



Research Report - The Key 2022

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Commissioned by The Key

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Brief

The aim of this research is to investigate the factors that influence progression through the stages of The Key and the impact of participating at higher levels. This research emerged from The Key's need of improving the progress of young people through the stages. This has been done by conducting surveys to participants and facilitators with the intention to evaluate what factors affect young people's motivation, will, and intention to continue progressing through the next stages. This with the intention of providing a proposal with recommendations for improvements based on the results of the research. In addition, an analysis of existing data was done to identify the demographics of organizations and find if this has to influence in young people's progress. The Key wants to understand what they can do to help kids continue being part of the projects and give them the support they need. The Key's main purpose to help young people engage in projects and activities that they are enthusiastic about, while they develop capabilities and skills that will thrive them to become part of a positive change.

Context of The Key

History, Aims and Values

The Key Organization was started 30 years ago by a group of youth workers and academics from Northumbria University in the North East. This has encouraged many people to join and be part of the team, working for the youth sector. Over the years The Key has changed and evolved to become a community with an environment full of ideas and attitudes to help others. Even though it has faced changes, its essence will always remain.

The Key Foundation works as a small charity in the North East that has the aim to inspire young people (aged 11 to 25) to work on projects and express their ideas by being responsible for the community (TheKeyFund, 1992). For 30 years they have supported organizations to help young people realize how capable they are of generating benefits for society and challenging themselves with meaningful goals without distinction of religion, race, and gender (CCEW, 2022). The eventual impact they want to achieve is to help

disadvantaged young people to have personal growth and emotional wellbeing. In effect, enhancing inclusive opportunities that support independent and fulfilling individuals (The Key, 2022). Finally, they enhance self-discovery to prepare for the real world focusing on building steps for work, adulthood, and education (CCEW, 2022).

Their values and aims are focused on the benefit of young people, especially those who need it the most. They focus on three specific values; focus, collaboration, and growth. By being focused they keep on track of their goals and work with a positive attitude driving to success. By believing they will achieve their mission they keep focused on their strategies and aims. The second value is Collaboration, as they work as a team and with partnerships to achieve common objectives. They value other objectives, and value what everyone does, by trusting and helping them. The Key believe that they will achieve more by working as a team, than alone. The third value is Growth, as they are always aiming to be the best they can be. They focus on feedback so they can be resilient, and improve to become better every day. Finally, they question everything in order to find challenges that will help them improve their goals.

Core Activities

The core activities of The Key Foundation are to provide a facilitator to a group of young people, and create a challenge that will help them develop new skills. This will provide opportunities for young people



Figure 1

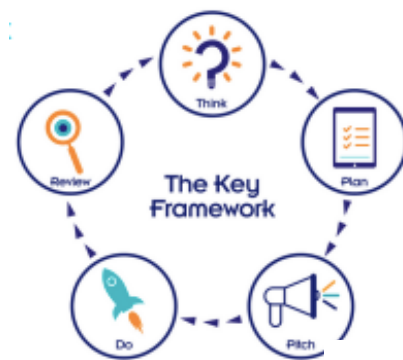


Figure 2

to help them follow the five steps: think, plan (including budget), pitch (to an external panel), do, and review (TheKeyFund, 1992). Examples of projects can be social work or trips. The Key makes young people analyze their development in 12 key skills that are important for their personal growth with a skill wheel

(Figure 1). They reflect on a skill wheel and analyze their progress after each stage. There are 4 stages offered by The Key for young people to participate in, and their funds and challenges increase in each stage, finally developing new skills (The Key, 2022). Generally speaking, “in six years The Key have helped 9,153 young people to develop 2,209 projects, which have benefited 84, 157 members of the community” (CCEW, 2022), and they raise funds for the microgrants awarded (MacDermott, 2022).

Challenges

One factor that affects The Key is the government's lack of financial investment in Youth Services, as it has been cut by 73% since 2010 (NYA, 2021). However, the government has been showing more interest in the Youth Sector in 2022. This means that The Key is expected to be in a good position because they provide structured programs and focus on social action (MacDermott, 2022). In addition, public fundraising is also difficult as people believe that the money can be used to cover indirect costs, and money is not being used effectively. Finally, Covid-19 was negative for many aspects of the economy, but it normalized digital transactions making funding easy and more accessible for charities (Muhammed, 2021).

Future Strategies

The Key has a 3-year plan where they have goals established to improve the organization. This will be focused on diversity, communication, number of people, technology, equality and finally providing a pathway of opportunities for young people. These three themes will be vital for the strategy; people, partners, and product. By saying People, they want to increase the number of people working with The Key and have a major impact on them. When they say partners, they mean to build relations with partnerships that will support them and give the young community what they need. For product, they mean to launch and deliver a new product for The Key framework which is sustainable and increases the audience. These goals will be achieved with the help of these six key enablers (Figure 3):



Figure 3

Methodology

The methods used to conduct this research were three; surveys, interviews, and demographic data analysis. For the survey, we decided to approach young people and facilitators with the intention of getting different perspectives that will give us a wide range of views. However, the responses were limited as we only had 19 for young people, and 10 for facilitators. Young people that responded were mostly the ones that have progressed through stages, so this made the results biased. By not having responses from kids that did not progress, the analysis of how to give recommendations can not be maximized.

The tool used for this research was google forms as they are useful for creating surveys and give a range of option that were helpful for this kind of research. The tools used were multiple choice and list written responses. These two tools were helpful to make the survey efficient and easier for the audience, and having clear responses.

When focusing on the demographic data analysis, I tried to find patterns between % of deprivation, type of organizations (schools, community groups, uniformed organization, sports, and arts), size of membership, number of individuals, and how long they have been a The Key member. After understanding the data and reflecting on it, I could not find any connections or patterns that could be a factor that affected young people progressing through stages.

Primary Research : Summary and key points of findings

Summary of surveys: Young People (Appendix 2)

- The Key Project had a high rating overall, as most of the students said it was an excellent experience as (Figure 4 shows the results of the question)
 - They improved their skills by managing the project and being independent in working as a team.
 - They had fun in the whole process of the project as they built new friendships and enjoyed their autonomy.
 - They had an amazing experience as The Key were supportive and helped them throughout the process, guided them, and motivated them.

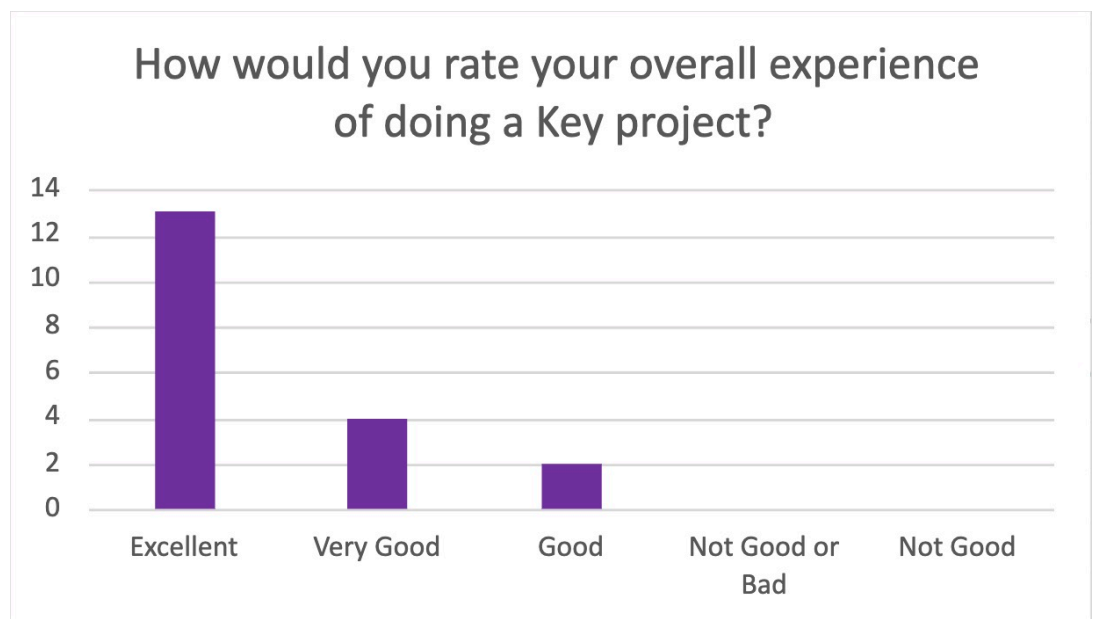


Figure 4

- Young people's suggestions for improvements
 - Shorter projects so they do not lose motivation

- More information about the skills wheel so they can have better reflections of their progress
- Guidance with more ideas for projects
- Financial management help
- Most young people said that friends and group members were the most influential people that encouraged their progress through stages. No one said family is influential in their progress in The Key.
- Difficulties they faced when doing their projects are
 - Keeping the group together
 - Calculating costs
 - Evaluation of skills
- Reasons for progressing through stages (Figure 5 shows the results of the question)
 - Team members and team work (friends)
 - Prove themselves that they can contribute to society and do things independently
 - The Key Staff motivation
 - Learning new things and having new experiences

What was the main reason you progressed to the next stage?

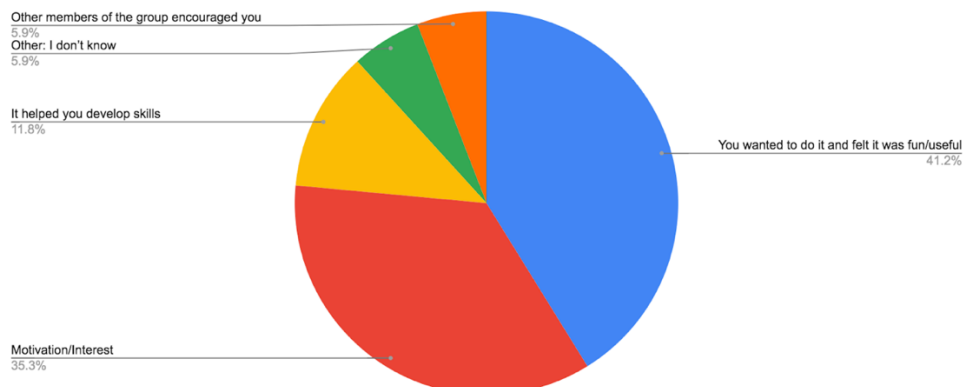


Figure 5

Summary of surveys: Facilitators (Appendix 3)

- Main reason for motivation when progressing through stages
 - Being independent and having the control of an idea.
 - Having the power to try new things and have experiences with friends.
 - Access to a budget and managing finances.
 - Looks good in the CV/ Future opportunities
 - Being rewarded after the project
- Limitations and challenges for young people
 - Projects taking too long
 - Disagreements in the process and members instability
 - Covid 19
 - Lack of motivation and low self steam.
- How can The Key Team help kids to progress through stages
 - Giving feedback so they can be more clear in their goals .
 - Rewards and prizes for the work they do.
 - Find ways of letting new kids join in all stages.
 - In general, most say The Key does a good job with supporting young people.
- What should The Key change to incentive young people to progress through stages
 - More independence
 - Let them do half of the project with community benefit, in any of the stages
 - Changing the progressions pages in each stage
 - Have faith in facilitators
 - Show it had helped other young people

Secondary research

Rewards and motivations for young people

Article: 'Adolescent development of the reward system'

By: Adriana Galvan

The academic article by Adriana Galvan talks about how adolescence is a period of development that can be characterized by reward-seeking behaviour. This means that

teenagers have different behaviour when they have reward processing as they are motivated and learn based on what they will get after that. This can be because they want to be seen as an adult, so they look forward on what is coming next and they have an ambition for their reward. She mentions that “As extensive animal and human work has identified the dopamine-rich striatum as the seat of reward sensitivity in the brain” (Galvan,2010), with the intention to explain how to reward increases dopamine has a huge effect on teenagers' brains. Children and teenagers are largely driven by rewards, it can be novel, social, or monetary (Galvan, 2010). This means that one of the main motivation strategies for children and teenagers is rewards.

Finance sessions for children HSBC bank

- HSBC has a programme focused on teaching kids about money. They care about the importance of kids understanding the value of money and where it comes from (HSBC, 2022)
- The websites offer different tools to help young people learn about making financial decisions and be able to manage money (HSBC, 2022)
- Managing money, learning about needs and wants, value for money, and planning for the future. (HSBC, 2022).
- Money Heroes
 - Resources for parents and teachers to teach financial education to young children (HSBC, 2022)
- HSBC bank offer financial educational sessions for schools, youth groups and any organisation.
 - “Please send this to educationteam@hsbc.com
 - name of school / college / university / organisation
 - address of school / college / university / organisation
 - email address of school / college / university / organisation

- contact at the school / college / university / organisation
- your relationship to the school / college / university / organisation
- if you'd like digital classes or for an HSBC UK learning lead to attend in person" (HSBC, 2022)

Demographics Data of organisations (Appendix 1)

First I will focus on the demographics data analysis of all the groups of young people that have been part of The Key. The intention of this analysis was to find patterns that could help the proposal of my research. Unfortunately, there were no patterns at all. The size of the groups changes, but their progress is not connected to the number of individuals. Then, I searched for the percentage of deprivation for each organization's postcode using the government website national statistics 'Indices of deprivation 2015 and 2019'. We thought their economic status would be a reason that could affect their progress through stages, but a pattern was not found. Third, the number of years they have been members of The Key, had nothing to do with how they did in progressing through stages. Finally, the type of organisation varies in who progressed and not. I can conclude that by focusing on the demographics, there is no proposal to make, as there are no patterns that can give me information for a recommendation.

*(Data: Appendix 1)

Interviews

-Case Study young people: No One Knows (No appendix, just notes)

- They said what they most enjoyed of the projects was to build strong relationships with their teammates and learn to work as a team.
- Also, they talked about how their confidence improved as they were aware of their capacity after completing the projects, and developing new skills.
- They were really enthusiastic when talking about their new project, as they were planning to make a camping trip in the third stage for other young people in their school.

- They mentioned that they were challenged with their first trip, as they did not know much what to do.
- Also, they struggled with money management, but at the same time enjoyed having the freedom to do something with a budget.
- Finally they said that what they really struggle with is that groups can be unstable, affecting their progress.
- No appendix as the recording was not clear, but this summary is based on notes I took during the interview

-Case Study facilitator: Helen Cheape (Appendix 4)

- School Teacher and facilitator in Gosforth East Middle School
- Helen says that the group 'No One Knows' had a massive growth in their skills as she saw how their confidence and independence improved. They learned how to do things on their own, and understand how to do it.
- She says The Key brings lots of benefits to kids, as they work as a team and learn about friendship
- Helen said that the projects they do are totally done by them, so they struggle with some things but that is why they learned a lot.
- She says that more schools and organizations should be members of The Key, as she can say first hand that it is beneficial for young people as they grow as human beings and mature a lot. They learn skills that they would never learn in their lessons.
- Helen says that The Key projects prepare kids for university and jobs as they are able to talk about their strengths and weaknesses as if they are in a real interview, as they have reflected on it on the skill wheel.
- The Key helps kids that have issues at home or in school to get out of that and find interest in something with more value, helping them look forward to something apart from their problems.

Limitations of the Research

After revising and analyzing the primary and secondary research done, it can be said that there are some limitations of the research that have to be considered when reading the proposal. First, further research would be needed as the young people that responded were all successful in progressing through stages, or were starting a new stage. This limits the research as to make recommendations I would need more results from young people that are no longer members, or that failed to finish stages. If this audience would be reached, the proposal would be more complete, as I would have a wider range of experiences and perspectives about The Key. However, I propose to continue doing research to members or non-members of The Key. This will be helpful so they can have better feedback from groups that did not progress or failed to finish their projects, and implement changes based on that.

Proposal/ Recommendations

The aim of this report is to create a proposal after analyzing and evaluating the research presented. Surveys, interviews, and demographic data have helped me develop 3 proposals that will help The Key make positive changes for young people's progress through stages, considering the limitations of the research.

Research says that as young people are in the process of learning and developing an identity, a reward after finishing a task can help them build up motivation and confidence (Galvan, 2010). Focusing on the interview and surveys, many kids said that what motivated them was the reward after finishing any stage. Combining these two ideas, the proposal is to give a certificate after finishing stage 1 and 2, based on an evaluation done by the facilitator where she/he can identify what skill they developed the most. In addition other members will vote in what skill had been developed by the other members, and what skill describe them during that stage. Based on facilitators and other members opinion, the individual will get his certificate. By giving them a more specific reward, young people will be more conscious in what they improved and have motivation to focus on other skills and continue improving on that one. In young people's psychology it is really important to reward them after doing

something right, as subconsciously this creates motivation and confidence. The skill chosen by the facilitator can be any of the skills on the skill wheel and can be a skill that kids were weak or strong at the beginning of the project. This will be more important and motivational for kids if The Key emphasize how important this certificate can look in their CV and how they can talk about this in their university and job interview.

Focusing on Stage 3 and 4, I propose that The Key creates a specific name (title) for young people that finished 4 stages. This means young people can use that as reference for their CV and job interviews, giving more importance to the completion of the 4 stages. In addition The Key can write rereferences for their CV and job applications based on their performance so they can use that as evidence for their future. By having 'title' of completing 4 stages, an organization reference and being aware of the importance of that, they will have the motivation to finish the 4 stages. Also because normally they are teenagers in stage 4, so they will be more aware of the importance of CV and interviews. I think is really important that The Key and facilitators make young people aware of the importance of gaining experiences outside of schools, how this will help them develop skills and be aware of their strength and weaknesses.

One of the main issues faced by young children when doing their projects was to manage the money, as for most of them this was the first time that they were in charge of money. After analysing the results and making some research I propose The Key to plan workshops for young people before starting Stage 1, where they can learn and ask questions about managing finances. HSBC bank run financial education sessions where kids can learn about the importance of money, how to manage it, and what to do with it. The approach of this sessions is for young people with the intention of helping them develop understanding in an important topic like money, that is important for them to know before startin their projects, and for anything related to money. In effect, The Key could receive training from them, or make them directly do every session for the specific group before they start a project. Finally this will make kids start with more motivation and more on track of how to do their projects. After that, they will have the independence and authority to manage their project, but it is important for kids to learn about simple finances. Please find the link in HSBC website were you can find the information about the sessions, and how to contact them.

HSBC link: <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/financial-education/first-steps/>

The third proposal is focused on how young people talked about how one of the major challenges is how the team members leave the group or are no longer available to participate. This becomes an issue because their plan involved all of them, and if one leaves they need to change all the plan. For this issue in progressing through stages, I thought groups that lose one of their members can open positions for other kids to become part of the group even though they have not done first stages. They would need to do like a 'panel', but for the other group members in stage 3 or 4. This will consist of the 'new member' creating a project proposal and presenting it to the other members of the group. They will need it to approved, and see if he is compatible with the group. If not, he will find a group to start from stage 1 with other members. This is an important proposal because it is one of the main reasons young people lose their motivation. It is really important for them to have a complete team that they can work with, especially in final stages where they need more support.

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Q2. How would you rate your overall experience of doing a Key Project?

- Excellent - 13
- Very Good - 4
- Good - 2
- Not Good or Bad - 0
- Not Good - 0

Q3. Please give up to 3 reasons to your previous answer

- Well organised, able to improve my skills, learn new things
- We get food, we have lots of things to do
- Good experience, learn new skills
- I am a fast typer, a good thinker, good at making ideas
- Staff are always there to help, we all work as a team, its great fun
- Educative, creative, fun
- They're nice
- It's nice
- I enjoyed myself, felt helped, provision was great
- Gave us opportunity to have amazing trips, brought us together as a group, allowing us to do things in community moving forward
- They were fun; they're not strict, they helped us move forward with the launch event

- Its fun, helps with team building, gives you lots of opportunities
- I benefitted from it, it improved my mental strength, helped my bond with the others
- It's a fun experience, you make a lot of friends
- It improves your friendships with others in our group, it allows you to learn how to work with people even if you're not friends with them, you develop new skills
- It lets you get closer to peers in your group, the trips that you do get you out of school, spending time working with your peers is amazing
- Useful advice, supportive team, skill development
- Really generous and supporting, gave useful tips, very invested within the youth by providing skills like teamwork

Q4. How do you think your experience of doing a Key project could be improved?

- Doing the projects over a shorter period of time
- To know more about the skills wheels
- Can't be improved
- By thinking of better ideas
- We could have a session dedicated to the key
- Advice of what to do for the next project
- I don't know/ nothing - 6
- Skills wheel > couldn't remember my last wheel so hard to track progress, more interaction with key staff - had a session with Jack and Leah which was so helpful, wish we had had more
- I think the Key should come more often (Jack and Leah)

- It was perfect
- I could try to help a bit more with the prices
- When we decide where we are going at the start of the project

Q5. Did you do more than one Key Project/ Stage?

- Yes - 16
- No - 2

Q6. What was the main reason you did not progress to the next stage?

- In the process of progressing to the next stage - 2

Q7. What was the main reason you progressed to the next stage?

- You wanted to do it and it was fun/useful - 7
- Motivation/ interest - 7
- It helped you develop skills - 3
- Other members of the group encouraged you - 1
- The Key Facilitator/Staff encouraged you - 0
- Other

Q8. How influential was the Key Facilitator/ staff member in getting you to progress to the next stage of The Key?

- Very influential/ wouldn't have done it otherwise - 7
- Influential, but I would have probably chosen to do it anyway - 12
- They didn't influence me one way or the other, I chose to do it - 0
- Not at all, they didn't influence or encourage me at all - 0
- Other - 0

Q9. Who were the most influential people that encouraged you to progress to the next stage?

- Myself - 4
- Facilitator/ Staff member - 5
- Friends/ Group members - 12
- Teacher - 0
- Family - 0
- Other - 0

Q10. List up to 3 things you faced that were difficult when completing your Key project.

- Thinking of ideas, getting everyone to work together to time frames, doing the evaluation
- Creating the powerpoint, doing the evaluation

- Keeping my group together, making sure everyone participates
- Nothing
- Groups different opinions, covid, motivation
- I think everything was quite easy
- Doing things indoors, concentrating, listening
- In the first project we argued over trips, we couldn't figure out the right prices at first, we did not know each other as well as we do now
- Argued a lot in the first project, finding prices, we didn't know people as well as we do now
- Working with everyone, deciding on a place to go, finding costs
- Getting to know your group, finding a similarity with the others, calculating the costs
- Communication, time management, efficiency
- Communication, time management, efficiency

Q11. If you did not progress to the next stage, what were the reasons that stopped you from continuing?

- Loss of interest
- Lazy
- I did progress

Q12. If you progressed to the next stage or more, list those factors that motivated you to continue progressing?

- Enjoyed it, wanting to do more projects
- Team members
- It was useful and showed younger people they could be part of a project
- The staff, teammates and myself
- Staff members, group members
- Community work, They Key staff (Jack and Leah) helped with motivation
- I enjoy coming to the meetings
- You get a lot of new experiences
- It was intriguing and it seemed fun so I kept doing it
- Fun, interesting
- Friends/ teachers

Q13. Do you think you learn anything about yourself from completing the skills wheel?

- Yes - 14
- No - 2
- No - lost it so couldn't track progress

Q14. Did it help you to track your progress through your Key project?

- Yes - 12
- No - 5

Q15. Would you have liked some sort of feedback or support around filling in the Skills Wheel?

- Yes - 10
- No - 8

Q16. What sort of feedback or support would have been helpful (Tick all that apply)

- Written hints about how to complete and think about skills - 5
- Support from your Key facilitator to look at your skills - 2
- Help to improve the skills you were least confident in - 12
- Discussion with someone about what you do well or how to improve - 4

Q17. When filling out the skills wheel, would you have been willing to give your 'top tips'/ advice on how to develop the skills you rate yourself the highest on in order to help other young people get better at them?

- Yes - 17
- No – 1

-Appendix 3: Survey Facilitators with results

Q1. What are 3 Factors that keep young people motivated with Key projects?

- The outcome/trips, having full control of an idea and being with their friends
- The end result, seeing the progress, excitement of planning their own project
- 1 - Being able to try new things, 2 - Access to funds they otherwise wouldn't be able to use, 3 - The ability to assess their own skills
- Good leadership, momentum, clear objectives
- Completing trips, they want to do (reward at the end), developing new skills, being a part of a project that they can get stuck into weekly
- Experience, getting the money to deliver projects, looks good on CV
- 1 - The chance to embrace their ideas, 2 - The feeling of having responsibilities and control of their own projects, 3 - Moving through the stages
- Possibly learning new skills, being rewarded after the project, building rapport with other young people
- Future opportunities, rewards, great role models

Q2. What are 3 limitations or challenges you find with young people progressing?

- Young people fall out, priorities change, disagreements and the process takes too long
- Time, concentrating levels, commitment
- 1 - Time: over the last couple of years, it's been difficult to run Key groups online, 2 - groups changing and no longer working together, 3 - Young people not being allowed in more than one Key group
- Encouragement, lack of enthusiasm and if they have done previous stages, it becomes repetitive.

- Time, increasing work needed as progress which in many ways is fair enough,
- 1 - Changes in friendships/relationships, 2 - Covid, 3 - Limitations of school environment
- Being lazy, not wanting to try new things and not having a good attitude to thrive
- Lack of motivation, poor self-esteem, can't visualise future
- "The key can get lost amongst other activities" if a group is busy with another project
- Groups being fluid and changing, friends fall out then group numbers may reduce, the 2 young people left can't progress without another friend first completing the other stages
- Time to commit to the process (facilitator and young person)

Q3. What 3 factors encourage young people to progress to more stages?

- Seeing the budget increase, involving and benefiting more people, the status of completing all 4 stages
- Looking at the bigger projects, gives them responsibility for planning larger projects which makes them feel they have a larger role to play in the youth club, the end results
- Being able to do something 'bigger'
- Feedback, meaningful involvement, ownership
- Bigger pots of money, involving the community in stage 3, decision making
- Getting money for project, CV value, sense of achievement
- 1 - the amount of money, 2 - the ability to see their ideas become a reality, 3 - the opportunity to gain new skills
- It provides opportunities, helps them with self-belief, helps them set goals for the future
- Rewards, discussing the future, verbal encouragement from elders and peers
- Inspiration for future projects

- An understanding of the process, time commitment etc
- Balancing the 'work' with fun - i.e. let's write half of the budget then we will play pool

Q4. Do you think the feedback on their skills development would have been beneficial for the participants after they had completed their Key project?

- Yes - 9
- No - 1

Q5. Would you be willing to give young people feedback on their skills development?

- Yes - 9
- No - 1

Q6. What sort of feedback would be the most beneficial in your opinion? [Tick all that apply]

- Written - 5
- Verbal - 7
- Given by other group members - 6
- What they did well - 8
- What they could improve on - 8

Q7. What could The Key Team do to support you to motivate young people to progress through The Key stages?

- Provide the feedback mentioned above so we can share it and set goals for progression at the next stage
- They give so much support already
- The new packs have been great, not sure young people need anymore
- Come along, meet the young people and encourage. Praise them for the work they have done
- I think they are supportive, have always listened when I've talked to them; but also don't try to put a square peg in a round hole
- They do a great job already
- Continue to give young people more opportunities with rewarding opportunities after a project
- Maybe look at fluidity in groups, i.e. if the majority of the group have completed previous stages can another young person come on board who hasn't yet completed other stages

Q8. What could The Key change about how the Key works to make it more likely that young people will want to progress and make you more inclined to encourage them to do so?

- Bring together all of the elements of a project and put them in one place so young people can access everything and be in control making it really youth led
- Young people to input their skills wheels online themselves and have the wheels side by side to show progress

- Be more flexible on the community benefit in stage 3/4. My groups ALWAYS have community benefit at stages 1 and 2, it would be nice to occasionally to be able to use a stage 3 or 4 for a residential
- Make the progressions pages different, young people are less encouraged because it's the same process for all 4 stages, it's boring
- Have faith in facilitators, don't make it too difficult to get through stages
- Make some more fun activities so young people don't feel like its schoolwork and a fun activity with friends
- Show how it's helped other young people

As above [fluidity in groups answer to Q7]

-Appendix 4: Interview

Interview with Helen Cheape - History and RE teacher at Gosforth East Middle School; Key Facilitator

Interviewed by Jess Allwright

JA: How would you describe The Key?

HC: It has different benefits for different people. They might go on lots of trips, but they've never booked a train ticket, they don't know how much stuff costs.

JA: As a facilitator,

HC: They have improved massively. You just watched the group No One Knows who have massively grown in confidence and they now have the ability to know they can do something, and do something quite big. To kids that haven't got opportunities to do stuff outside of school that we give them those opportunities. They're working together, to increase their confidence. It just has massive, massive benefits. The negotiation skills we take for granted as adults, we have to teach them, and they learn from that. They really come on from learning those teamwork skills, those negotiation skills which as adults they might come more naturally.

JA: So in terms of the other programmes that could be available to the young people, what makes The Key different?

HC: It allows the pupils to be independent, and to be in charge of what they do. It's very much their trips. They do everything, they do everything from budgeting everything, to writing the parental permission letters, kit lists. We get them to do everything, whereas in school a lot of it tends to be very teacher led. The Key is very pupil led.

JA: What would you say to other people considering becoming Key facilitators?

HC: I don't understand why more schools don't do it if I'm honest. Even just mathematically, the return is massive. My membership is £650 for 15 projects, so even if they all just did their stage one projects, as school budgets are so tight, this gives us the money to let us do the things that sometimes school budgets don't let us do.

JA: What is your favourite thing about watching the group members grow throughout their stages?

HC: Their confidence, their ability to work together and to come back from a knock. They've had issues within the group, with fallings out etc. but they've come back from it, solved things and put them right. Just seeing them be independent and mature. They've grown into young men; they started as little lads of 11, and now they are mature and responsible young men.

JA: Do you think that their experience with the Key helps prepare them for the transition from middle school to high school?

HC: Oh definitely. Definitely. When we look at careers in school, the Key links to loads of different things. You watch the kids in the panels, and it's like watching adults in interview. The questions that you ask in panel, are the questions that you trip up on as an adult in interview. What are your weaknesses? What are your strengths? Tell me something you did well. What do you need to work on? Those are the questions that are hard as a forty-odd year old in an interview, so it is great that they are getting the practice as 12 year olds.

JA: Do you think it helps them if say they wanted to go out and get a job, a weekend job for example?

HC: Yeah definitely. They've planned stuff, organised stuff, worked together as a team. It's a lot of skills that employers are asking for. They're the skills that are harder to get through school, just sitting in a lesson sometimes.

JA: Out of No One Knows, or another group you've worked with, is there anyone that stands out?

HC: One of the lads in No One Knows, he has ADHD, he's had a very difficult year. This year could have been about him being excluded from school, getting into trouble, having

internal exclusions or detentions. He has got into bits of bother, it's not been about that. It's been about his successes in the Key and it's given him something positive in what might have been a very very difficult year for him. It's given him something positive to cling onto. There is another girl in a different group who also needs a mention. We took her away to Keswick last week. She has a fairly rubbish home life, and she smiled for two days. You can't buy that.

JA: It's so nice to hear the stories it actually makes

HC: I know I get slightly emotional talking about it.

JA: I think when you actually talk about the difference that it has made to their lives its nice to see.

JA: What is your favourite part of The Key?

HC: I love taking them out if I'm honest. I'm always well known as the trip advisor at school. I love taking them out on their trips, especially in smaller groups. As a teacher you take them on trips in a group of 30, and you are just counting heads. Whereas in the smaller groups, its just lovely. The relationships can build. I's just watching them grow and develop; having confidence and experiencing new things.