



Octavia Foundation

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Putting young people first

An independent evaluation of BASE, the Octavia Foundation's creative learning centre for young people

**Annabel Jackson
and Cause 4**
2014



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The Octavia Foundation has worked on youth-led projects with local young people since the charity was launched in 2006, so it was a natural next step to set up BASE in 2011. BASE is a creative learning centre dedicated to giving even more young people the opportunities, support and empowerment we knew they valued so much.

BASE provides a safe and accepting space for children and young people (or those aged up to 30 if they are disabled) to develop their skills and learn about life. Engaging and creative youth-led activities currently take place at the centre on three evenings each week and we hope to expand on this. The centre and activities that we provide were developed in direct response to local consultations and the needs of the local young people; the need for a safe space to spend time, somewhere to be creative and showcase talents and skills and the need to socialise and be heard by a wide range of people.

The cooking and sharing of an evening meal is a central part of our offer to young people and contributes massively to breaking down barriers and promoting inclusion and responsibility.

After over three successful years at BASE we decided to commission an independent consultant to assess our work – to see what we were doing well, where we could improve and to speak confidentially with the young people themselves. This report, carried out by Annabel Jackson and Cause 4, is the outcome of that assessment and we hope it will be of use and of interest to others working to give young people opportunities and skills. This is even more important at a time when they may be struggling to gain employment, get into further education or to work out what they want to do in the world. As one of our young members said, young people need to “see the world in terms of possibilities.”

This report would not have been possible without the generous support from the Westminster Foundation and we are looking forward to sharing the results of our work with our partners and other youth organisations.

My thanks to Annabel Jackson, Cause 4, The Westminster Foundation and to all of the staff and young people at BASE for their work in putting this report together.

Executive summary



About BASE

BASE runs in the Sea Cadet building at Grosvenor Waterside on three evenings for young people each week: two for 'Seniors' who are over 13 and one evening for 'Juniors', aged 7-12 years old. At the time of the review, BASE has 42 Seniors and 61 Juniors registered, with 20 Seniors and 32 Juniors being regular attendees. There is a maximum of 20 attendees at any one session.

Methodology

Our methodology consisted of:

- review of service
- logic model and learning session
- interviews with young people

Outcomes

The evaluation suggests the following mechanisms for BASE:

Young people develop confidence through:

- being asked about their preferences and opinions
- interacting in a group with new people
- developing new skills
- being treated as equals by the staff/adults
- being able to talk without being judged
- taking on new roles e.g. as presenters
- learning about their legal rights
- gaining positive feedback or acclaim

“““ Everyone listens to everyone else. The more you respect people, the more they give it back. I have never felt unimportant at BASE.

Young people raise their aspirations through:

- new experiences
- mixing with a wider group of people
- peer support and motivation
- being able to see opportunities arising from their existing interests
- seeing the staff as role models and absorbing some of their attitudes
- hearing presentations from experts e.g. Mind
- taking responsibility for other young people in the group

“““ In youth clubs you find this strange dynamic, you can escape from all of your problems, but when you leave you have the same problems you had when you went in. You never come out feeling that your life has changed. The difference with BASE is that it is changing young people's lives. It wasn't about fun; it was about elevating your standing in society.

Young people reinvigorate their inherent interest in learning through:

- creative approaches to learning including about the arts and culture
- separating learning from the stress of taking exams
- seeing the practical value of learning and its continuity to work
- learning from each other as well as from staff
- having a variety of subjects and forms of engagement

“““ We often have debates about various subjects. Even if you are not very aware of them, after a while you see you can have your own opinion. You can speak to people you have never met before.

The empowering style of BASE builds young people's motivation and so helps them to reach their potential.

“““ The staff listen to you. They don't talk down to you. They give you a chance to speak. They want to hear your views. They take your views into account. Instead of them telling us what we are going to do. Everyone has an input.

About BASE



BASE benefits from the resources, contacts, support and belief of the Octavia Foundation at operational and strategic levels. Young people, volunteers and staff have day-to-day contact with staff from the Foundation, which gives a strong link to employment and the community.

The philosophy underpinning BASE aligns with the central mission of the Octavia Foundation which is to empower individuals to achieve positive personal change. The Foundation's focus on addressing inequalities in the central and west London boroughs in which it works and on brokering opportunities to address imbalances between different communities also helps to shape the strategic direction and activities of BASE.

Young people in London

Nearly a quarter of London's population is aged under 19 and this group is facing a large number of real and pressing issues particularly around employment and training, wellbeing and happiness and being active members of their communities.

A number of key issues and considerations exist which impact upon the development and delivery of programmes for young people in London including:

- 4.5% of 14-18 year olds in London are recorded as not in employment, education or training (NEET) in London. This is compared to 6.1% nationally.¹
- Research carried out by the Princes' Trust shows that the number of long term unemployed young people nationally (unemployed for more than 24 months) has increased by 342% in a decade – from 26,000 to 115,000.²
- 25% of primary school children and 22% of secondary school children in London qualify for free school meals (those classified as economically disadvantaged compared to their peers).³
- 50% of all London state school children have English as a second language, compared to 18% in the rest of the UK.⁴
- Young people in London feel disengaged from their communities and that the media only focuses on negative portrayals of them.⁵

Both Westminster, where BASE is currently operating, and Kensington and Chelsea, where it is looking to expand contain areas of serious deprivation and need that BASE is well-placed to respond to.

1 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/regional-trends/regional-economic-indicators/march-2013/regional-economic-indicators---march-2013.html#tab-Key-Points>

2 <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/the-impact-of-long-term-youth-unemployment-by-youth-charity-the-princes-trust-october-2013.pdf>

3 <http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/topics/low-educational-outcomes/>

4 http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Education%20Inquiry%20First%20Report_0.pdf

5 <http://www.equalbutdifferent.org.uk/pdfs/community%20cohesion%20our%20responsibility.pdf>

“

Everyone listens to everyone else. The more you respect people, the more they give it back. I have never felt unimportant at BASE.

It is better to have groups mixed. I want to make a bridge between people with special needs and people who don't have special needs.

”

Methodology



Methodology

Our methodology consisted of:

- review of service
- logic model and learning session
- interviews with young people

Explanation of logic models

The two most common forms of visualisation for conceptualisation are logic models and systems diagrams. We use the first here because it is simpler. A logic model is a visual depiction of a programme or project. Logic models were originally developed and popularised by The Kellogg Foundation in the United States. By plotting the different stages in a programme, the actions and assumed consequences (outcomes), logic models provide a simple way to summarise programmes by including their description but also their rationale and philosophy.

Logic models are read from left to right

Your planned work ▶

Your intended results ▶

Resources

Certain resources are needed to run your project.

Activities

If you have access to resources, then you can use them to accomplish your planned activities.

Outputs

If you accomplish your planned activities to the extent you intended, then you hopefully will deliver the amount of service you intended.

Outcomes

If you achieve your planned activities to the extent you planned, then your participants will benefit in certain ways.

Impacts

If these benefits to participants are achieved, then certain changes in organisations or communities might be expected.

Language

This is our definition of the terms used in a logic model:

- **Resources** are financial and non-financial inputs for a project or programme.
- **Activities** are the actions taken by the project or programme.
- **Outputs** are measures of effort to show that the project or programme took place and can be defined from the supply side (number of events), or the demand side (number of participants).
- **Outcomes** are changes in the behaviour, skills, knowledge, motivation, feelings, attitudes, or aspirations of participants; or the culture, structures, systems, or processes of organisations.
- **Impacts** are the direct and indirect effects for society, the economy and the environment.

Outcomes



Review of service

At its core, BASE is a creative platform that encourages young people to focus on what affects them and how to challenge and change things in their local community. BASE aims to motivate young people to be the change agents for their own lives. Members are encouraged to:

- Think about the issues that they or their peers may be facing
- Identify topics that they are interested in learning more about
- Develop skills that they would like to build upon or develop
- Identify things that they would like to change

BASE staff then work with young people to create a programme of activities that explore these areas.

Competitors

In order to offer a fuller understanding of the services offered by BASE and how they compare with other offerings, in what is a crowded field, a full competitor analysis was carried out by Cause4

The majority of activities offered by these other groups can be classified as 'traditional youth work' – games/arts and crafts activities – and there is less focus on personal development and empowerment than with BASE.

Whilst there is some overlap with the activities of the other youth clubs in Westminster and in Kensington and Chelsea, words such as 'family', 'mentoring', 'debates', 'meal' show up prominently at BASE, unlike the others that were more focused on traditional youth club 'play' activities. The provision of a hot meal and the ceremony surrounding it – everyone helping and then sitting down to eat together is something not mentioned by many of the competitors surveyed.

“” When I noticed a change in my son's behaviour, I called BASE. They assured me that they would talk to him to try and find out the reasons for the negative change in behaviour and would reinforce my message of respect. I really appreciated the way in which they supported me and my son.

Parent of two Senior BASE participants

Unique aspects of service

Audience

- BASE caters to a wide audience in terms of age range – covering all ages from 7-30 years old – wider than the majority of other organisations surveyed.
- The inclusive nature of BASE and the fact that young disabled people, people with learning difficulties and those with mental health issues develop and participate in activities together with their non-disabled peers together is a key strength and unique. This work not only responds positively and proactively to the need caused by high levels of mental illness in both Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea but achieves crucial 'soft' outcomes such as encouraging mutual respect amongst young people and supporting greater peer understanding and empathy.

Activities

- BASE is unique in engaging young participants in such a high level of consultation regarding the development of its programme of activities. The digital and media projects it designs and delivers are also on a larger, more impressive and more impactful scale than other organisations working in this field.
- Whilst there is overlap in a number of the activities offered at BASE and by other youth clubs there is more focus on personal development and citizenship in the BASE programme.
- BASE is unusual in offering a programme where activities are determined from the bottom up by participants rather than developed in order to achieve specific organisation (or funder) set outcomes or to engage particular groups – unlike other housing associations and national charities working in London. Not being funding led is a clear differentiator.
- The focus on consultation with young people and supporting them to achieve personally defined goals is compelling.

The breadth and reach that BASE's current open and inclusive approach allows, as well as the fact that it fully reflects the user voice rather than a funder desired perspective is a clear and evident strength.

Octavia Foundation logic model

This is the logic model developed with the staff at BASE and the Octavia Foundation:

Activities	Outputs	Shorter term outcomes	Longer term outcomes	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> workshops e.g. health, arts, sports debates and discussions trips homework and course-work support mentoring cooking and eating together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2250 engagements per annum (50 weeks per year with 3 sessions per week) average age for Juniors is 10 years old average age for Seniors is 16 years 	<p>young people feel safer, increase their sense of agency over their environment and their sense of their place in the world, raise their self-awareness, self-esteem and aspirations, and develop skills and relationships</p>	<p>young people reach their full potential</p>	<p>increased social justice, community cohesion, and youth citizenship</p>

Assumptions

- There is a moral need to address the inequality of opportunities into which young people are born.
- BASE starts from a position of undying belief in, and respect for, young people.
- Young people differ in their individual needs. Activities should be developed with young people since this increases their engagement, and results in a better experience. The activities are responsive and thus constantly evolving.
- Building on young people's existing interests, and taking this as far as you can go (e.g. into social enterprise, training or media), provides a powerful pathway for progress.
- Young people want to learn. They respond well to creative and dynamic routes into personal development and informal learning.
- Young people learn from each other. Having a mix of ages, needs, abilities and skills encourages responsibility and peer support. Young people don't just learn from staff but also from each other.
- Having a diverse group helps young people to accept difference.
- Young people need to be challenged about negative behaviour e.g. offensive views of women, or defeatist thinking. Such attitudes are limiting for them and those around them, and are not acceptable in the workplace, so limiting their options in life. Changing negative behaviours enables them to make better choices.
- Staff need to have a carefully judged role as mentors and role models. The atmosphere needs to be relaxed enough that young people feel they can express themselves but formal enough to encourage, and internalise, good standards of behaviour.
- Provision of hot food, and the ceremony around that, engenders a family vibe. It also encourages young people to be, and to enjoy being, responsible, e.g. helping with the preparation and washing up.
- Young people need to be engaged with the news so they can become active citizens. Young people can walk around in a bubble, thinking issues don't affect them. Engaging them in a discussion makes issues more relevant to them and encourages them to have a view and feel confident expressing it.
- Encouraging young people to volunteer or do other work that helps others encourages a life-long habit of active citizenship, once they realise how good it feels.
- Having a long term relationship with young people is more likely to lead to transformation because developing relationships and trust takes time. BASE maximises its impact by working with a relatively small number of young people over a long period of time.
- Giving young people access to high quality facilities shows respect for them, and a view of their worth, and encourages them to respect others.



Logic model assessment

This is a strong logic model: assumptions are well elaborated, outcomes are focused and realistic, and the different elements of the logic model are consistent.



Case studies of young people



Background

We interviewed ten young people aged 15 to 28. Nine of these interviews were face-to-face and one over the telephone. Face-to-face interviews were generally carried out in pairs, to make the feeling less formal. Our interviews were all with Seniors, and so give a detailed picture of outcomes for this group. We used the interviews to write the case studies but also to test questions that we wanted to use in developing an evaluation framework.

Our style is to place great importance on the words of, and views of, the interviewees. The following case studies draw on the phrasing used by the young people interviewed.

We wrote up nine of the interviews as case studies:

- **Jonathan and Michael**

This case study demonstrates the value of the philosophy of having groups with mixed abilities, and the process whereby following young people's interests can lead to work opportunities and volunteering.

- **Zakiya**

This case study shows how BASE supports learning and progression.

- **Adam.**

This case study illustrates the value of having mixed groups.

- **Omar and Amirhon**

This case study particularly illustrates how BASE has developed as a community, and how it opens young people up to opportunities.

- **Atif**

This case study shows how young people internalise the standards expected at BASE.

- **Saida**

This case study shows how BASE helps to develop confidence and aspiration.

- **Moktar**

This case study is a follow up interview investigating sustained impact.

The questions we used for the interviews were probing and have revealed quite detailed information about the individuals. Young people have been given the chance to comment on the text before it is made public, and/or some details have been changed to prevent the interviewees from being identified.

“

You don't feel so many barriers when you are expressing your opinion. At school you don't talk about your culture or your opinions. It is more intellectual at BASE.

You feel more confident because the supervisors treat you as an equal.

”

Jonathan and Michael

Jonathan and Michael are both 28, and have had contact with the Octavia Foundation since 2008. They still come to BASE about twice a month, and fit the age criteria because they have special needs. They were part of a project to create a film about four unsung female heroes. This kindled an existing interest in film, which they developed in the BASE sessions. Coming to BASE has also encouraged them to volunteer in the community, as they want to help other young people to develop their talents. Being at BASE makes them feel happy, encouraged and supported. When their opinions are taken into account this shows that they are respected. BASE has definitely increased their confidence, being around people they can relate to. They used to be afraid to talk to people because they did not know if the people would talk to them. BASE has taught them that they just have to pluck up their courage.

“” BASE encourages you to move forward and keep at it.

Jonathan and Michael are in the process of establishing a film-making company. They have learnt skills from using the equipment at BASE and the Octavia Foundation has helped them make contacts. None of this would have happened without BASE. There is nowhere else young people can talk about the projects they want to do.



Zakiya

Zakiya is 19 and has been with BASE since the beginning. She comes twice a week and doesn't go to any other youth club. The best parts are the staff and the young people. The staff are: "great to work with, they are fun and supportive and trustworthy and that is what you need." The young people: "make you feel young again. You can have deep conversations with them and sometimes they make you laugh until you cry, and they are cool to be around." Zakiya particularly enjoyed the session printing on t-shirts. She doesn't think of herself as an arty person because she can't draw but she learnt lots of skills using the stencils. She could see how this activity could lead to you running your own printing business.

The group made a ten minute film on sexual health, which she was interested in, so BASE encouraged her to take part in a week long training course to talk on the subject. She is now a sexual health advisor, and has run two sessions at BASE. These were different from talks you might get at school because they asked the young people, mainly boys, what they were interested in, and oriented the session around their interests. The first session was on condoms and STIs, then they wanted a session on relationships. The young people have a lot of opinions and it is good to talk to them. She also challenges their views on, and attitude to,



females. The young men listen to hip-hop artists who talk about, and to, women without respect. If she changes only one person's views then it will all be worthwhile.

BASE put Zakiya in touch with Hip-Hop Shakespeare, a theatre company combining the two styles of culture and she attended for a while. She doesn't have the time to continue with them at present but only because she is working as an apprentice at BASE.

BASE makes her feel empowered. The staff are really understanding and supportive. If you have problems or want to do a project or activity, they really look into how you can do that. They make every young person feel like they belong and they are important. Being able to express her views without being judged has made her more confident. She has also gained confidence from hearing about her rights, which happened during a session on Stop and Search. Schools don't cover these kinds of topics.

At school students write down what the teacher has written on the board, it is the same each day. BASE is different each week. She has always liked learning but found school boring because it was so rigid and structured.

““ The way they approach your ideas and the things you want to do, they try their best to do as much as possible here.

BASE is different from a youth club because it is more interactive. In a youth club you would just play pool or use the computers. Here even the cooking isn't just adults cooking. The young people take part in cooking and cleaning up. BASE gives you functional skills that you can use in the future.

Wray from the Octavia Foundation came to BASE and helped the young people write their CVs. He has a template, which showed how to write a cover letter, using the job description, incorporating your interests to highlight why you want to be working there. She used this approach successfully to get paid work taking photographs of local events.

““ It is because of them that I ended up where I am today.

The main weakness of BASE is the size of the building. It would be nice to have more people from different backgrounds attending. The location is great because it is between two gangs but is neutral.

BASE is a big part of Zakiya's life. She has been coming for a long time and it has helped her mix with different groups. Without groups like BASE young people don't get the opportunity to meet people with a different religion or background.

“

They make every young person feel like they belong and they are important

”

Adam

Adam is 27. He was involved in Hidden Herstories in 2009 and started attending BASE regularly in September 2013. He comes twice a week and fits the age criteria as he has special needs. Adam particularly enjoys helping staff with the cooking and taking part. "It is nice just to feel part of something, welcomed in the group". It makes him feel he could fulfil his life.

At BASE everyone's ideas are listened to. They help him with his needs. He has gained in confidence by taking a step forward, being part of the activity. It is difficult for him to talk in a group. BASE encourages him to volunteer or do some cooking. It is like being part of a family. Being included in the activities gets him out of a negative cycle, his depression eases up a bit. Before coming to BASE he felt isolated sometimes in many ways.

BASE has helped him find other groups where he can have social contact. He is more confident because he has been able to show the younger people things he has learnt because he is older. This makes him feel good.

“” It is better to have groups mixed. I want to make a bridge between people with special needs and people who don't have special needs. The strong can help with the weak. I might look strong but I am weak inside and have a struggle with life. I also have life experience, which I can share. Even people with disabilities can do something better than others.

Omar and Amirhon

These two friends are 15 and started coming to BASE in 2011. They come once or twice a week, depending on how busy they are studying for exams. They don't go to any other youth clubs. The ones they know are "bad places with bad people". BASE is safe.

They enjoy BASE because it is relaxed. They like the people and the activities, and learning new things. People share their talents and work together, disabled and non-disabled. Everyone is comfortable with each other and the facilities are free.

“” We all help plan. We decide on what we should do as a group.

They are treated as role models at BASE because they are both very calm, which makes them feel good. They feel that they are part of a community that they helped create. They are more sociable than when they came because they have got used to speaking to new people. At school you are with the same people for years and you don't tend to speak to new people.

“” Everyone listens to everyone else. The more you respect people, the more they give it back. I have never felt unimportant at BASE.

BASE is different from school because it is relaxed. School is stressful because you have to take exams in what you have learnt. In BASE you are learning stuff because it is fun. Some of the things discussed at BASE, like first aid, are really interesting and they research them further at home.

“” You feel more confident because the supervisors treat you as an equal. You feel like they are your friends. BASE also makes you see the world in terms of possibilities.

The session on t-shirt printing was informative because it showed how you could make a job out of an interest. Careers advice at school makes you think you can be a doctor or accountant or teacher, but BASE shows that there are lots of other opportunities. They have become more confident and sociable from expressing opinions in the discussions at BASE.

“” You don't feel so many barriers when you are expressing your opinion. At school you don't talk about your culture or your opinions. It is more intellectual at BASE.

BASE is an important part of their lives. When they leave school, they would like to keep contact, perhaps volunteering to help other young people.

Atif

Atif is 15 and has been coming to BASE for two years. He thinks BASE is very advanced compared to other youth clubs. Other clubs are more about keeping children off the streets to prevent crime. BASE is more about a community. The young people take part in projects, gain skills and if someone needs help with their homework, the young people help each other or get assistance from the staff. Everyone can get involved, and there is always something to do that has a valuable outcome at the end. For example, he got a first aid certificate, which he hasn't heard of happening at other youth organisations.

Atif likes all the activities: table tennis, board games, playing on the computer. There is good banter at BASE; it is very sociable.

The feeling in BASE is very relaxed. There is still authority, but it is not a dictatorship. Staff give young people freedom and opportunities and would tell you if you did something wrong. You would be sent home, and so miss the rest of the session, but this is very rare. There are sofas and BASE feels comfortable. It is like a second home.

“” The learning here feels more relevant. School teaches you academic matters but in BASE you are learning about life.

“” We often have debates about various subjects. Even if you are not very aware of them, after a while you see you can have your own opinion. You can speak to people you have never met before.

“

I feel a sense of pleasure in the skills we learnt here. It is very nice to do things for other people and when they say thank you, you feel as if you have been acknowledged.

”



Saida

Saida is 21 and has been coming to BASE for just over two years. She is studying Nursing at university but still comes back to BASE every week because it helps her to unwind. She enjoys the feeling of helping the other young people and is pleased she can still relate to the much younger ones.

She trained to be a sexual health facilitator with Zakiya and they ran the sessions in BASE together. They were trained in ways to make the messages more vivid, for example using glasses with dye and water to show how fluids transfer across contacts. Even though Saida can talk for England she was never able to talk in a group of people she didn't know. Through the training at BASE she has acquired that skill. She gained confidence because, whatever came out of her mouth, she knew she wasn't being judged.

The staff are very supportive. They say you can have a one-to-one talk any time within the opening hours if you feel stressed.

“” The staff listen to you. They don't talk down to you. They give you a chance to speak. They want to hear your views. They take your views into account. Instead of them telling us what we are going to do. Everyone has an input.

Saida went through a rough patch applying for university. The people at BASE gave her productive help instead of telling her what she wanted to hear. She hadn't found that anywhere else.

“” Everyone knows there are barriers, but no-one is afraid to speak their mind. We are allowed to express our views. The young people respect that they can voice their opinions without being judged.

“

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”





Moktar

Moktar is 22 and has had contact with the Octavia Foundation since he was 16. He is in the third year studying Law at University. He is the first person in his family to go to university.

Before they set up BASE the Octavia Foundation let him use the space to run his own youth activities.

“““ They let me have the space for free. It is quite remarkable to allow an 18 year old to have complete control. We were there almost every day. It is only now I am a bit older I can really appreciate what they did for us. Without the Octavia Foundation we wouldn't have been able to do anything.

The location for BASE was important and positive.

“““ What I found is that especially when you are working with young people, when you bring them out of their area, and take them to such a serene environment, it encourages them to challenge the social norms they are used to. I don't think the Octavia Foundation could have chosen a better space.

BASE is different to a youth club. It is more like a cultural hub. It allows the young people to aspire to different things.

“““ In youth clubs you find this strange dynamic, you can escape from all of your problems, but when you leave you have the same problems you had when you went in. You never come out feeling that your life has changed. The difference with BASE is that it is changing young people's lives. It wasn't about fun; it was about elevating your standing in society.

The staff provide the young people with real opportunities that they can really get their hands into. The volunteering provided him with skills that allowed him to get into employment. The research skills he is now using for his degree dissertation he acquired

working on a film for Channel Four, while studying his A Levels. He was part of the team filming Grove Roots and Hidden Herstories; films which won awards at film festivals and were shown in many countries abroad. He also made a film about the London riots, while it was happening.

“““ It was the environment that did it for me. I felt comfortable. It isn't strictly business. You get the idea the people genuinely care for you. I really felt I had somewhere to go to.

Moktar has set up a social enterprise, Aspire to Inspire. Over the summer he delivered a six week job ready programme for ten disadvantaged young people, most with experience of prison. The results were exceptional, seven are now in jobs. Moktar's whole approach is based on the Octavia Foundation's approach to young people, of helping young people solve their problems rather than treating them as a problem. He realised that the young people were very business-minded. They had chosen crime or drug selling because of the money it generated. The course analysed the income and risks of a life of crime and showed the young people that they had other more positive opportunities. It also helped young people to revisit their identity, which was often built around their criminal activity, to release their deeper potential.

Moktar says that BASE has played a large part in his life. He has worked with a large number of youth organisations across London and none of the others stands out in the same way. With the Octavia Foundation there is a special bond.

“““ A lot of my way of thinking came from the Octavia Foundation. There was never a sense of us and them. You could have a degree in philosophy or a criminal record, it didn't matter. We were just-like minded people discussing an issue.

Conclusion



The evaluation gave a consistent and clear picture of the mechanisms for BASE:

Young people reinvigorate their inherent interest in **learning** through:

- creative approaches to learning and learning about the arts and culture
- separating learning from the stress of taking exams
- seeing the practical value of learning and its continuity to work
- learning from each other as well as from staff
- having a variety of subjects and forms of engagement

Young people develop **confidence** through:

- being asked about their preferences and opinions
- interacting in a group with new people
- developing new skills
- being treated as equals by the staff/adults
- being able to talk without being judged
- taking on new roles e.g. as presenters
- learning about their legal rights
- gaining positive feedback or acclaim

Young people raise their **aspirations** through:

- new experiences
- mixing with a wider group of people
- peer support and motivation
- being able to see opportunities arising from their existing interests
- seeing the staff as role models and absorbing some of their attitudes
- hearing presentations from experts e.g. Mind
- taking responsibility for other young people in the group



The **empowering** style of BASE builds young people's motivation and so helps them to reach their potential.

“We are thrilled with the results of this independent evaluation which shows the impact of our unique approach at BASE on young people's lives. But there are also things we can learn from the evaluation. It has shown us that there is even more we can do to make a difference on our doorsteps – we need to offer more sessions at BASE in Pimlico so that more young local people who are currently on the waiting list can benefit. The evaluation has also confirmed the need for a second BASE centre in the neighbouring borough of Kensington and Chelsea where we are aiming to expand to and offer our unique model of services to even more young people from different areas.

But to do this we need your support. If you would like to find out more about our work in local areas or how you could help us with this expansion then please get in touch. Thank you.

Reena Mukherji
Director, Octavia Foundation



It's a community thing... 

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