilot of the Department of Health funded Young Person's Development Programme (YPDP), which addressed risk behaviour among young people aged 13 to 15. As part of this, Motorvations set up a community cycle project, through which young people repair old bicycles, which are then donated to charities. Motorvations has continued build on the YPDP model, which linked young people's physical well-being to academic attainment.

Collaboration

Motorvations works with a broad range of referral agencies including local education authorities, youth offending teams, Flexi Learning, Connexions, and local schools. The National Youth Agency managed the YPDP on behalf of the DoH, providing training and support to staff.

Funding

Motorvations received annual funding of £40,000 from YPDP between 2004-07. It has secured continuation funding of £35,000 to March 2008 under the 'Youth Work for Health' initiative, based on an extension to the YPDP model. Other funders include London councils (16+ NEET project), and Tudor Trust (physical fitness project). Clothworkers, Percy Bilton and Hilton Foundation have contributed to the purchase of equipment for the nutrition centre.

Staffing

The team consists of a development manager, operational manager, four project workers, careers adviser, basic skills tutor, and administrator. Volunteers and sessional workers also support the project from time to time.



→Some project members with some of the bicycle

Nature of provision

Which groups of young people does the project work with?

Motorvations works with young people aged 13 to 17 primarily from the Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge areas of London, although some come from further afield. Many come from socially deprived backgrounds, and most have missed a significant part of their education and have poor levels of basic and social skills. Some have special educational needs, mental or physical health problems, or come from abusive families.

The project originally mainly attracted young white men with 12.5 per cent belonging to a minority ethnic group. Minority ethnic young people now account for approximately 40 per cent of participants, as a result of more referrals from Barking and Dagenham.

During the three-year YPDP pilot, 67 young people formally attended the programme, while around 100 took part in some of its elements each year.



they have repaired in readiness for donation to charity.

The 16+ programme involves 13 young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

How was the need for the project identified?

The project was established in 1998 by Havering Venture, a local charity, with the support of the Metropolitan Police and Havering Youth Support Service. It targeted local young people involved in vehicle crime, offering training in car maintenance and repair to divert them from crime and encourage progression into work or college. The project's success led it to expand its remit and it is now recognised as an alternative education provider for young people who have difficulty in functioning effectively in a school environment. Motorvations is now independent of Havering Venture.

How do young people become involved? What, if any, commitment do you ask for?

The project takes referrals from local agencies including Connexions, Youth Offending Teams, social services, looked after children teams, local education

authorities and schools. Self-referral is also possible.

YPDP participants committed to a year long programme with ten key components, including volunteering, for a total of 6 to 10 hours per week.

What are the main approaches used and activities offered?

Motorvations' approach is based on the belief that improving young people's physical health and well-being is a key factor contributing to improved educational attainment and personal growth. The YPDP model included a range of components designed to address risk behaviour, particularly in relation to teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and academic attainment.

Young people take part in OCN accredited modular based vocational training in motor mechanics-related subjects in Motorvations' purpose-built motor vehicle workshops. Other activities offered include group work sessions covering sex and relationship education and substance misuse, arts, and sports/physical activities.

As part of the volunteering component, Motorvations set up an environmentally friendly community cycle refurbishment project. Young people organise the collection of bikes and subsequently repair and recondition them under the guidance of experienced project workers. Each bike takes approximately six hours to refurbish with new brakes, tyres, seats etc, spread over two workshop sessions. Young people are also trained in health and safety in road use.

Once the bikes have been reconditioned they are distributed to other charitable organisations chosen by the young people with staff support. During the three year programme, 50 charities received bicycles, which they hired out or sold to raise funds. Organisations benefiting included a charity supporting cycling days out for local poor families, St Francis Hospice for the terminally ill, Brentwood Women's Refuge, and an orphanage in Zambia where the bikes were used for children to ride to school or traded for food.

Young people have also become involved in community based projects such as a local carnival – young people painted and refurbished a float for this, including fitting a sound system and canopy.

How are young people involved in shaping the project/programme?

YPDP students were actively involved in all stages of the cycle project's development, for instance in designing promotional materials. Regular open forums – tailored to the young people's needs – encourage them to contribute their ideas on the project's approach and the activities that they would like to participate in. Two young people have joined the project management committee as advisors.

How does the project respond to the needs of different young people, particularly the most marginalised?

Each young person has a personal development plan tailored to suit their specific needs.

The project has developed a charter of inclusivity to help promote equal opportunities and celebrate diversity.



→A high standard of repair and maintenance is very important to the project.

Outcomes

How does the project contribute to the five Every Child Matters outcomes for young people?

The project has adopted the ECM framework for success. Involvement in volunteering and formal decision making processes provide real opportunities for young people to 'make a positive contribution' to the local community. Motorvations has increased the life chances of young people on the programme. They have improved their health and well-being, gained basic and trade skills and employment opportunities and reduced their re-offending rates.

What skills do young people gain through their involvement in the project?

Young people gained opportunities to develop their personal skills and work with the local community in a positive way, increasing their confidence and self esteem. They benefited through greater social inclusion, becoming valued members of society and positive role models for others. They all benefited from work readiness programmes.

How are young people's progress and achievements measured, recorded and

accredited?

Participants complete questionnaires at the start and end of the programme. They agree personal development plans to suit individual needs, which are reviewed each month to ensure that realistic goals and targets are set.

The project uses an individual client monitoring system covering agreed goals and targets, referral details and risk assessment plans. Attendance, punctuality and daily activity are also monitored, and workers complete a daily sessional feedback form. Improvements in physical fitness and diet are recorded in each young person's file.

What has changed for other young people, organisations or the wider community as a result of the project?

Refurbishment of old cycles helps protect the local environment. Donations to local charitable organisations allow young people to give something back to the community, helping alter how they are perceived in a community which labels them as 'excluded'.

Measuring effectiveness

How is the project evaluated and by whom?

YPDP was evaluated as part of a national evaluation carried out by the Social Science Research Unit. The NYA undertook annual assessment visits to support this and maintained regular contact with the project in its role as training and coordination agent. Ofsted included Motorvations in its inspection of youth provision in Havering, and the project is inspected annually by Barking and Dagenham's health and safety team.

What are the findings of any evaluations to date?

During a recent Ofsted evaluation, Motorvations was ranked outstanding in every criteria. It was the top ranking provision for young people in the Borough of Havering.

Motorvations won the Guardian Charity Awards 2006 and the Thames Gateway's Community Involvement Awards 2006 for innovation.

The cycle project was commended by London Mayor's office in 2006 as part of the cycle London campaign promoted by Ken Livingstone.

What changes/developments have occurred as a result of evaluation?

Developing more effective ways of

evaluating staff's personal performance and development and training needs has resulted in a staff development programme based on the skills needed to deliver expected outcomes.

What has worked well (within the volunteering component of the work) and why?

The bicycle refurbishment project has allowed the development of volunteering on site which, matched with staff skills and young people's interests, resulted in a successful and popular activity.

What has been difficult and why?

The volunteering component of YPDP was initially difficult to fulfil because of problems associated with taking young people off the site. At first the project had some difficulty in identifying worthy recipients for renovated the bikes. It has since used networking opportunities to develop a database of potential recipients.

It was also difficult to retain young people over the full programme due to the very nature of excluded young people and changes in local authority provision.

Partnership and strategic impact

What other agencies do you work with?

Motorvations has developed partnerships with local businesses to ensure that it is helping young people develop skills that are wanted by employers. It continues to build relationships with Children's Services to become part of the strategic plan for the Borough's excluded pupils.

What specific skills and expertise does your organisation bring to partnership work?

Motorvations offers the only alternative education provision in the area. Its staff are qualified and experienced to work with some of the most challenging young people in the area. They regularly attend child protection reviews.

Has this partnership resulted in greater collaboration or increased understanding between partners?

Growing levels of social exclusion and Motorvation's track record has led to increasing demands on the project from referral agencies in several outer

London boroughs, and from young people themselves.

Have you experienced any particular difficulties in partnership working?

In a minority number of cases information on referrals is sometimes lacking. It is important to have a clear understanding of what is going on in a young person's life in order to provide the best possible support.

Do you consider this project to be innovative?

Motorvations is recognised for its innovative, holistic approach to dealing with the special needs of challenging young people and achieving life changing outcomes at critical stages in their lives.

How do you disseminate the learning from the project?

Through local and specialist press, website, and through links with The NYA and DoH.

Has the learning from this work influenced wider organisational/service strategies?

Motorvations has become part of local educational planning for young people.

What plans do you have to sustain/develop this work?

The project is currently working towards becoming self-sufficient as an organisation. It intends to install a new gym, nutrition centre and juice bar to boost its wider work on fitness and diet, enhance its health education programme and provide a social centre for young people. It is hoped that, once fully subscribed, these new areas will be self-supporting and contribute to the overall running costs of Motorvations. The demand for the bike project has increased and the project is now looking at working with local schools on bike refurbishment programmes. The project continues to promote cycling as a healthy way to travel.



→The project offers young people 'at risk' a 'stabilising' influence in their lives.

Contact: Chris Lee, Development Manager, Motorvations, 13-14 Maldon Road, Romford, Essex RM7 0JB. Tel: 01708 723733.