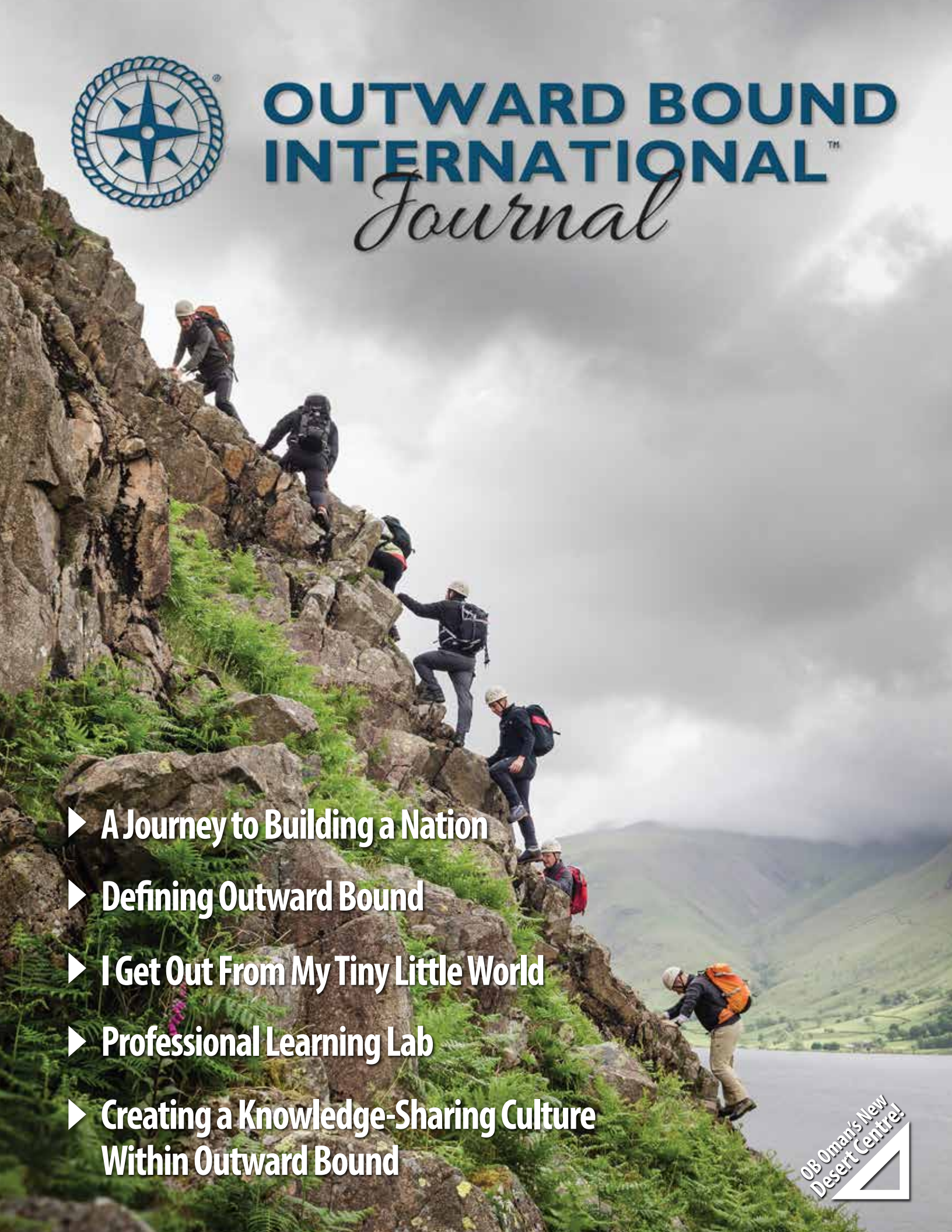




# OUTWARD BOUND INTERNATIONAL™ *Journal*

- 
- ▶ A Journey to Building a Nation
  - ▶ Defining Outward Bound
  - ▶ I Get Out From My Tiny Little World
  - ▶ Professional Learning Lab
  - ▶ Creating a Knowledge-Sharing Culture Within Outward Bound

OB Oman's New  
Desert Centre!



**THERE IS  
MORE IN YOU  
THAN YOU THINK**



**OUTWARD BOUND  
INDONESIA™**

# From the Editor



The words *Plus est en vous*, as the story is told, were discovered inscribed on the wall of a Belgian church in the 1930s by Kurt Hahn, the pioneering schoolmaster and co-founder of Outward Bound. Translated from French they mean, "There is more in you." The aphorism so captivated Hahn and his sense of educational purpose that it was adopted

as the motto for Gordonstoun, his independent school in Scotland. Outward Bound's motto, "To serve to strive and not to yield," similarly counsels that great opportunity awaits those who can push beyond the self-boundedness of their lives. In fact, an animating purpose of Outward Bound is to create the conditions through which people can discover and sustain their positive capacities.

In this issue of OBI Journal, readers will find examples of Outward Bound schools investing in their own positive capacities across a range of initiatives, from a major construction project (see page 40 for OB Oman's newly inaugurated Desert Centre) to a five-million dollar grant that intends to enable the development of good character in young people through supporting effective practice among OB instructors and program staff (see OB USA's Outward Bound Professional Learning Lab on page 21). And then there is the innovative "Unity in Diversity" program that places Outward Bound learning methods at the service of a national unifying value and where learning about collaboration and the value of meaningful teamwork translates to high school students better prepared to become agents of peace in their communities (see OB Indonesia's A Journey to Building a Nation on page 11). Capacity is also built through the careful process of research, whether investigating the relationship between rucksack weight and its impact on the overall expedition experience for participants (see page 30 for OB UK's related investigation) or OB USA's efforts to better understand the therapeutic value of Outward Bound for military veterans (page 50).

And some of OBI's own efforts toward capacity-building are revealed on page 12, where the concept of a knowledge-sharing culture is discussed and then examined in the context of our new Global Portal sharing platform, and on page 44 where OBI Executive Director Iain Peter offers highlights from the 2016 OBI World Conference that was hosted by North Carolina Outward Bound School in November 2017.

Lastly, we acknowledge 50th anniversaries for North Carolina Outward Bound School and Outward Bound Singapore. Both organizations are robust and thriving after a half-century of creating the conditions through which tens of thousands of their participants have learned that "*plus* really is *en vous*." Read about their unique stories on pages 8 and 24, respectively.

## EDITOR IN CHIEF

Rob Chatfield

## CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Iain Peter

## PHOTO, ART AND DESIGN

Paper Plane Productions

## COPY EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Anassa Rhenisch, Erin Moore

## CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Front Cover photo: (Long Crag, Middle Fell, Lake District, United Kingdom) The Outward Bound Trust

Back Cover photo: (Big Sand Dunes, Oman) Phil Weymouth Photography.

Contents page (clockwise from top right): OB Singapore; OB Hong Kong; Everst/123rf.com; OB Oman; OB USA; OB Germany; OB Hong Kong; OB Czech Republic; OB Hong Kong; OBI; OB North Carolina; OB North Carolina.

The Outward Bound Trust (p. 4); OB North Carolina (pp.6-10, 13, bottom left & upper right, 20, 63); OB Indonesia (p. 11); OB Hong Kong (pp. 13, lower right, 14, 15, 16, 17, 26-29); OB Czech Republic (pp. 18-19); OB USA (pp. 21-23, 48-50); OB Singapore (pp. 24, 37, 38, 53-54); Everst/123rf.com (p. 31); Grzegorz Japol/123rf.com (p. 32); Dolgachov/123rf.com (p. 35); Maridav/123rf.com (p. 36); Ann Dudko/123rf.com (p. 37); OB Oman (pp. 40-43, 65-66); OB Germany (pp. 44-46, center right, 51-52); Will Ripley (p. 46, center left); Lindsay Ward (p. 46, center bottom); NOLS (pp. 55-56- Kirk Rasmussen); OB UK Trust (p. 57); Iain Peter (pp. 58-59); Givaga/123rf.com (p. 60); Project REFLECT (pp. 61-62); Rob Chatfield (p. 67, top left); OB UAE (p. 69).

## CORPORATE OFFICE

85 Grampian Road

Aviemore PH22 1RH

United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)1479 812544

info@outwardbound.net

## OUTWARD BOUND INTERNATIONAL

Mary Thomson CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Iain Peter EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

© 2017 Outward Bound International Journal  
(ISSN 2161-8860 (print), ISSN 2161-8879 (online))  
is published annually by Outward Bound International.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of Outward Bound International®

**Copyrighted material in OBI Journal, 2017 Edition was reproduced from the following periodicals and sources:**

The photos (p. 31, 35-37, and 60) are used with permission of Paper Plane Productions 2017.



# C O N T R I B U T O R S



## Aaron Funnell

*Adaptive Journeys: Inclusive Sea Kayak Expeditions at OBHK*

Aaron Funnell is Head of Operations at Outward Bound Hong Kong. He first joined Outward Bound in Australia in 1997 and has been in Hong Kong since 2004. He also serves as a member of the Association for Experiential Education Accreditation Council and convened the first International Sea Kayaking Educators Symposium in collaboration with Monash University. In 2018 he will be taking up the role of Executive Director at Outward Bound Vietnam.



## Kateřina Klímová

*Outward Bound Czech Republic's Inventive INTERTOUCH Project*

Kateřina is a fully qualified Czech attorney and transactional/mergers and acquisitions lawyer who has spent over a decade working for international law firms and a private investment group. Over the course of her studies, Kateřina spent a year in the UK (Cardiff University Law School) and a year in the US (University of Michigan Law School). Volunteering for OB Czech Republic and being a member of the INTERTOUCH 2017 Team was a part of Kateřina's sabbatical during which she explored new experiences outside her traditional work environment. She loves being outdoors and being active.



## Wendy Kusumowidagdo

*A Journey to Building a Nation*

Wendy Kusumowidagdo has served Outward Bound Indonesia for ten years and is currently the Executive Director. She initiated the "Ekspedisi Bhinneka Tunggal Ika bagi Tunas Bangsa" project, a nation-wide program in peace-building for youth, in 2017. Her hope is for Indonesian youth to practice Indonesia's core principles of diversity and unity and be the ambassadors of peace.



## Dirk De Vilder

*Project REFLECT*

Dirk De Vilder worked for several youth and welfare organisations and as a freelance trainer for the European Union and international NGOs, before joining Outward Bound Belgium in 2000. Dirk is one of the founders of Youth Express Network and the co-founder of Via Experientia. He is a passionate trail runner and active in many cultural organisations in his village.



## Bert Vandenbussche

*Project REFLECT*

Bert Vandenbussche holds a Ph.D. in visual arts and has also studied social and cultural anthropology. He is a freelance trainer who works with several organisations, and began working with Outward Bound Belgium after participating in Via Experientia. He is also a teacher and senior researcher at the LUCA School of Arts in Gent. Bert was one of the coordinators of Project REFLECT.



## Candy Yan

*Adaptive Journeys: Inclusive Sea Kayak Expeditions at OBHK*

Inclusive Sea Kayak Expeditions at Outward Bound Hong Kong Candy Yan is a Senior Marketing and Web Officer at Outward Bound Hong Kong. She is also an Outward Bound photographer whose passion in capturing exciting moments and Hong Kong landscapes is evident and whose shots can be seen on social media platforms. Candy's greatest strengths are her creativity and passion for the environment. She strives every day to pursue her passions, achieve excellence, and learn something new about this world and herself.



## Flora Barton

*Creating a Knowledge-Sharing Culture Within Outward Bound*

Flora is Outward Bound International's Global Portal Manager and she also works for NHS Highland in the field of Technology Enabled Care. She spent her early years running wild at Outward Bound Eskdale in the UK and has walked, climbed, sailed, and skied in Scotland and Europe. She has taught music and English in Vienna and now holds a Masters in Information and Library Studies from Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. She is interested in knowledge management, libraries in the digital age, learning in the outdoors, and education through gaming.



## Mark Evans

*Desert Centre*

Mark Evans ([www.markevans.global](http://www.markevans.global)) is the Executive Director of Outward Bound Oman, the first Outward Bound school in the Arab world. He is Patron of the Andrew Croft Memorial Fund ([www.acmf.org.uk](http://www.acmf.org.uk)), and the founder of Connecting Cultures, an educational initiative endorsed by UNESCO that uses the desert wilderness to bring young people together on journeys of intercultural dialogue.

Evans has been travelling in wilderness environments for 38 years, and has, among other things, spent an entire year in small tents on Svalbard, which included four months of total darkness; crossed Greenland in 26 days by parachute and ski, on the trail of Nansen; and kayaked solo the entire 1,700-kilometre coastline of Oman. He is the author of four books. In 2002 he was named a Pioneer of the Nation at Buckingham Palace for his services to the field of youth exploration, and in 2012 was awarded the MBE for his work using expeditions to promote Intercultural Dialogue. In 2016, with Outward Bound Oman colleague Mohamed Al Zadjali, he completed a 49 day, 1,300km crossing of the largest sand desert on earth, the Rub Al Khali, the first time the journey had been attempted in 85 years.



## Nick Dawson

*Researching Rucksack Weight on Expedition*

Nick first came to Outward Bound Aberdovey as a student in 1980. Three years later he returned, initially to work for the summer—and stayed for 35 years! He has held a number of different roles with Outward Bound over the years and is currently a Learning and Adventure Manager at the Aberdovey Centre. Nick has a range of technical outdoor qualifications with higher level ones being on the water in boats of various types. In his own time he enjoys sailing and biking, both on and off road.



# C O N T E N T S

## 6- Outward Bound With My Son

*By North Carolina OB Alumnus  
Samuel Kim, Family Course, 2017*

## 8- 50 Years Strong

*North Carolina Outward Bound School  
is "Outward Bound"  
By OB North Carolina*

## 11- A Journey to Building a Nation

*By Wendy Kusumowidagdo*

## 12- Creating a Knowledge-Sharing Culture Within Outward Bound

*By Flora Barton*

## 14- I Get Out From My Tiny Little World

*By Outward Bound Hong Kong*

## 18- InterTouch

*Outward Bound Czech Republic's  
Inventive Project*

## 20- Instructing My First Course

*By alumna and prior North Carolina OB  
Instructor, Deb Caughron, 1983*

## 21- Professional Learning Lab

*By Outward Bound USA*

## 24- Outward Bound Singapore's 50th Anniversary Homecoming

## 25- Gear

*Black Diamond Vision Harness,  
Handpresso Wild Hybrid*

## 26- Adaptive Journeys

*Inclusive Sea Kayak Expeditions at OBHK  
By Candy Yan and Aaron Funnell*

## 30- Researching Rucksack Weight on Expedition

*By Nick Dawson*

## 38- Let Go and Move On

*An Outward Bound Singapore Leadership  
and Service Award Story  
By OB Singapore*

## 40- Desert Centre

*Outward Bound Oman opens its first  
Centre for Outdoor Learning  
By Mark Evans*

## 44- OBI World Conference 2016

*North Carolina, USA  
By Iain Peter*

## 48- Research: The Therapeutic Impact of Outward Bound for Veterans

*By David Scheinfeld and Chad Spangler*

## 51- Stand Up Paddle Boarding

*With Outward Bound Germany  
By OB Germany*

## 53- The Only Mountain Worth Climbing

*Outward Bound Singapore's Outdoor  
Education Conference 2017  
By OB Singapore*

## 55- Wilderness Risk Management Conference

## 57- Defining Outward Bound

*By Iain Peter*

## 60- Outward Bound Belgium's Project REFLECT

*by Dirk De Vilder and Bert Vandenbussche*

## 63- Taking a Look Back at 2016

*by North Carolina OB School*

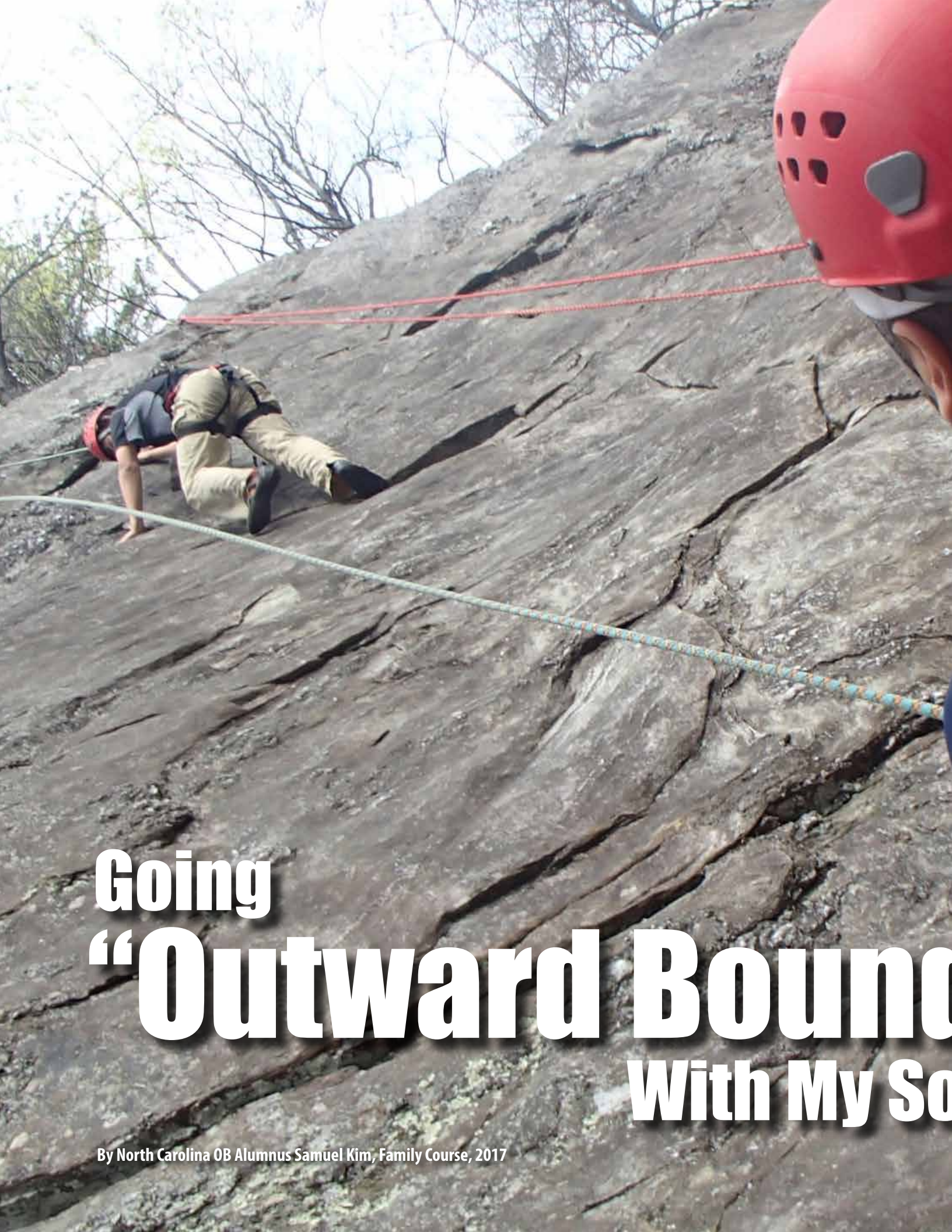
## 64- Book Review

*Holding the Space  
Crossing the Empty Quarter*

## 65- 2016 Annual Report







# Going “Outward Bound” With My Son

By North Carolina OB Alumnus Samuel Kim, Family Course, 2017





“Close your eyes,” said Nora, our instructor. “Now, I want you to think about why you selected this course and what you experienced and learned since Wednesday.”

Sitting in a circle with others in the woods of North Carolina, my thoughts are interrupted by my body, which is complaining of the unexpected exertions and demands made over the last four days. Yet somehow, my mind accepts the aches and pains as deeply satisfying.

I had signed up for the course for my son, who suffers from social anxiety. While he made progress through counseling, I wanted him to learn that he is more capable, more resilient, and stronger than he believes. A smile comes over my face when I first tell him about the trip. “What are we doing?” he asks. That question is followed by, “Will I have access to the net?”

I didn’t blame him. The kid has never known a world without Google. While I am a digital immigrant, he was born into this connected world. Broadband, Youtube, and Facebook were his birthrights. It is oddly paradoxical that while he is so connected online, he is awkward around people in general and suffers from social anxiety.

After meeting everyone at the Asheville airport and during the bus ride to the camp, my son was quiet. To an outsider, he seemed to be busy checking his phone while periodically looking up to see the world passing around him—but I knew that being in a bus full of strangers and the thought of spending the next four days with them filled him with dread and he was trying his best to avoid any eye contact or interaction.



When we first observed his behavior, we explained it away as a part of my son’s normal development or part of his temperament. It wasn’t until recently that we learned social anxiety disorder is also called a silent disorder because it can affect children for years before it is diagnosed. As children grow and mature, they learn how to avoid being the focus of attention at school or home; as a result, their extreme discomfort in social situations can go unnoticed. We tried giving him the opportunity to speak for himself in situations such as ordering in a restaurant or asking for movie tickets, but he found excuses and work-arounds to avoid them.

*continued on page 13.*



# 50 Years Strong, North Carolina Outward Bound School is “*Outward Bound!*”



Hiking up a rugged trail deep in the Linville Gorge, on day three of a 16-day North Carolina Outward Bound School (NCOBS) course, the raucous trail banter of teenagers gradually muffles to the pants of a steep ascent. These students are on unfamiliar ground, tentatively navigating old trails through dense rhododendrons by newly acquired map and compass skills. When at last they reach the summit of Hawksbill, they hoot and cheer and then, suddenly, are utterly silenced by the magnificence of a sunset in the Gorge.

Examining photos in the North Carolina Outward Bound School's archives, going back to its first courses in 1967, similar moments of achievement are captured time and again. From the earliest photos of students clad in cotton, wearing army-issue hiking boots and the iconic green wool pants to today's youth in colorful fleece and high tech gear, whether reaching a summit, pushing through a tough moment on a rock climb, or navigating a river rapid, the expressions are the same—joy, fatigue, pride, relief, and for many, reverence.

No matter the year they took a course, for Baby Boomers, Gen-X, Millennials, or Gen-Z alumni, the essence of the Outward Bound experience is today as it was in 1967—to leave the safety of the harbor and in nautical terms, go outward bound, towards the unknown. There, in the grandeur of nature with its own profound effect, they meet physical challenges, discover untapped strength and spirit, and learn to work compassionately and effectively with a diverse group of strangers.

“Outward Bound is about changing lives,” says Whitney Montgomery, executive director of the Asheville-based North Carolina Outward Bound School since 2007. Since the School's founding

in 1967—from the mountains and Outer Banks of North Carolina to the central rivers and Everglades of Florida, the inner-city schools of Atlanta and the snow-capped peaks of Chile—it has provided courses for more than 160,000 students. For many of these alumni, their experience serves as a lasting touchstone.

The NCOBS instructors who guide the journey and teach the skills required to navigate the complexities of the Linville Gorge or to kayak through the Pamlico Sound, are a highly trained and hardy bunch dedicated to a vision set forth by German educator Kurt Hahn, Outward Bound's founder. He designed the first program “to impel young people into value-forming experiences and to ensure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, a readiness for sensible self-denial, and, above all, compassion.”

Lofty goals? Yes. And attainable. NCOBS guides students of all ages and all walks of life to discover that they are better than they know. And this particular learning can change everything.

John Huie, the executive director of NCOBS from 1977 to 1994, is as impassioned about Outward Bound now as he was when he first heard about it decades ago, while interviewing for a teaching position at an Alabama boarding school in 1964.

After offering him the job, the headmaster, Bob Pieh, told Huie he was leaving the school in the fall to start an Outward Bound program in Minnesota. “I said, ‘What’s an Outward Bound school?’” recalls Huie, who, rather than touting his own resume in the interview, sat back in his chair and listened.

What he heard was a narration that has drawn educators and visionaries to Outward Bound for decades. Kurt Hahn, a respected and innovative German educator, founded the Salem School in Germany in 1920, “to train citizens who would not shirk from leadership and who could, if called upon, make independent decisions, put right action before expediency, and the common cause before personal ambition.” In 1932, during the rise of Hitler, Hahn called upon the Salem alumni to either break with Salem or break with Hitler. His public denouncement of Hitler led to his imprisonment in 1933, but leaders in Britain and Germany arranged his release and eventual exile to Britain. In 1934, Hahn established the Gordonstoun School in Scotland based upon the philosophy and methodology of the Salem School.

Sir Lawrence Holt, a parent at Gordonstoun who owned a large merchant shipping company, was disturbed by the staggering loss of life in the North Atlantic during the early years of World War II. He noted that his younger seamen seemed to have neither the life experience, the resources, nor the will to survive in the face of battle. They were dying in their lifeboats and the older men were not. In 1941, in Aberdovey, Wales, Holt and Hahn joined forces to develop a program called Outward Bound to teach these younger seamen resilience.

After the boarding school interview, Huie turned down the job and in the summer of 1965 followed his interviewer to the newly chartered Minnesota Outward Bound School based in Ely. There, he met an enterprising young woman from Goldsboro, NC, named Marjorie Calloway, whose visit was motivated by an article about Outward Bound in a 1964 Princeton University alumni magazine.

The author of the article was Josh Miner, an American who taught at the Gordonstoun School for Kurt Hahn. He returned to the US, and in 1962 founded the first American Outward Bound School in Colorado. G. Watts Hill, Jr., then chairman of the North Carolina Board of Higher Education, read the article and was intrigued. Miner said, for Outward Bound, “We simply want the opportunity, too



often denied, to enable young people to discover what wonderful qualities they really possess.”

Hill saw resonance with the goals of The North Carolina Fund, established by Governor Terry Sanford to identify and implement innovative strategies “to enable the poor to become productive, self-reliant citizens, and to foster institutional, political, economic, and social change designed to bring about a functioning, democratic society.”

Hill sent the article to the Fund’s Director, George Esser, who shared it with staff members Jack Mansfield and Marjorie Bryan Calloway (now Buckley).

Compelled by the relevance of Outward Bound’s goals to North Carolina’s gnawing social needs, Buckley began to explore establishing an Outward Bound school in the state and to attract a cadre of excited cohorts. She explained, “Why did this philosophy, espoused by a German Jewish schoolmaster, fire the energy of the band who came together to try to make this school happen? Did they have a special slant on these ancient values? I believe they did. The people who first struggled to build this school were all North Carolinians and I bet you every one of them could have told you the State’s motto—“Esse Quam Videri”—to be, rather than to seem.”



These founders embodied the same ethos which serves as North Carolina Outward Bound School’s motto to this day—“to serve, to strive and not to yield.” Eventually, they secured a charter, established a board, raised funds, and set the North Carolina Outward Bound School on leased National Forest Service land, in the shadow of Table Rock Mountain, on the rim of the Linville Gorge in Burke County.

It was 1967. NCOBS and wilderness-based experiential education in the US were in their infancy. The first NCOBS staff, according to their Woods Crew leader Lance Lee, were “bursting with energy and a wild sense of destiny as they plunged into the rhodo thickets and forested slopes of Table Rock to make a road, a base camp, and the school’s first building. They made the dream of Outward Bound their own. Outward Bound touched them with its ideals and in turn, they left an imprint on Outward Bound.”

NCOBS’s first instructors were pioneers in this new educational paradigm, and they helped to seed the immense growth in the field that persists to this day. Decades later, though, what contin-



ues to distinguish the North Carolina Outward Bound School from other programs is baked into its founding—its mission to serve. Dan Meyer was the School's executive director in the 1970s, and what he said in 1974 will be true for NCOBS for all time: "We seek to educate all: rich and poor, forceful and timid, thinker and doer, those in trouble and those who have it made. And by so doing, we hope to build those strengths in people and those bridges between people that are vital to the survival of our society."

John Huie served as the School's executive director from 1977 until 1994 and during this time, program outreach grew to include youth, adults, military veterans, educators, corporate teams, middle and high school groups, inner-city Atlanta youth and, thanks to regional scholarship programs, youth from Chapel Hill, Greensboro, Charlotte, Asheville, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington DC. Enrollment grew swiftly and by the late 1990s, the School was serving courses for more than 3,000 students a year.

As NCOBS grew so too did Outward Bound International, with schools in more than 40 countries, and other new, similar, organizations. By the early 2000s there were five Outward Bound Schools in the US and a multitude of other wilderness challenge programs. Among them, competition for students was intense and for Outward Bound, the founding force, it had also become challenging to attract and retain highly qualified staff. It was, to put it in rock climbing terms, time for a crux move.

Four of the five Outward Bound Schools chose to consolidate, yet the North Carolina Outward Bound School, birthed by North Carolinians passionate about its relevance to the needs of the state, remained an independent, participating member of the Outward Bound system in the US. According to John Huie, this was vital to honoring the deep, place-based identity that had inspired decades of board members to work tirelessly on its behalf. Though its programs had expanded to Florida, Atlanta, and South America, through this choice the iconic image of Table Rock became, for NCOBS, emblematic of "home."

Fast forward to 2007, when Whitney Montgomery took the helm at NCOBS. He inherited an organization that was struggling financially but still working passionately to bring the Outward Bound model to more people with diverse backgrounds. "What was flourishing was the commitment to our mission and its programming," says Montgomery, who had to tighten the school's belt during the economic downturn that began in 2008.

Now, he says, "NCOBS is as healthy as we've been in years, not just program-wise, but financially and organizationally too. We provide

courses for more than 4,500 students a year, and extend scholarship support for nearly half of them. We are as relevant to the needs of the times, if not more, than when Outward Bound first intrigued the staff of The North Carolina Fund in 1964."



"We're in one of the most polarizing political and social environments we've been in for a while. Our Unity Project—an awarded NCOBS program which takes diverse groups of teens from select schools on an 8-day wilderness expedition designed to build tolerance and prepare students to initiate social change at home—really helps address these burning issues. The kids are learning what it means to be a good community member.


How to build bridges among diverse people," said Katherine Burton, NCOBS's Unity Project coordinator in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Yes, we are relevant as never before," says Deb Sweeney Whitmore, who arrived at the School in 1996 and currently serves as the director of program operations. "But there are challenges, like determining how to unplug teens from technology and social media and attract them to a device-free, wilderness challenge experience during their brief, busy summers. The world has changed since our founding," she says, "and we need to continue to adapt while staying true to our mission."

"For North Carolina Outward Bound School, the 50th anniversary," explains Montgomery, "is not just another birthday. We're honoring the rich history of the school and the thousands of students, staff, and board members who have been a part of the organization, but we're also looking ahead. We view our stewardship of this incredible legacy very seriously. We're consistently delivering high-quality programs. Our infrastructure and finances are strong. The importance of supporting people to discover their strengths and their capacity for leadership and collaborative problem-solving has never been greater. It's a great place from which to look forward."

***"The world has changed since our founding and we need to continue to adapt while staying true to our mission."***

"The path ahead for us is clear," says Montgomery. "We will serve more students than ever before with high-quality programs that change lives and address the challenges of our times. Our alumni are high-potential youth, adults, military veterans, edu-

cators, and corporate teams who have learned vital lessons on courses that will help them participate more responsibly and positively in their communities. One student at a time, we create positive change. That's what we do best." Fifty years strong, North Carolina Outward Bound School is outward bound! 

# a journey TO BUILDING A NATION

By Wendy Kusumowidagdo



Indonesia is a vast and diverse nation, the world's largest archipelago, made up of more than 17,000 islands, and home to hundreds of ethnic groups that speak more than 1000 different languages. At 1,904,569 square kilometers (735,358 square miles), Indonesia is the world's 14th largest country in terms of land area, and the world's 7th largest country in terms of combined sea and land area. With an estimated population of over 261 million people, it is the world's 4th most populous country in the world. Indonesia's founding fathers dubbed "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," or "Unity in Diversity," the official national motto of Indonesia, in the dream of unity despite all these differences.

With the spirit of fostering one of Indonesia's core values, Outward Bound Indonesia initiated a project we named Ekspedisi Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Bagi Tunas Bangsa, which translates to Expedition of Unity in Diversity for the Youth. The program is the first character-building program in Indonesia that uses Outward Bound learning methods. It brings together high school students from across the country with the purpose of providing a platform for them to learn about collaboration and working together in a real way, and essentially to become agents of peace in their communities. It is a five-day program that combines a backpacking mountain expedition, canoeing, and a home-stay experience with villagers in the area.

We launched the program in August 16, 2017, to coincide with Indonesia's independence day. Fourteen students, who were Muslim, Christian, Javanese, Sundanese, and Chinese, from seven schools and three different provinces participated. An emotional flag-raising ceremony was conducted at the top of Mount Parang (983 meters) in the morning of Indonesia's independence day. We were fortunate to receive major support from the Ministry of Education, who dubbed the program "Character Education."


From the post-program survey we took, it was evident that aside from developing the intra-personal aspects such as tenacity, independence, and maturity, students rated high on the inter-personal values of teamwork, respect, and teamwork in the face of diversity. All the students agreed that the program was an effective method to learn about Indonesia's core values through practice.

We set up the second cohort from October 25–29, 2017, to celebrate the historic day of Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Pledge), which was a declaration made on October 28, 1928, by young Indonesians. They proclaimed three ideals: one motherland, one nation, and one language. We wanted to take the opportunity to commemorate this day with youth in a special way using the expedition. We had nearly 100 registrants coming from 16 provinces, but at the end we had to select only 12 students.



(As a note, this article was written as the program is running. On October 28, participants will do a flag-raising ceremony and proclaim the pledge at 983 meters above sea level.)

What's next? It is only the beginning for us. We want to keep developing and scaling the program. We want this program to be accessible to more students across the nation, especially those from the remote areas of the country. Our hope is that we make an impact for the Indonesian youth by creating friendships and potentially peace.

We welcome any support and opportunities for sponsorships and partnerships. 

**Contact us for more information about this program:**  
[info@outwardboundindo.org](mailto:info@outwardboundindo.org)

**Check out our Instagram:**  
[outwardbound\\_id](https://www.instagram.com/outwardbound_id)



# Creating a Knowledge-Sharing Culture Within Outward Bound

By Flora Barton



Outward Bound International Global Portal

Discussions

Obi Documents

Community Documents

School Sites

EDIT LINKS

## Community Documents

Home  
Who's Who  
Jobs Board  
Discussions  
Obi Documents  
Community Documents  
School Sites  
Improvements Log  
Help and Guidance  
Site Contents



Risk Management & Safety



Programs



Fund Raising



HR & Employment



Philosophy & History



Impact Reports & Evaluations



Admin



Wiki Docs

## “There is more in you than you think.”

This inspirational phrase, adopted by Kurt Hahn, is widely quoted within the outdoor community; it encourages us to see beyond our self-imposed limits, to discover what we are made of, and to find the courage and ability to overcome actual and perceived barriers. Hahn's philosophy prompts us to challenge what we know about ourselves. It is not only compassion, daring, and strength that can be discovered by looking within. Something else can be found, something unique to each of us and utterly invaluable—our knowledge.

## What is Knowledge?

Knowledge can be explained as the skills and the information we acquire through education, and perhaps more importantly, through experience. It is a richer form of information. Let's use knot-tying as an example.

A diagram of a knot in a book is information. Following these instructions and becoming adept at tying the knot is the know-how, but learning when to use the knot, and why, is the know-why. The know-why is usually only achieved through experience and it can be challenging to put into words why it is we do something. Recognising that our knowledge can be valuable to others is the first step. Finding ways to share the knowledge is the second.

Knowledge is now extensively recognised as a lucrative and intangible asset for organisations, and it comes, not from its CEOs or board members, but from all its workers. The knowledge of each worker is extraordinarily valuable, but it is accessible only to the individual unless and until it is shared.

Creating a knowledge-sharing culture within an organisation can be challenging, as it often requires a sizeable change in methods

and now relies heavily on understanding and implementing twenty-first century technologies. Some people have a tendency to resist sharing their knowledge. This is often due to a lack of trust—“what if I don't get credit?”—or confidence—“this isn't useful to anybody.” Recognising this barrier and finding ways to overcome it is critical when implementing a knowledge-sharing network within an organisation.

## What is Knowledge-Sharing?

Knowledge-sharing within an organisation is the act of sharing skills, expertise, and information between members of the organisation. It is workers sharing their know-how and know-why with others. The success of knowledge-sharing depends on two key factors. The first is motivating members to share their knowledge across the organisation, and the second is providing a suitable network for them to do so.

Successfully motivating members of an organisation to share their knowledge is what will result in a change in organisational culture. The expression “knowledge is power” is well-known, but we need to learn that it is sharing our knowledge that makes us powerful. By participating in knowledge-sharing, we always get more out of the pot that we put in. Often, a motivator for knowledge-sharing within an organisation is its proven success with increasing profits and making the company more attractive to investors. As part of a not-for-profit organisation, we are sharing our knowledge not to make money but to ultimately benefit those we strive to serve.

A successful knowledge-sharing network is one where workers can easily share and access information. In this digital age, to share knowledge effectively, we rely greatly on technology, however, it is critical to understand that technology alone is not enough. It is the human network behind the technology which finally results in increasing collaboration within an organisation.

## The Global Portal

In April 2017 Outward Bound International launched The Global Portal, a Microsoft SharePoint site to enable OBI staff from around the globe to share knowledge. SharePoint is increasingly used by large companies and organisations to store and share documents and to provide a robust platform for collaboration. It is a vast and powerful tool, and its innovative search function can quickly locate user-relevant information and it can be endlessly customised to suit the needs of an organisation.

Within Outward Bound, SharePoint is particularly valuable, as it allows all staff, wherever they are based, to access the same information and to have an opportunity to upload documents and instigate and participate in discussions, and thereby share their knowledge.

Documents that are uploaded to SharePoint are stored in document libraries, which can be modified depending on their contents. For instance, on The Global Portal there is a document library named OBI Documents. When viewing and using documents or images from this library, users can be assured that these are official and pre-approved documents. There is also a document library called Community Documents, where any user can upload and share any document they think will benefit the community.

The Global Portal relies on its users to be successful. We need each Outward Bound school to share their resources and expertise—effective knowledge-sharing starts with leading by example. Sharing the tremendous variety and richness of knowledge within Outward Bound can only be a benefit to our own staff and our invaluable clients. ▶

*For access to, or more information about, the portal please email [portalmanager@outwardboundinternational.org](mailto:portalmanager@outwardboundinternational.org).*



*continued from page 7*

As expected, when we started the first activity—the ropes course—my son wanted to know if he could opt out. “That’s not an option,” I said. To my surprise, he didn’t complain. He was slow and methodical, horrified at the thought of embarrassing himself in front of strangers, but he completed the course. He was covered in sweat and shaking from the experience, but he had done it.

One night, he said, “It is beautiful out here. I wish we can stay longer.” This was not something he would have said in the past. Normally he would be so uncomfortable with the social situation that he couldn’t wait to get back to the safe confines of home. My son was coming out of his shell and starting to enjoy the experience.



It was a small but an important step. I was very proud of him and loved him for trying. I knew that he would experience setbacks as well as successes in the future. It was a journey I would take with him as long as he needed me. I knew with certainty that one day, he would be strong and confident enough to continue the journey by himself.

Nora’s voice interrupts. “Okay. Open your eyes and look at the person that accompanied you on this trip. What would you like to say to that person?”

I open my eyes and am struck by the beautiful young man before me, and am thankful to have shared in this experience with him. ▶







Z SPARSE



# I GET OUT FROM MY TINY LITTLE WORLD

By Outward Bound Hong Kong

I was shivering with excitement. The anticipation was a nervous kind of energy. It tingled through me like electrical sparks on the way to the Outward Bound Hong Kong School. I was new to everything and curious to know what would happen during the 18-Day Classic Achievers Programme. All I knew was I would be involved in activities like kayaking, sailing, and hiking. The journey itself might be adventurous and beautiful, yet I was afraid since it was all new. My heart beat all the harder.

During the course, my teammates and I were delighted to engage in every single task. We paddled from the Sai Kung area to the northeast of the New Territories. Kayaking was tough and I sweated a lot. It soaked into the waistband of my shorts. I hate to sweat but when I saw my teammates paddling hard and encouraging me, I decided to go on. By noon, I smelt stinky, very stinky, and so did my teammates. It was the kind of smell that stopped you thinking. All that was left in your brain once the smell reached you was a desire to flee. The happiness was infectious.

We then paddled through the sea caves. A strong wind was blowing and the sea was gray and white. Now happiness started as a tingle in my finger and toes, much like the feeling I had when I was anxious, but instead of being worrisome, it was warm. I felt it pass through me like a warm ocean wave, washing away the stress of my day to leave me refreshed inside. The group of us laughed and made silly jokes.

Ketch sailing was another big challenge. As soon as we got on the ketch, I was introduced to all the equipment. We sailed to Tung Ping Chau and went through Tolo Harbour. The ketch bounced along the waves sending cold spray onto the deck—a good chance to cool ourselves under the heat. I would describe ketch sailing as flying over water, dancing over the white crested waves, cleaving a path through the wind-whipped water. This was my first time sailing on a ketch and it was a great achievement for our team. I was glad that my instructor appreciated our teamwork. We took control of the ketch and I felt freedom on the sea!











Once off the boat, it was time for our mountain journey. I was given a big backpack. I could not believe that it weighed even more than me. It perched on my back like a baby koala on its mother throughout my hike. I could barely breathe and walk at the beginning. Soon, though, we all got used to the heavy weight and walked 10 to 20 kilometres per day! On the hike, I felt the tranquil beauty of nature. The trees surrounded me were alive with birds and chirping insects. In the valley below there were ponds and rivers with fish. I was not alone at all, yet the solitude I could achieve in nature felt like a running faucet draining away my stress.

The next day we walked fast. We set a new challenge for ourselves—the SUNRISE challenge. I still remember the yellow sun starting to rise from the ground. It filled the sky with mighty reds and splashed the clouds with endless rays of orange. It was bright and mesmerising as it invited me to stare deep into the horizon. There was nothing scarier to me than height itself.

I took a long time to overcome that difficulty, especially in the sessions of high ropes, abseiling, and rock climbing. Every time I came down from the top, I clenched my fists as I hesitantly took each step. My feet trembled and my legs twitched, fighting the impulse to whirl around and land on the ground. I was so thankful that my trustworthy team supported me all the time. We shared our experience and this brought us even closer and helped us show more compassion to each other.

The most silent moment that I had ever had in my life was probably the SOLO session. As a city dweller, it was rare for me to enjoy a quiet moment in nature. I was so surprised to receive a letter from my parents while I was alone on an isolated island. I missed them so much and I could not control my tears. I had so much to share with them. 🗣️

*“Let the mountains speak for themselves”*

## Outward Bound Czech Republic's Inventive

# INTER-TOUCH Project

By Kateřina Klímová

**A**s an example of innovative Outward Bound programming, INTERTOUCH 2017 was a project of Prázdninová škola Lipnice, z. s. Outward Bound Czech Republic (OBCZ) that brought 24 participants from 16 countries and five Outward Bound Schools (Germany, Hong Kong, Peacebuilding, USA [Baltimore], UK, and Czech Republic) to the Czech Republic at the end of summer, 2017. OBCZ is a purely volunteer-based organisation and development of INTERTOUCH was a more than nine-month adventure for a team of six instructors, who were supported and assisted by over 30 other long and short-term volunteers throughout the execution of the course.

The course included a 12-day experiential learning course and a two-day methodology workshop in which the team revealed everything about the theory and practice of the course—and introduced the participants to the OBCZ method of personal development through work with experience.

The Czech approach to experiential learning is known as 'drama school.' It is based on dramaturgy, a theatre term which involves the development of emotional and social themes, and the integration of a wide variety of social, physical, creative, emotional, and reflective activities into a course scenario aims to enhance the challenges for the participants in ways other than physical. 'Drama school' is the art of interweaving to achieve a balance of effort and relaxation, physical and mental activities, and individual and group events to maximize the overall course effectiveness.

Apart from developing a course that follows in the tradition of past OBCZ international courses (INTERTOUCH 1997, 2004, 2006, 2007, WINTERTOUCH 2011) and fosters development of cooperation between other similar organisations, INTERTOUCH aimed to explore game and play as an approach to life. The course was designed to show the participants functional parallels between playing games and living lives and (possibly) integrating them into one's own life.

## PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

INTERTOUCH has been very successful over the years. Here's what some of our 2017 participants have had to say:

"INTERTOUCH was...hard to define! I was conscious that we were not given specific learning outcomes before (or really at any point during) the course. When I spoke to colleagues who had previously completed an OBCZ program, the typical response was a sparkle in the eyes, a small smile, and a description that it was "weird, but good!" They were right. ...Among the practical takeaways for me are additional tools for my 'toolbox' and good ways to explain things that I already do. Ways to give a course structure without giving away intended content, interesting use of music and drama to set a mood or trigger an action without the need for an instructor briefing (which can carry unintended overtones), a clean way to visualise the changing balance between different aspects of the course, and different ways to create and manage spaces for reflection and sharing to name a few."

– Tim Harrison, Senior Instructor (Ullswater and Howtown Centers), The Outward Bound Trust UK.

"For me, INTERTOUCH was about showing the power of games, to learn while having fun, to feel the feelings, to live the life, to





share, to care, to take it easy while processing a heavy topic. It was about showing an open-minded way of living, getting in touch with myself, creating something magnificent, contributing, taking the plunge. And it was also about getting in touch with people who have the same interests and think in a similar way, about appreciating and developing myself while trying something new. From now on, I can say that it was a lifetime experience, shaped by many interesting and different people from all over the world, created by an active, enthusiastic, and creatively outstanding team. Most admirable was the authenticity, creativity, the love, and the time of work they spent on the program. I experienced how impressive and important it is, so put some real effort into doing something. To prepare the course settings in detail and with love! ...Everything was prepared so well that it was just lovely, exciting, and impressive to be a part of it! (Even though it was absolutely exhausting.)”

– Laura Sporning, Instructor, Outward Bound Germany

“During INTERTOUCH I was able to enter a space as a participant that fostered life-changing moments for me. I took away the knowledge that speaking my truth and experience—to those that are different than you—from a place of compassion is one of life’s greatest challenges and also gifts when achieved....I think the waves of programming focused on OBCZ method create a dynamic course flow for deep participant outcomes. One of the most unique aspects for the INTERTOUCH course is the large group of volunteers that spend 9+ months designing and delivering such a program. Such long-term preparation and detail are hard to find on a typical Outward Bound program. This has a direct impact for the participant experience. A unique approach to Outward Bound and experiential learning has been developed and mastered by OBCZ and it has to be experienced to understand fully.”

– John Lee, Director of Programs, Outward Bound Peacebuilding

For more information about OBCZ, please visit:  
[www.psl.cz](http://www.psl.cz)  
[www.facebook.com/prazdninovka/](https://www.facebook.com/prazdninovka/)

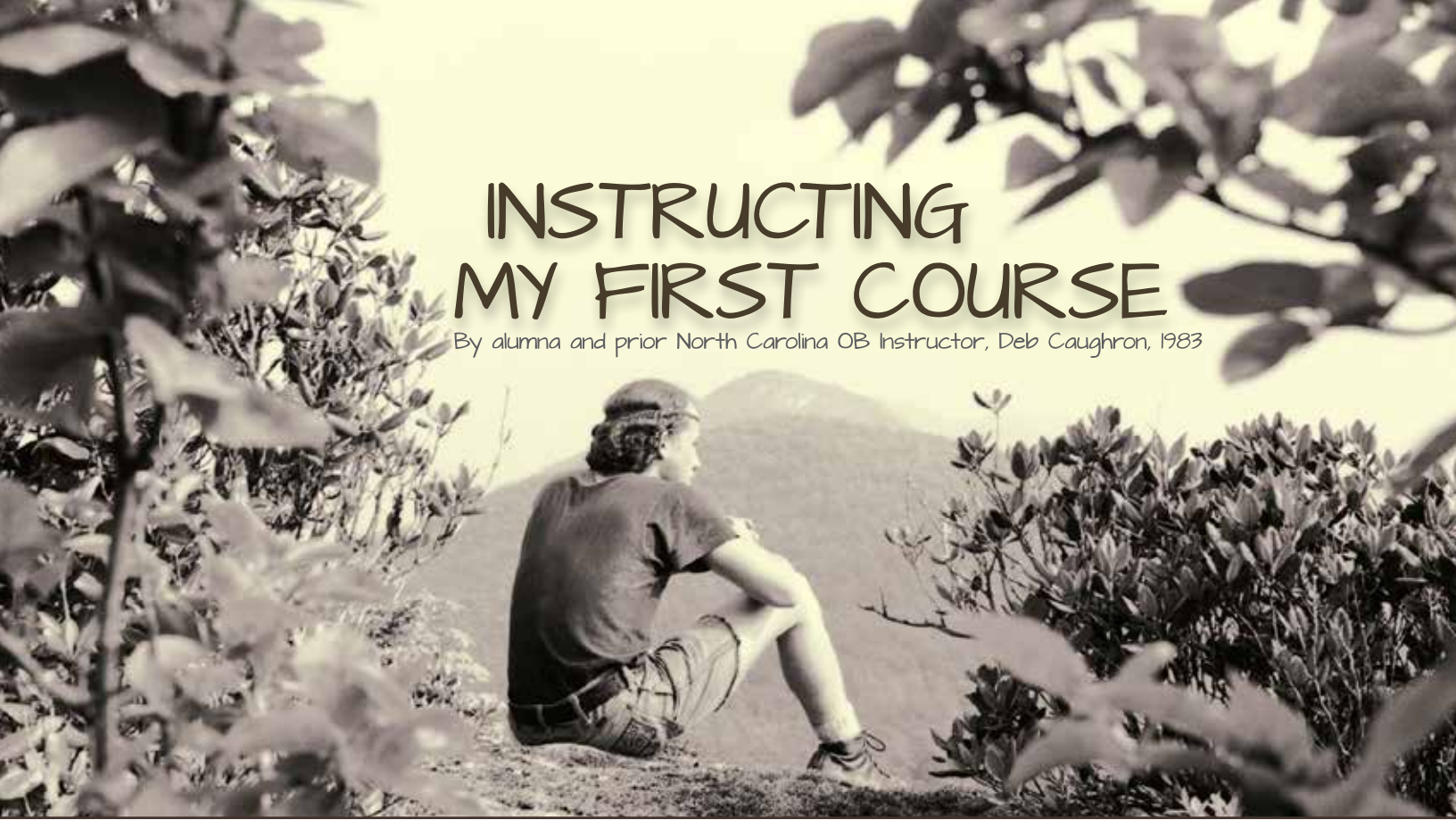
For INTERTOUCH 2017, its team and participants:  
[www.intertouch.cz](http://www.intertouch.cz)  
[www.facebook.com/intertouch2017](https://www.facebook.com/intertouch2017) 🎥





# INSTRUCTING MY FIRST COURSE

By alumna and prior North Carolina OB Instructor, Deb Caughron, 1983



*"There was nobody to talk to except myself and the creek. The creek was constantly talking back so I could hardly get a word in."*

— John G. Thomas, Jr., Crew Journal Entry, Solo



My first course as a new assistant instructor in the summer of 1983 had an inauspicious beginning. Program Director Mike Fischesser had put me with a sweet fellow who I knew would gently help me navigate the steep learning curve of leading students through the rigors of an Outward Bound course. Shortly before pre-course planning, my co-instructor injured his ankle and I was hastily paired with the fearsome Ken Peeples. Ken had the reputation

of being a gifted facilitator and a tough character. As we planned, he kept calling me "kid" and I stopped just short of calling him "sir." I was terrified to be working my first course with a legend.

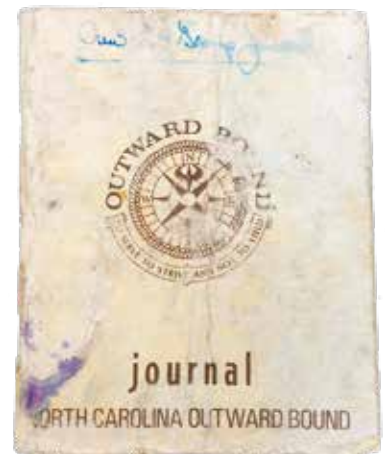
I had spent a lot of time in the mountains, but I was very nervous about going into the field with a crew of 12 young men and women for whom I was partly responsible. I was not yet comfortable with map and compass and still in awe of the mysteries and challenges associated with being an Outward Bound Instructor. I was pleasantly surprised when Ken asked me to write down three things I was most comfortable teaching. Hmmm... packing a backpack? Camp craft? Doctoring blistered feet? He looked at my list through mirrored sunglasses and said, "Okay, kid, I'll teach these and you'll do the rest." Wait, what? Had this man never heard of compassion? Ken, who would become my mentor and friend, held me to it and taught me more in my first 23 days than I had learned in my first full year in the field.

And our crew? They were intrepid, fun, challenging, and enthusiastic. They persevered with humor and tenacity through three

weeks of bushwhacking, route finding, climbing, canoeing, solo, and service while enduring nonstop rain and lightning drills. Intrigued by a term they learned in an early first aid lesson, they named themselves "The Sucking Chest Wounds."

In 2016, 33 years after this first course and a year before the 50th Anniversary of the North Carolina Outward Bound School, someone (the handwriting and zip code point to Ken) sent our crew journal to the town office. What an extraordinary and unexpected gift to be given a window into this transformative time for my crew and myself more than three decades later! After joyfully reading every entry—which ranged in tone from insightful, silly, moving, and profound—I landed on one that, for me, defines the essence of the Outward Bound experience:

*"As for the people (on the ropes course), it was as if you were seeing somebody new and the activities done before had little or no bearing at all. People who were weaker at some points in the past showed signs of being stronger, bolder and more confident in themselves. The same went for people who showed weaknesses that didn't show up before. I think each new experience we go through here gives us a clearer and better understanding of ourselves. I first came to Outward Bound for the physical (challenge)... but after a few days I realized Outward Bound was more than that. It is a teaching tool to better understand yourself."*



— Thomas deHaan, Day 9





# OUTWARD BOUND USA ANNOUNCES THE **OUTWARD BOUND PROFESSIONAL** **LEARNING LAB**

**I**n June of 2017, Outward Bound USA received the good news of a five million dollar, multi-year grant award from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, a California-based foundation with a primary focus on developing good character in young people through support of effective adult practice.

Word of the grant award came after three years of work by a team representative of the eleven OB USA network schools appointed to develop the concept for the Outward Bound Professional Learning Lab [The Lab]. Through the creation of The Lab, Outward Bound USA intends to deepen its educational impact with a new generation of students in courses and programs delivered by a well prepared and highly skilled core of field instructors and program staff across the national network of regional OB USA schools.

## **What will the Outward Bound Professional Learning Lab do?**

When operational, The Lab will:

- Identify research-based best practices for character development across the US and translate them into professional development for Outward Bound instructors
- Engage the most experienced program staff from across the OB USA network of regional schools in partnership with leading national research and curriculum specialists
- Measure student outcomes to assess the impact of OB USA's educational practices with the students we serve






## What will be the outcomes and results of The Lab?

By creating a shared, national, research-based professional learning capability, OB USA will:

- Improve staff professional learning and development
- Improve and make accessible research to inform staff training
- Improve and make accessible research to support fundraising and national partnerships
- Enhance equity and inclusion-based educational approaches to inform development and expansion of relevant learning experiences inclusive of a new generation of students
- Improve program outcomes across a range of program delivery environments
- Reinforce brand reputation and awareness, positioning Outward Bound as a leader in the field of youth development and character education

Peter Steinhauser, Executive Director of Outward Bound USA, is pleased that Arthur Pearson, CEO of Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center, will also serve as the Interim Director of The Lab for the first year as the work is launched.

Outward Bound USA looks forward to providing Outward Bound International with updates on the progress of The Lab as it develops over the next three years. 



 **S. D. BECHTEL, JR.  
FOUNDATION**  
STEPHEN BECHTEL FUND










# OUTWARD BOUND SINGAPORE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY HOMECOMING

On Saturday, September 16, 2017, Outward Bound Singapore hosted its largest gathering of more than 600 OBS Alumni members at Pulau Ubin. Held as part of the OBS 50th Anniversary celebrations, OBS alumni young and old relived their Outward Bound memories with activities like the flying fox, jetty jump, abseiling, and kayaking with family and friends.



Singapore's Minister for Finance Heng Swee Keat, who attended a 21-day classic challenge course in 1980, graced the occasion by helping to unearth the OBS Time Capsule installed in 1999. Minister Heng, who first announced in 2016 the expansion plans for OBS under Singapore's National Outdoor Adventure Education Masterplan, recounted his own valuable lessons learnt at OBS: "OBS not only teaches young people to push past their limits, to challenge themselves to be the best that they can be; OBS teaches them to do so together, as one. Even though I may not remember the technical steps of each challenge, I will never forget the cheers of my teammates when I needed encouragement, or the real sense of triumph we all felt when one teammate pushed past his limits." 





# G E A R



## Black Diamond Vision Harness

Weight is important—just ask any instructor whose professional life must fit neatly (and lightly) into a backpack for the duration of a lengthy Outward Bound course.

Some of the heaviest packs are worn by mobile course instructors, who must carry climbing equipment over long distances to remote technical peaks, rock-climbing sites, or across glaciated terrain. Add to that the increasing amount of safety-related communications equipment that is often provided by OB schools looking to keep in touch with their instructor teams (think mobile and satellite phones plus various satellite communications devices—and all those batteries), and it's not hard to imagine how as outdoor equipment gets ever lighter, instructor packs get ever heavier. Black Diamond Equipment's Vision Harness hopes to rebalance the weight equation in favor of lightness. At 224 grams, the Black Diamond Vision will be one of the lightest fully-functional harnesses on the market when it reaches retail outlets in the first quarter of 2018. Made of lightweight Vectran™—an abrasion-resistant, liquid crystal polymer fiber that is ten times stronger gram-for-gram than aluminum—the alpine harness is equipped with the usual features, including belay loops, gear loops, elastic in the leg loops, a pre-threaded waist buckle, and four slots for attaching one's ice clippers. In summary, the Vision is a perfect way for the minimalist alpinist to harness the "less is more" ethos while still maintaining communications with headquarters.

**\$150 US** [www.blackdiamondequipment.com](http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com)



## Handpresso Wild Hybrid

For those who simply can't do without a good Italian espresso while leading an Outward Bound course in the deep wilderness, look no further than Handpresso, the French manufacturer of portable espresso machines. The Wild Hybrid is a handheld espresso maker that can reach 16 bar (232 PSI) of pressure. Just pump the Wild about 40 times, add boiling water, load the coffee, lock the lid, and enjoy a reasonable cup of espresso. It weighs 480 grams and is 10 x 7 x 22 centimetres. Perfect for expressing your inner barista!

**\$120 US** [www.handpresso.com](http://www.handpresso.com)





# ADAPTIVE JOURNEYS:

## Inclusive Sea Kayak Expeditions at OBHK

**By Candy Yan and Aaron Funnell**

Ask people what their fondest memory of taking an Outward Bound course is, and most will come back with an exciting story about their journey: how they struggled and triumphed, explored, took risks, faced adversity, attempted new tasks, reflected on values in their life, strived, and made new friends. Outward Bound staff from around the world agree these outdoor experiences shape who they become

later in life, and as a long-standing outdoor education organisation OBHK has recently explored how to make such value-forming experiences available to everyone, both for the able-bodied as well as those less-abled. In Hong Kong, over 400,000 persons have a disability, representing about six percent of the population, and this has previously been an under-represented demographic that we wanted to work with but lacked the skill-set.



## What is an 'Adaptive Journeys' programme?

Adaptive Journeys is a pilot program at OBHK that supports this often-marginalized segment of the population by strengthening resilience, resourcefulness, and courage through a wilderness journey in specifically adapted sea kayaks. Through carefully facilitated experiences, and with proper support and equipment modified to an extent that a person's disability is overcome, less-abled people are empowered to participate in sea kayaking in a similar capacity to able-bodied people. In turn this helps people with a disability have more belief in their own future and undertake a more active or healthy lifestyle after the course is completed.

## Who can join this journey?

Physical disabilities that are eligible for the Adaptive Journeys course include those limiting mobility, dexterity, or physical functioning. Impairments include physical defects, upper or lower limb loss or impairment, poor manual dexterity, and spinal impairments, as well as visual or hearing loss. The composition of each group, however, is intentionally designed to be varied rather than all participants having the same disability. Essential Eligibility Criteria for admittance into this course at OBHK provide established safety parameters for additional medical screening.

## Course Structure

The course structure involves a preliminary training weekend that includes icebreakers, the fitting out of gear to individuals' needs, and practice with water and expedition skills. A subsequent extended wilderness journey is the culmination of this program. During the first trial course instructors and participants were equally surprised to see that the distances covered on the week-long journey exceeded their expectations. Overcoming the physical impairments through customising the gear has allowed for the course to cover a comparable distance and course-pace of an able-bodied group of participants.

## Instructor Preparation

Adaptive Journeys instructors completed a three-day Adaptive Paddling Workshop run by the American Canoe Association. This invaluable course provided instructors with the skills and knowledge needed to outfit equipment and modify instruction to allow people of all abilities to participate in paddle sport activities as safely, comfortably, and with the same performance potential as all others. This additional staff training was a vital step in the development of Adaptive Journeys sea kayak expeditions at OBHK and instilled the concept that while each person's disability is unique, with resources as simple as foam and tape the equipment can be improvised, modified, and customised to overcome many impediments.



## Evolution of the Concept of Disabilities Programs

The Adaptive Journeys course was originally conceived for 12 disabled participants per course; however, we quickly realised that a more appropriate course enrolment structure is six able-bodied and six disabled participants per group, under the supervision of four trained staff and one additional external 'assistant' instructor with a disability. As such, the Adaptive Journeys program has evolved to be inclusive and it is noteworthy that we have a long waiting list of people with a disability wanting to attend this course, but find it much more difficult to recruit six able-bodied people even though all twelve places are fully funded.

Once underway, all participants quickly overcome any awkwardness or discomfort in interacting with people different to themselves, either able-bodied or disabled. The assistant instructor Derek Ko is a glowing ambassador for the program and provides all participants with a quintessential role model whereby paddling with or without a disability is possible for all. Having lost his right arm at an early age, he is the ideal person to set the tone for able-bodied and disabled alike.

In addition to modifying and customising gear, OBHK is also purchasing a range of custom-built sea kayak equipment for people with disabilities, including transfer benches to move from a wheelchair to a kayak, floating chariots to allow entry and exit from a beach to the ocean, hand-adaptation grips, spine-supporting seats, paddle-pivots, and wide cockpit kayaks. All these items together allow disabled participants to undertake a sea kayak expedition just like an able-bodied person, reducing any additional discomfort or anxiety.



# Customised Gear and Experienced Instructors

A normal kayak cannot assist a disabled person to go on a sea journey effectively. With proper support and equipment, a paddler with a disability can participate equally. Custom-built gear is not essential to conduct an Adaptive Journeys course, but for interest some of the custom-built gear purchased by OBHK is now described.



**Boats and Stabilisers:** Adaptive Journeys kayaks have wider cockpits to allow easy entry and exit. They can also be fitted out with stabilisers to provide more stability when floating on the water.



**Customised seats:** Spine-support seats are available to individuals with reduced stability to remain in a kayak better. These are ergonomic and provide for upper, mid, or lower spine supportive needs.



**Kayak chariots:** Pushing a wheelchair across a beach can be gruelling, even with matting in place. However, the unique design of a kayak chariot allows transfers on a flat level surface (like a parking lot) by positioning the cockpit rim at wheelchair height. With the paddler in the kayak, the rig can be rolled into the water and floated off of the chariot, making most water entry points accessible.



**Transfer bench:** This easy-to-use system provides a flat, smooth transfer surface at wheelchair height when used with the kayak chariot. It provides independence for the paddler and safety for those assisting in the transfer. The paddler slides to a transfer board, positioned directly above the kayak seat. Adjustable handles enable the paddler to remove pressure from the transfer board, which is then removed, freeing the paddler to lower down onto the kayak seat.



**Hand adaptation:** This back-of-the-hand grip is designed for use by those who have some hand function and can grip the paddle shaft on their own but need a bit more support. The adaptation takes lifting pressure off the fingers and places it on the arms. The height is adjustable and the end is open to allow for proper pressure without inhibiting release.



**Paddle pivot:** The combination of a universal base with this pivoted paddle adaption allows one-arm control of the kayak. It also provides support to completely remove the weight of the paddle from the paddler's arms when using both arms. The pivot assembly snaps onto any paddle shaft. The paddle and pivot assembly lift out of the base for ease of entry and safety in the event of a wet exit.

**Specialty/amputee armbands:** The basic armband is extended and lined with grip material to reduce slippage. Bands are added to provide anchor points beyond the first available joint.





We reiterate that such custom-made gear is not essential to run programs for people with a disability, but has been included as it may be of interest to some Schools.

We truly believe


in the impact of high-quality courses for people who have a physical disability. This new 'Adaptive Journeys' programme gives disabled people skills for life and an increased motivation and appetite for learning and broadening horizons, and often opens up a whole new world of opportunity. Participants in these courses often express more euphoria with participation than is seen on other courses and this is likely due to the social stigma in Hong Kong which encourages people with a disability to stay at home and avoid any risks. However, while Adaptive Journeys is new to OBHK, we realise we have simply imported existing training, human skills, and understanding of equipment from existing materials outside the OB network. By removing the physical obstacles we provide the same opportunities for value-forming experiences that able-bodied people regularly have.

## Feedback from Adaptive Journeys Participants

"I learnt resilience after joining Adaptive Journeys. I am a person who easily gives up when facing difficulties or things that I am not interested in, but while we are paddling we have to paddle in a team. I remember one day, I wanted to fall asleep when I was paddling. I really wanted to give up and the whole team was waiting for me. I thought to myself 'I can't be that selfish and if we stop here, we are stuck in the middle of the sea,' which made me feel how important resilience is. I am now so passionate about kayaking and wish in the future that I can join another Outward Bound course again."

—Participant Nat Ko

"It was hard to communicate, especially after I took off my hearing aids, and this was my first time cooperating with people with different physical disabilities. I realised we needed more communication and cooperation to work out different tasks in order to complement each other. I strongly appreciate my team-mates and they were very mentally tough and physically stronger than I thought. I really enjoyed being in the environment as well as every single task on the journey and everyone gaining a deeper understanding of each other during the course."

—Participant Ching 





# Researching Rucksack Weight on Expedition

By Nick Dawson

## INTRODUCTION

Many students coming on outdoor education courses will complete some form of expedition. The distances walked and the terrain covered will vary, but the requirement to carry sufficient kit to spend a night out on the mountains or hills will generally be the same. Expedition tents, sleeping bags and stoves, and sufficient food and clothing will all be needed.

At Outward Bound Aberdovey over the last 20 years there has been a steady decrease in the average age of the students. In the late 1990s the average age was 16 to 21 years compared to the current average age of 13 to 15 years. The distance and length of expeditions has also been reduced over the same time but the weight of the rucksack has not changed a great deal as the type and weight of the expedition kit has generally remained the same. Recommendations and research is available on rucksack weights for the over-18 years and under-18 years age groups but no research has been completed on the younger, 13 to 14 years age group.

In 2016 I began a small study at OB Aberdovey, to investigate the weight of the rucksacks the students carry proportional to their own weight and the impact this contributes to their overall expedition experience. The likely physical effects of carrying weight, for example on the spine and posture, were researched. My methods and results can be found below, along with recommendations on healthy and practical options on rucksack weights, in particular for the 13- to 14-year age group.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Recommendations on rucksack weight and equipment are available from a variety of different sources. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for young people, in its expedition guide gives guidance about packing a rucksack as follows:

Get into good habits to take the pain out of packing:

- Pack the same way each time
- Make logical groups—today's food, tomorrow's clothes
- Keep stuff you'll use a lot close to the top of the bag
- Pack heavy gear close to your back to help your balance
- Don't carry more than 25% of your body weight

Hickman, Hives and Selfe in an article in Professional Mountaineer (Autumn 2016) suggest that standard mountaineering practice advocates that daypack weight should be approx-



imately 15 percent of body weight and large expedition packs should be approximately 30 percent of body weight. They also discussed that as the weight of the rucksack increases there is a corresponding increase in postural sway due to postural instability, which in turn increases the risk of injury.

Outward Bound Australia research into rucksack weight in 2007 led to changes in their standard operating procedures:

A Group Instructor should endeavour to abide by the Pack Weight Matrix:

1. Participants under the age of 18 should not carry more than 25 percent of their body weight
2. Participants and staff of 18 years and over should not carry more than 30 percent of their body weight
3. Persons of any age should never be carrying more than 30 kilograms

The details of the research are unavailable.

In 2015, Justyna Drzał-Grabiec et al., looking at the bags children carry at school, suggest that several researchers recommend that safe rucksacks should not exceed ten percent of the child's weight, although rucksack weight often goes up to 30 percent to 40 percent. Other research has shown that carrying a rucksack of these weights for long periods could be a factor contributing to spinal pain in children. Moreover, such weight has a significant effect on body posture and walking. Drzał-Grabiec's study concluded that the effect on young children of carrying rucksacks with a weight constituting ten percent of their body mass leads to an increase in asymmetry of the shoulders, scapulae, pelvis, and the entire trunk—and that the load that is currently considered safe, ten percent of the body mass of the student, should be reconsidered.

Also in 2015, Samira Golriz et al., in researching the effect of hip belt use in rucksacks, concluded that postural stability decreased when wearing a loaded rucksack. However, load placement and hip belt use did not affect measures of postural stability. This will be relevant in looking at the type of rucksack used in the study. Also relevant was the fact that this study set a lower age limit of 18 years because the development of the skeletal system reaches its maturity at this age.

The human bipedal stance is inherently unstable due to the relatively high position of the body's centre of mass above

a small base of support. To remain stable and avoid injury during daily activities, the body needs to keep the centre of mass within the base of support. Disease, medications, the ageing process, and load-carrying can all affect postural stability. A study by N.R. Talbott in 2005 suggests that carrying loads can decrease postural stability, hence the falls that have been reported by rucksack users. This same study also suggests that, to reduce the risk of falls and abnormal postures, rucksacks should not weigh more than 20 percent of body mass. It also provides evidence that women, obese individuals, and younger students who carry rucksacks have greater instability and greater postural changes. However, Talbott goes on to suggest that percentage of body mass does not take into consideration upper body strength or the child's height, which affects the position of the rucksack on the back. For children who are smaller or weaker, compensatory strategies that alter posture and strain musculoskeletal structures may be needed with proportionally lighter loads. Furthermore, percentage of body mass does not consider the percentage of body fat or students who are overweight. Essentially, it is an error to assume that the more a person weighs, the more they can carry.

In 2004, J. Knapik et al. looked at the weight that soldiers carry. Men and women were asked to complete a ten-kilometre road march with loads of 18.27 and 36 kilograms, and to do this as quickly as possible. Men were approximately 21 percent faster, regardless of load. However, when questioned afterwards, women commented more often than men that the rucksack straps were uncomfortable, hip belts ill-fitting, and rucksacks unstable. An independent predictor of march time (when sex was included in the equation) was shoulder breadth. Because rucksacks have been designed primarily based on the anthropometry of men, this data suggests that if consideration is given to the anthropometry of women in military rucksack systems, the speed gap between them may decrease.





In conclusion, although there is some advice on children’s expeditionary rucksack weight, it appears based on practice rather than on detailed research. Where there is research into rucksack weight, it is predominantly based on adults and indicates that weights of over 20 percent of body mass decrease postural stability, but also suggests that body mass is a poor indicator of strength. Design of rucksacks around a male physique also means that postural stability of women is further reduced when carrying loaded rucksacks. Finally, although research on children is limited it points to loads of even 10 percent leading to problems with spinal development.

## METHOD

The choices of design in evidence collection, at least according to Vogt in 2012, are divided into five main types. In this study, I used the first two, surveys and interviews. I surveyed participants preparing for two-day, one-night expeditions between February and April of 2017. To allow the participant to remain anonymous I issued each with a code number. For each participant, the following data was collected:

1. Weight of rucksack
2. Tents and water included in rucksack
3. Weight of participant
4. Age
5. Biological sex
6. Perceived fitness level
7. Weather at time of expedition
8. Location of expedition

The data was collected on a recording form as shown in table 1.

Rucksack Weight Data Collection sheet									
Student Identity Code	M or F	Age	Weight	Rucksack weight	Perceived Fitness level	Nature of weather	Location of expedition	Tents	Water bottle in pack
C1									
C2									
C3									
C4									
C5									

Whenever possible each participant was interviewed on return from their expedition. The set of questions required either a score from 1 to 5 or a yes or no answer, as shown in table 2. For some groups, there were logistic issues with time, which meant that post-expedition interviews could not be completed for all participants.

**Table 2. Questions following Expedition**  
On a scale of 1 to 5 or yes/no

Participant Identity Code	How much did you enjoy the Expedition	How much sense of achievement did you get	How much did the weight of the pack effect you	Do you have an injuries related to the rucksack	Would you do it again
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

## SAMPLE SIZE

How big should the sample be? The bigger, the better. Although there were around 600 participants through the Aberdovey Centre during the time period of the survey, logistics and time allowed only a sample of 76 participants to be surveyed. These logistics included identifying groups going on expedition when I was available to collect the data and having willing volunteers from those groups.

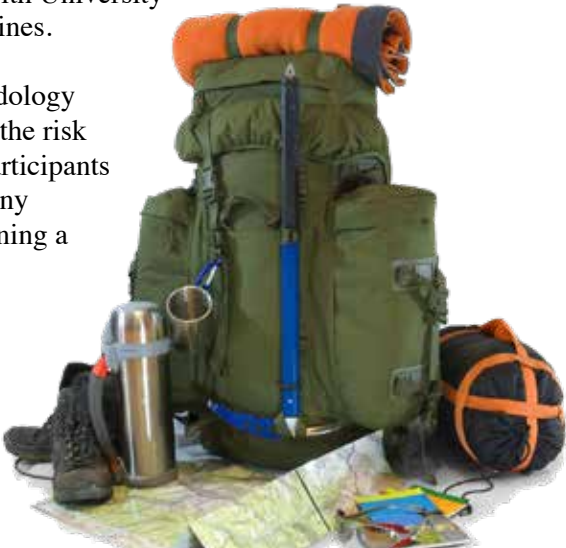
## INFORMED CONSENT

As the participants would not be individually identified, parental permission was not sought but the lead visiting member of school staff was asked to agree to this study and sign a form to cover ethical requirements.

In line with University of Worcester ethical guidelines, the participants were given the option not to take part in the survey, and the taking of the weights was done in a discrete way and still in line with accepted safeguarding procedures. This was explained in a briefing at the start of the session.

I kept the data I gathered secured and password-protected. Participant’s names and identifiable characteristics are not visible and won’t be distributed or used beyond the research stated intentions. The gathered data has not been altered or misrepresented, and it will destroyed after ten years, also in line with University of Worcester guidelines.

My research methodology sought to minimise the risk of any harm, and participants could withdraw at any time without explaining a reason.



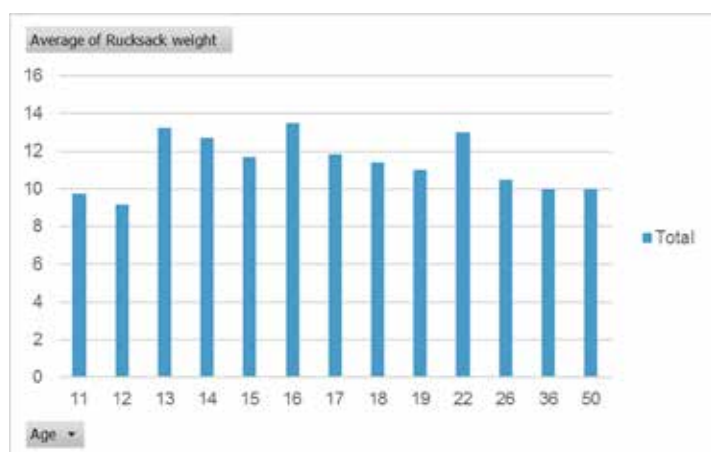


## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample was made up of 27 girls and women, and 49 boys and men (35% female, 65% male). The overall gender split in the Centre's participants and instructors over the study's period was 60% female, 40% male. The ages in the sample ranged from eleven to 50 years. This is typical of the Centre's participants, consisting mainly of students and a few adults who were with the groups, such as teachers or support workers.

The average weight of a rucksack was 11.66 kilograms with a standard deviation of 2.81. The maximum weight carried was 17.6 kilograms and the lightest was 6 kilograms. Graph 1 shows the average rucksack weights with the ages of the participant. The results show a small range of only 4.5 kilograms. This is because the core level of equipment remains the same across the age groups. The sleeping bags, roll mats, stoves, and, if carried, tents are all the same no matter the age or size of the participants. Clothing and personal items are the main variations in what the participants were carrying.

**Graph 1. Average rucksack weight in kg by participant age**



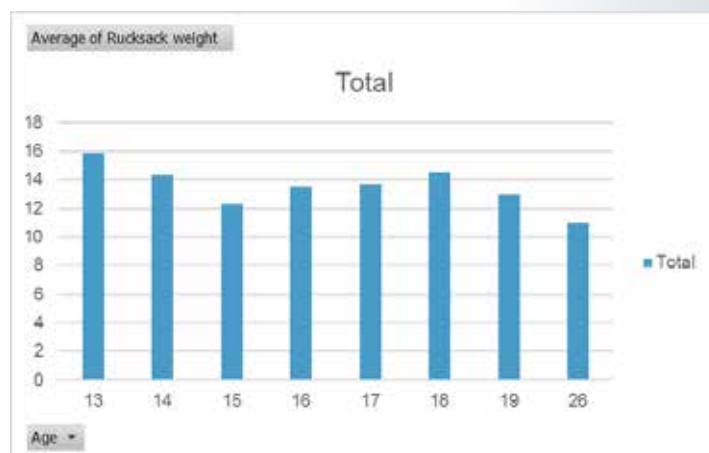
The average weights of the rucksacks link back to feedback gathered when the current rucksack design was introduced at the Aberdovey Centre in 2014. During the design stage, a standard set of expedition kit was used. Although the weight of the kit was recorded, the feedback was more about the design of the rucksack, though it was helpful in providing an insight into the kit carried as well. The feedback, noted that when packed the rucksack would be a maximum of 15 kilograms. This was calculated based on two people carrying their own basic kit and sharing a tent, food, and cooking equipment, which was common practice. However, it is now more often divided between three people. This reflects the younger students and the desire to keep the weight down, therefore fitting three people in the tent rather

than two. This feedback on the design also noted that hip belt position and changes were introduced to provide two different size of rucksack.

On some of the expeditions included in the study, participants used tents that were not carried in their rucksacks. Some of these expeditions stayed in cabins and some had tents dropped off at organised locations. This was a decision primarily made by the instructor running the group and was based on several factors, especially age and ability. Graph 1 shows a wide age range taking part in expeditions, but this includes some younger participants completing expeditions but not carrying tents.

Graph 2 shows the average weight of rucksacks that had tents in them by the age of participant. Little variation is observed between the ages although the results show that the 13- and 14-year-olds were carrying slightly heavier packs than the older participants. Graph 1 had a wider range of ages as this included all of those that went out on expedition. The 11-, 12-, 22-, 36-, and 50-year-olds do not appear as they did not carry tents on their expedition.

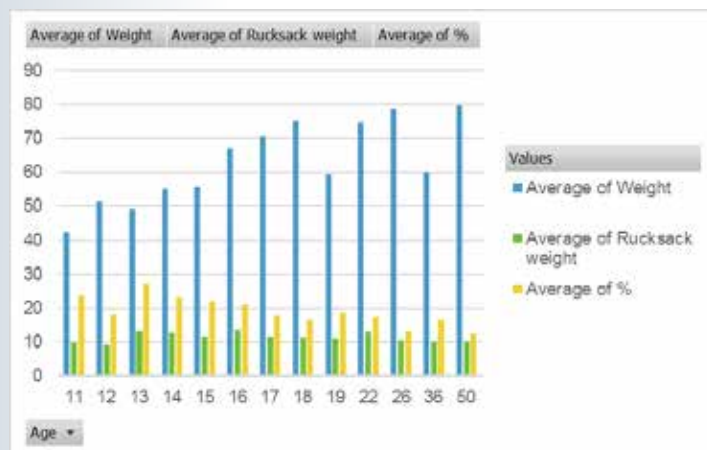
**Graph 2. Average rucksack weight with tents by age of participant**



In general, older participants tend to be heavier than younger ones. This leads to the percentage of body mass carried in all rucksacks being higher in the younger participants, as seen in Graph 3.



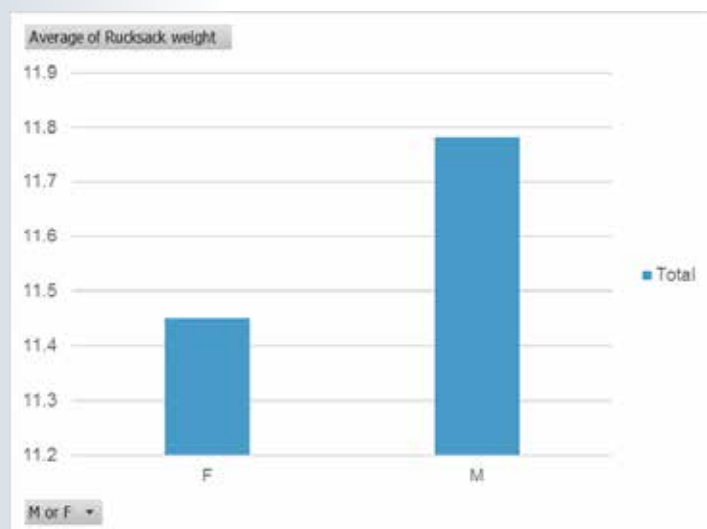
**Graph 3. Average weight of participants, all rucksacks, and percent of body mass**



The highest percentage of weight carried was 38.94%, for a 13-year-old girl. I have left this figure in the data as it was how the rucksacks were presented for weighing just before the expedition started. Having highlighted the weight of this pack the instructor re-distributed some of the weight amongst the group. That group of 11 participants (Group H) had heavy packs, with all at least 25% of body mass, six of which were 30%, of which three were over 35%.

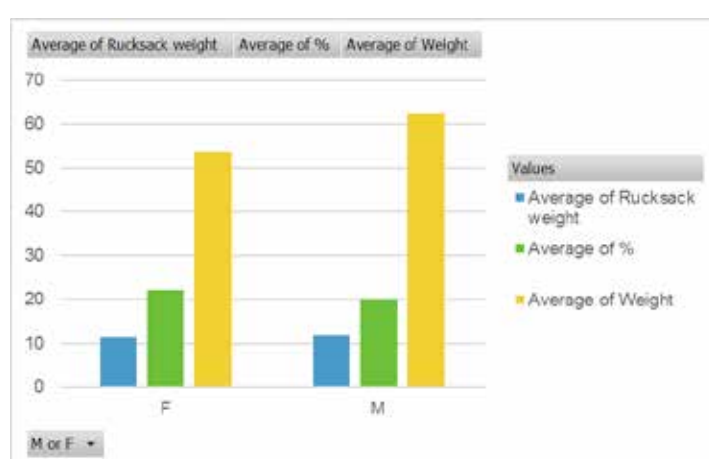
Looking at the weight of all rucksacks carried by the boys and the girls, the boys carried slightly more, but only by 0.33 of a kilogram on average.

**Graph 4. Average rucksack weight by female and male**



Splitting the weights of the participants down by male and female shows that the boys' rucksacks are slightly heavier than the girls' (Graph 5). With the rucksack weights being similar, this means that the girls are carrying a higher percentage of weight by about two percent.

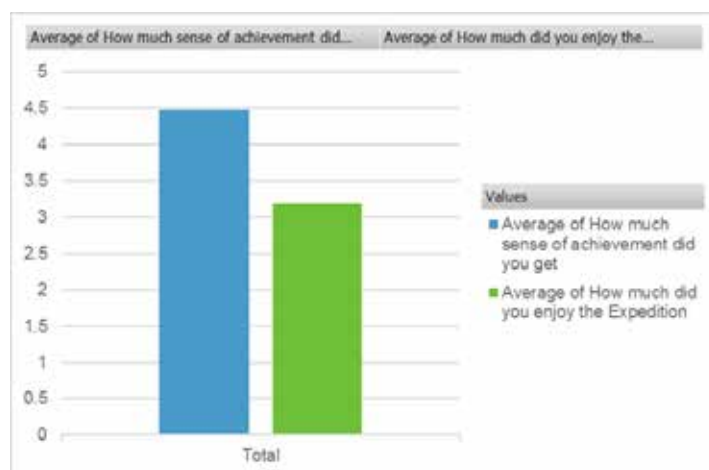
**Graph 5. Average weight of participants, rucksacks, and percent of body mass by male and female**



## POST-EXPEDITION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The data collected from the participant interviews, completed on their return from the expeditions, showed some interesting results. When asked about the enjoyment of the expedition, the participants gave an average score just over three out of five. The score for the sense of achievement that the participants had gained came out much higher, at four-and-a-half. These results are shown in graph 6.

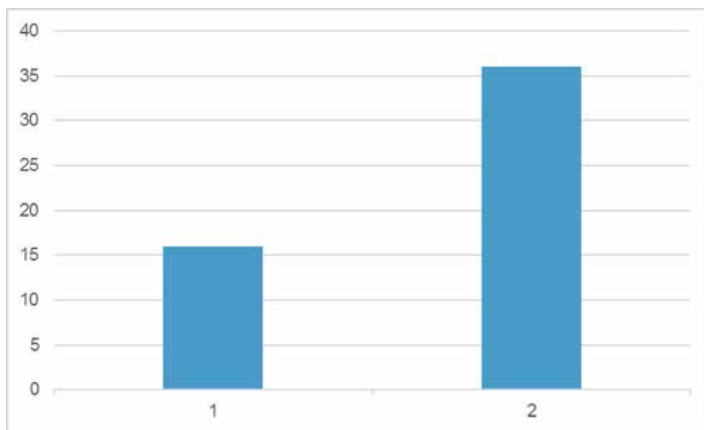
**Graph 6. Scores of enjoyment and achievement**



When asked if they would do it again, 16 (30%) of the participants said no and 36 (70%) said yes. Of the 36 that said yes, 26, or 72%, were male and ten, or 62%, were female.

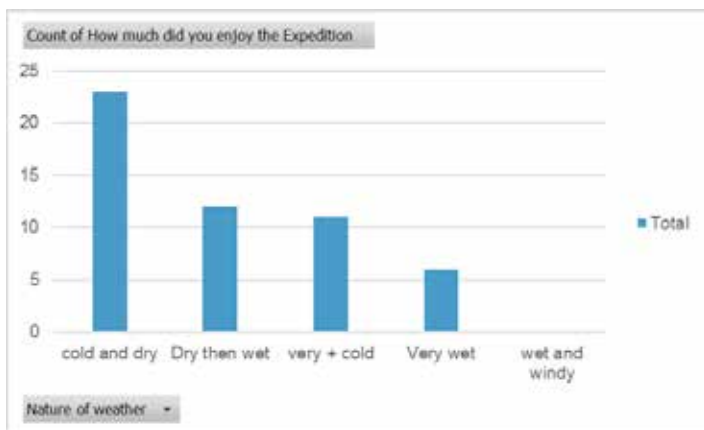


**Graph 7. Would you do it again?**



Not surprisingly the enjoyment score went down with wetter weather.

**Graph 8. Weather effect on enjoyment**

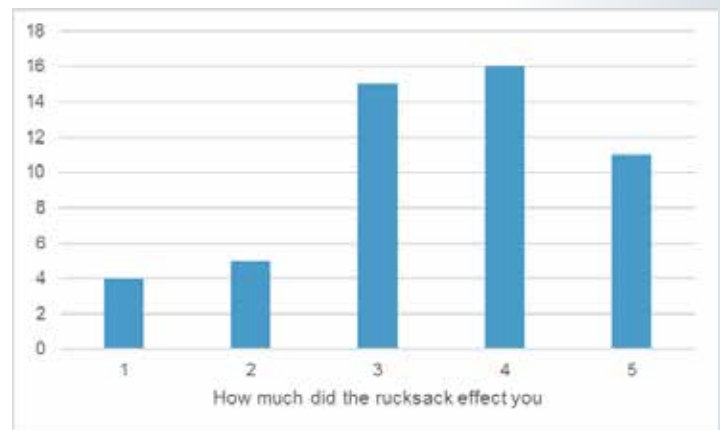


Of the 28 participants who gave a score of five in the 'sense of achievement' question, all apart from one said they would do the expedition again. In Group H (previously highlighted as carrying a high percentage of weight), eight of the 11 said they would do it again and all gave an achievement score of four or above.

It proved very difficult to gain meaningful results from the question around injuries caused by the rucksack. Many reported that they had some initial form of soreness in legs or shoulders but felt okay now. Nobody reported an actual injury that had required first aid.

In relation to the effect that the rucksack had on the participants, Graph 9 shows that the majority see it as having an effect, with only four giving the lowest score of one.

**Graph 9. How much did the rucksack affect you?**



The literature review provided evidence that carrying a rucksack influences the person carrying it, from potential injury to postural instability. The weight was represented as a percentage of the person's body mass, starting with school bags at 10%, daypacks at 15% and then expedition packs from 25% to 30% depending upon age.

The weight of a rucksack that is carried on an expedition will have a similar weight for all participants regardless of age or sex. If the expedition varies in terms of whether tents are carried or not, it still leaves the participants carrying similar weights. Rucksacks including tents weighed on average 13.83 kilograms with a standard deviation of 2.21. The maximum was 17.6 kilograms and the minimum was 9.75 kilograms. Rucksacks without tents were on average 9.71 kilograms with a standard deviation of 1.61, with a maximum of 15 kilograms and a minimum of six kilograms. This shows that when tents are included, the rucksacks weigh on average 4.12 kilograms more.





Although the rucksack weights themselves are not particularly high, when looked at as a percentage of the participants' body mass we see some interesting figures. The age group that carried the highest percentage weight on average was the 13-year-old group. The rucksacks that they carried were on average 27.3% of body mass and rucksacks with tents raised that to 33.2%. This is above all the recommendations that I have found. Also, female participants were noted to be carrying higher percentages of weight than their male companions.

The issue of postural stability was highlighted from the reports made by instructors. These are of any incidents or injuries that are recorded on a form and are compiled for each quarter of the year. The first quarter report (January to the end of March), which covers most of the period of the research, highlights five incidents during expeditions. Four of those were classed as slips or trips. These were all female with one girl aged 12, one 13, one 14, and one 37-year-old woman. These individuals may not have been in the study sample but these reports support the idea that the rucksack may lead to issues of postural stability.

The expedition plays an important role in the Outward Bound course and the development of the participants is shown very clearly in the sense of achievement scores, with some of the higher scores coming from participants who had carried more weight.

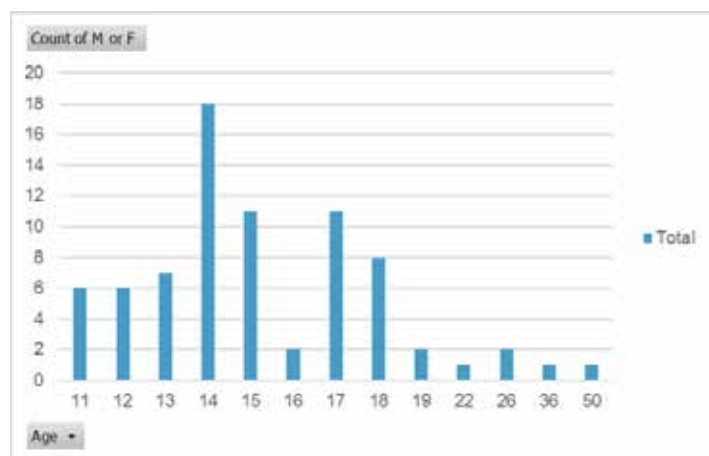
During my research, I also took the weights of the instructors working with the groups. I left those out of the data since the study focused on course participants. However, the highest weight I recorded for a rucksack was being carried by an instructor. Although in relation to body mass it came in 22%, this is a likely indicator of the weights being carried by instructors and some of them will be much higher in terms of percentage.



## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The accuracy of taking the weight of the students was difficult to achieve. To not know the names of the participants I decided to give them identity codes and then weigh each participant who volunteered. This was done at the start of the expedition and the clothing worn did vary with the weather. It was inappropriate to ask the participants to reduce the level of clothing to get a more accurate reading. Another option was to use the data from the medical enrolment form, which included weight. This meant I would have known the name of the participant and therefore would have needed to seek parental permission for the younger participants, which would have been very difficult. The sample size I had available to me was the participants that would attend a course at the Centre during February through April of 2017. Of those, 600 would be doing an expedition as part of the programme. This was my sampling frame. The sample itself was the participants who I was able to accompany when they went out on expedition. That gave me eleven groups with potentially 132 participants, from which 78 volunteered. The spread of ages is shown on Graph 10. I had no control over this spread.

**Graph 10. Spread of ages**



After the expedition, I administered the follow-up questionnaire myself. This was usually done on a one-to-one basis, with me asking the questions and recording the answers that were given. This fitted in around the work the Instructor running the group had to do. However, I was clearly a member of staff and this may have influenced the participant answers. As R. Tonrangeau suggests in "The Psychology of Survey Response," the desire to be viewed positively outweighs the desire to respond honestly. For a couple of the groups I asked them to write down the answers to the

questions that I read out. In effect this was a self-administered questionnaire that would reduce the desire to misrepresent, but may have been prone to a self-serving bias. As S.W. VanderStoep and D.D. Johnson suggest, this may lead to inaccurate responses but that it is a powerful and flexible way to collect data.

In some cases, I was unable to see the group on their return from expedition or get other instructors to ask the questions, and so the data is incomplete for several of the participants.

The sample was made up of a lot more boys than girls. It may have been that female participants were less willing to volunteer because of the issue of having their weight taken. I did not record the height of the participants but the indication of females carrying higher percentages of weight may be affected by the type of female that volunteered for the study.

## CONCLUSION

This research has produced some data to establish the likely weights that participants are carrying on expedition. These weights, although not excessively high, did show some commonalities across the various groups. This perhaps indicates that the instructors, in a desire to treat everybody equally, look to divide the weight across the group equally. This may have benefits in some ways but does not look at the individual's ability to carry weight.

The research also showed that the youngest participants, from 11 to 12 years old, usually did not carry tents and therefore the weights carried caused fewer issues. However, the group from 13 to 14 years of age were carrying tents and thus were the group with the highest percentage of body mass and therefore most at risk. With this age group, instructors need to make careful decisions about the nature of the expedition. They need to look at the spread of the weight across the group, the additional personal items that are carried that add to the weight, and, importantly, whether a tent is carried. The likelihood of injury from slips and trips with the rucksack also needs to be considered. This will require instructors to be more attentive in ensuring rucksack weights do not get too high.

Any new study designs will need to focus on rucksack weight, as adding to any of the current items will mean the age range that is of concern will grow. This would include tents and food. Future design work should also look at both men and boys, and women and girls.

Outward Bound Australia's Pack Weight Matrix, although a good indicator, does not allow for other factors apart from weight and so I would not recommend this as a must-do, but rather as good guidance to give to instructors.

## RECOMMENDED FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Investigate rucksack weight carried on longer expeditions of two to four overnight stays. The basic equipment carried will remain the same but the addition of the extra rations will increase the weight of the rucksacks. It is possible that the increase in weight will move a greater number of participants into the percentages of body mass that are close to or above the current recommendations.
2. Investigate the long-term effect of the regular carrying of rucksacks by instructors and the impact this could have on the longevity of an instructor's working life. ➡







## An Outward Bound Singapore Leadership & Service Award Story:

# Let Go & Move On

By OB Singapore

### HER STORY

As a former athlete, Jing-Wen had been given many opportunities to showcase and develop her skills and talents. Not forgetting 2013 when she was also given the chance to attend the try-outs for the Southeast Asian Games (SEA) and to represent Singapore as a national swimmer.

“This was, of course, huge for me. It signified a chance for me to step up and step out into the international stage through the most prestigious competition in the region.”

She recalled how she “trained a lot, and sacrificed a lot” during the preparatory stages. She even took a gap year during her Junior College days to attend an overseas training camp that her parents supportively funded. The hard work eventually paid off and she made it to the national team.

Albeit the victory of entering the prestigious competition, Jing-Wen regrettably caved under the pressures during the actual SEA Games preparation. She admitted: “I decided to take the easy route out, to give up and walk away from the sport”. In retrospect, she knew that her setback wasn’t in the competition but in the fact that she gave up what she had worked so hard for.

“As a result, I changed. From someone brimming with confidence, always daring and willing to try new things and speak out, I became someone lacking in confidence—an introvert who preferred to keep things to myself, fearing that my thoughts and ideas would never be good enough.” But things changed after she attended the OBS 21-day Classic Challenge Course.

### A NEW BEGINNING

Having heard from a senior about the opportunities and life experiences the OBS Leadership and Service Award (LSA) gave, Jing-Wen decided to take a leap of faith by applying for the award. She felt that she had “much more to learn” especially if she “wanted to go further in leading and serving”.

She was pretty confident about the physical challenges the 21-day course would bring since she already had prior experience as a former athlete. Instead, what worried her most was having to meet new and diverse people, and spending all her time with them. Yet at the end, she recalled how everything “exceeded all of my expectations,” mentioning that the activities “tested my mental capacities” and that she felt surprisingly physically drained after the many expeditions she endured.

### “I FELT THAT MAYBE I DIDN’T DESERVE TO BELONG HERE”

While the introvert preferred not to be in the limelight and had always tried to keep a closed door so that no one would see the vulnerable side of her, the 21-days stretched Jing wen and pushed her out of her comfort and quiet zone.

There were moments during the course where she was given opportunities to lead her watch. At the start, Jing-Wen remembered that she felt very insecure then. She was unsure about her abilities to lead others and feared that she wouldn’t be well accepted by the group, especially when the others seemed to be more capable. She was also very hesitant about decision-making and often, the others had to help her make decisions instead. “I felt that maybe I didn’t deserve to belong here” she shared.

## FEEDBACK AND ENCOURAGEMENT DID THE TRICK

Throughout the course, Jing-Wen remained open to feedback from her watch. “I realised that feedback was important if I wanted to continue learning and growing to be a better person and leader”, she said. In fact, it was through their constant support that Jing-Wen began to feel more confident of herself. Later on during the course, she was given another chance to lead the final expedition, and this time round she aced it.

“My kayak buddy, Alvin, encouraged me to step up, seeing it was our last expedition for the course. We also told ourselves to take up the challenge and push ourselves to realise our fullest potential”, Jing-Wen shared.

Despite little knowledge on what to expect, the duo stuck together and successfully led the watch through their expedition on kayak. “I thoroughly enjoyed myself, especially when I saw the entire mobile coming together to help and encourage each other”, she said, realising that it was in that moment when she felt accepted as a leader and was able to step up and display leadership.

## “IN ORDER TO TRULY MOVE ON, WE HAVE TO FIRST KNOW HOW TO LET IT GO”

As Jing-Wen reminisced, she shared a quote that her watch mate left her with during the reflection sessions. “In order to truly move on, we have to first know how to let it go” and that struck a chord in her heart. She realised then it was time to let go of her past failures, self-doubts and fears—to forget her stance at the SEA games and instead, “live with [her] heart on [her] sleeve” and truly be herself once again.

The experiences during Jing-Wen’s 21-day journey with OBS coupled with the many encouraging words from her watch eventually gave Jing-Wen the strength to step out of her pit and become a different and better person.

As aptly put by Jing-Wen, “for those who are still holding on to any past regrets, for those who have yet to put down their past disappointments and failures, let go. And then you can find it in yourself to finally move on.” ▶





# DESERT CENTRE

## Outward Bound Oman opens its first Centre for Outdoor Learning

By Mark Evans

Located on the shores of the Indian Ocean, some two hours' drive south of the capital city Muscat, lies a unique sand sea that is now the home to Oman's first purpose-built centre for outdoor learning.

Bounded to the north by the 6,000 ft Eastern Hajar mountains, and to the east by the Indian Ocean, the Sharqiya Sands (Ramlat Wahiba on the attached map) is an isolated sand desert in Oman, with an area of 12,500 square kilometres. It is one of those unique, increasingly scarce, silent places where mobile phones don't work and where there is little evidence of human activity. As such, it provides the perfect platform for Outward Bound Oman to run powerful wilderness courses each winter, when temperatures drop to a tolerable level.

The desert is possibly the most intensively studied arid environment on earth and has been at the heart of scientific interest since a three-year research expedition in the 1980s. Undertaken by the Royal Geographical Society in London, the expedition documented the diversity of the terrain and the fauna, noting 16,000 invertebrates, as well as 200 species of other wildlife. They also documented 150 species of native flora. This surprising biodiversity is due to the desert's proximity to the sea; as temperatures drop rapidly after sunset each day, a dew and sometimes a thick fog can appear at dawn that can equate to up to 0.5 millimetres of rainfall each day, so bringing precious, life-giving moisture to species of plants and animals that are uniquely adapted to their environment.

For the first eight years of its life, Outward Bound Oman has delivered mobile courses in the desert and mountains, working with 2,000 young people each year, supported out of 4x4 vehicles carrying water and supplies for the groups. That all changed in 2014, when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Al Said, Sultan of Oman, learnt more about what makes Outward Bound

unique. It was quickly agreed that Outward Bound was the perfect vehicle to nurture and shape the character and mindset of young people in Oman. A series of decisions were made: firstly, to establish Outward Bound in Oman as a wholly Omani entity, as an educational foundation set up by ministerial decree, and secondly, to allocate land and provide funding for the construction of three national training centres: one in the Sharqiya Sands, one in the capital city of Muscat, and the third at 8,000 ft altitude on Jebel Akdhar.

By the time you read this article, the first of those centres will have been formally opened in the desert, and construction of the second centre, in Muscat, will be underway.

Located on an area of 5,000 square metres, some two kilometres from the nearest power supply, and 12 kilometres from the nearest blacktop road, the desert centre has taken 12 months to construct and the remote location has presented a series of challenges for the contractor. Demonstrating Outward Bound's commitment to minimising environmental impact, it is Oman's first building totally powered by renewable energy and all water is treated and re-used on site.

The dominant factor to be considered at the design stage was the position of the sun. As a result, south-facing walls are especially thick, and windows both narrow and small. Bathrooms and taps are designed with water conservation in mind and key buildings oriented to provide maximum shade in the late morning, when most groups will arrive at the centre. Water has had to be transported in by tanker and workers on site have focused their efforts into the cooler hours of early morning and evening, with most outdoor work being done in the cooler winter months, and the interior work taking place when temperatures rise to 45–50 degrees Celsius outside in the summer.







Amongst other things, the Centre for Outdoor Learning has been equipped with an equipment store, an audiovisual room, two classrooms, and four learning pods, as well as a dining room, kitchen, medical room, outdoor climbing wall, fire-pit, prayer room, and amphitheatre. It has also been designed to provide multiple revenue streams, to act as a centre for Outward Bound youth courses, corporate training groups, and residential academic environmental research groups from schools, colleges, and universities. One year before opening, the centre received its first booking by a group of expedition medicine doctors who had identified the base as a perfect location for their annual training course.

An automatic weather station has been fitted to the roof of the building, enabling participant groups, and Outward Bound, to monitor the prevailing conditions remotely and to compare and contrast them with their local communities. In January 2018, supported by grant aid from the Anglo-Omani Society in London, and in partnership with the UK's Royal Geographical Society, Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Geographical Association, and Institute for Outdoor Learning, a group of four innovative geography teachers will fly from the UK to Oman for a week's fieldwork visit, the outcome of which will be a series of curriculum-linked lesson plans that will go some way to embedding Oman in the UK geography curriculum and so



further promoting the Centre and Outward Bound.

There will be no fluffy pillows, en-suite bathrooms, or comfortable beds at any of the three Oman centres. Our core wilderness courses will remain just that, with nights spent under the

stars or under canvas. The centres will, however, enable us to work with much greater numbers and will act as good start and end points for our courses. In terms of accommodation, there will be outdoor sleeping areas on the roof of the centre for those who wish to sleep under the stars, and alpine-hut style indoor wooden sleeping platforms able to sleep up to 60 people for residential research groups, or for younger age groups unable to cope with the physical demands of a full-blown Outward Bound expedition.

While the desert centre is now up and running, construction of the centre in Muscat has just begun. Due to open in the fourth quarter of 2018, the Muscat centre will act as the administrative base for Outward Bound in Oman, and as the central equipment store for all three centres. Part of the building will be an urban training centre, with an audiovisual and lecture room that we hope will host monthly adventure lectures and act as a hub for the outdoor community in Oman. Two learning and activity rooms, and an indoor climbing tower and challenge zone, will complete what we hope, in time, will become a very busy facility, as well as a great place to work. ➡









# OBI World Conference 2016 North Carolina, USA

By Iain Peter

Last year's Outward Bound International World Conference was hosted by Outward Bound USA and the North Carolina Outward Bound School, October 31st—November 4th, 2016. It was based at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina, USA. The theme of the conference was “Building Today for a Stronger Tomorrow.”

The conference was a chance to share successful developments with the Outward Bound network, to explore innovative solutions to communication, safety, marketing, and sales, and to contribute to Outward Bound International's strategic planning. The conference also saw the launch of the OBI “Global Communications Portal.”

The conference was attended by over 120 representatives from 31 member schools. Representatives included Executive Directors, Program Managers, Sales and Marketing Managers, and Board Chairs.

The conference outcomes in summary:

## 1. More Conformity

Schools were clear that they welcomed a “more joined up Outward Bound Community.”

There was agreement that Schools should continue to develop and deliver their own programs (i.e., no uniform program content) but that these should increasingly meet the requirements of OBI's “Key Elements of an Outward Bound Program.”

There was a clear wish that we continue to strengthen the brand. Key outcomes of this being:

- Improved access to the marketplace
- More consistent programs
- Improved engagement with funders

There was agreement that a strong brand is more than a logo—it includes program content, quality and consistency of provision, and clarity about what differentiates OB in the marketplace.

OBI was encouraged to develop support and resources to facilitate all of the above across the network.

Possible OBI initiatives might include:

- Guidance on program content
- Support for marketing
- Branding resources (video, web, social media, etc.)
- Fundraising support and services
- Continued development and building of the brand—resources for Schools to help differentiate OB

## 2. Communication

There was very strong support and enthusiasm for the new “Global Portal” (see article, page 13) which would replace the OBI Wiki and would facilitate communication, sharing, and collaboration.

The Global Portal needs to:

- Be dynamic
- Have managed content
- Be secure

OBI was encouraged to provide support to Schools in the use of the Portal.

Possible OBI initiatives might include:

- Training
- Appointment of a Portal Manager
- Content generation
- Regular webinars
- Management and facilitation of discussion groups













### 3. OBI Capacity

The Conference recognised that it was unrealistic to expect much more from the existing OBI staff resources. Nevertheless, there was real enthusiasm for increased support and services from OBI. OBI was encouraged to:

- Investigate fundraising opportunities which could be used to resource more staff
- Work with Schools to identify collaborative opportunities. e.g., shared staff, sabbaticals
- Put in place a Portal Manager and maybe a “Partnership Manager”

Possible OBI initiatives might include:

- Fundraising staff
- Appointment of a Portal Manager
- Staff placements with OBI
- Increased training capacity

### 4. Support

Schools were looking for support from OBI in the following key areas:

- Staff mentoring (particularly senior staff but also instructors)
- Facilitating staff training (technical and other training, e.g., finance, Global Portal, sales and marketing, etc.)
- Fundraising
- Establishing and endorsing levels of competence for instructors
- Providing generic Outward Bound guidance

Possible OBI initiatives might include:

- Organisation / coordination / provision of staff training
- Accreditation of training, defining standards and badging competence
- Fundraising (see above)
- More guidance materials
- Increased training capacity


### 5. Safety

Safety remains a high priority, with the Conference endorsing the Program Review system now in place. There was strong support for:

- Continuation of the Program Review regime
- Additional safety support and guidance
- Collaboration on safety matters

Possible OBI initiatives might include:

- Direct guidance and support on matters of safety
- Program Review training for all Program Managers
- Improved risk management training and resources
- Accident and incident data collection, analysis, and feedback
- Increased training capacity

The next OBI World Conference is planned to be held in the Sultanate of Oman at Outward Bound Oman’s new Desert Centre in January of 2019. 





# Research: The Therapeutic Impact of Outward Bound for Veterans

By David Scheinfeld, University of Texas and Chad Spangler, Outward Bound Veterans

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health issues and suicide completions among U.S. military veterans and soldiers are rising, yet the rate of those seeking help remains low. Not including those that go unreported, it is estimated that 51 percent of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans have received mental health diagnoses. From 2002 to 2008, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnoses have increased from 2 percent to 22 percent. Seventy percent of those cases are comorbid diagnoses of

Despite these high rates of mental health issues, it is estimated that only one-third of veterans diagnosed with mental health problems seek help. Of those veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, it is estimated that less than 10 percent attended the minimum number of mental health sessions required for adequate treatment of PTSD. Age (under 25) and gender (being male) appear to further decrease veterans' likelihood of seeking out mental health services. Within the military culture, a stigma associated

with utilizing mental health services appears to be a primary contributor to veterans' resistance to seeking help: i.e., fear that getting help is a sign of weakness or will negatively impact one's professional or social life.

The prevalence of mental health disorders combined with a lack of help-seeking among veterans often leads to a stressful reintegration process. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) attributes a staggering suicide rate, roughly 6,000 veterans a year (20 percent of U.S. suicides), to reduced help-seeking, unaddressed mental health issues, and the often confusing and overwhelming transition from military to civilian life.

Moreover, The Department of Defense recently released a report providing the shock-

ing statistic that the United States has lost more soldiers to suicide than to soldier casualties since 2002.

depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, which puts a veteran at even greater risk. Of note, young veterans (less than 25 years of age), compared to older counterparts (over 40 years of age), were found to have 2 to 5 times higher rates of PTSD, alcohol, and drug use disorder diagnoses.







An exploratory qualitative study by Scheinfeld and Rochlen found that an Outward Bound veterans course provided the following psychosocial benefits for veterans: increased closeness with others/intimacy, patience and less reactivity, ability to relate to and express emotions, self-confidence, confidence to cope, physical health, and decreased isolation. Other research shows that Outward Bound Veterans also helped Vietnam veterans address post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and increased OEF/OIF veterans' sense of coherence and resilience.

This study examined the impact of an Outward Bound Veterans course as an adjunct to PTSD group therapy on veterans' psychosocial

Considering the above-mentioned rates of diagnosable mental health issues and suicides, many argue the nation is currently facing a public health crisis that needs to be addressed immediately. In an effort to provide services that transcend the stigma-related barriers to care, it is critical to explore alternative avenues for veterans to receive mental health assistance. To this end, the Department of Defense and the VA are calling for innovative methods to provide outreach and mental health support to returning soldiers and veterans.

function. They found that veterans identified three underlying aspects of the Outward Bound experience that promoted cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. First, veterans reported the Outward Bound Veterans course provided them with a strong sense of camaraderie and trust. The teamwork and physical reliance on one another fostered a rapid development of trust among them. This led to greater a comfort in sharing more about themselves and their mental health issues. Second, veterans commented that the length of the retreat combined with hearing other veterans talk about shared experiences led to a greater comfort level to share and process issues related to their military experience. This


A complementary and alternative approach that shows much potential, but has received limited scholarly attention, is the Outward Bound Veterans Program. This national program provides fully funded therapeutic initiatives that combine outdoor group adventure activities (e.g., hiking, canoeing, etc.) with facilitated therapeutic group process sessions that engage participants cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. The primary goal of the Outward Bound Veterans is to provide an experience where veterans build camaraderie, outdoors skills, and personal growth in a team-based, therapeutic adventure model.





phenomenon relates to the concept of Universality where people find comfort in sharing personal information when they hear others have similar issues or experiences. Finally, veterans stated that the Outward Bound experience reminded them of their military experiences. For example, they experienced team-based physical tasks, campfire chats, and physical and emotional challenges similar to the military. Veterans reported that their recalling of these experiences intermixed with an emotionally supportive group culture, helped them begin to address feelings and memories they had repressed.

A review of the literature within military psychology suggests multiple reasons why Outward Bound Veterans may align well with veterans' interests and needs. Outward Bound Veterans' use of high adventure activities seems well suited to meet veterans' need for adrenaline-inducing activities as a physical and psychological outlet. Furthermore, veterans' desire to stay physically fit and be physically challenged is supported by Outward Bound Veterans. Finally, veterans tend to enjoy engaging in shared goal-directed activities to accomplish tasks and develop a sense of camaraderie, which is a central goal of the mission of the veteran program.

In sum, Outward Bound Veterans is poised to provide a therapeutic adventure alternative to those veterans who are in need of help but who may not seek out traditional mental health support systems. Based on several findings, veterans seek help less often and are at higher risk of committing suicide or of letting debilitating mental health diagnoses go untreated, leading to increased severity of symptoms. With this in mind, it is critical to examine alternative and complementary therapeutic approaches, such as Outward Bound Veterans, that provide veteran-centered, psychosocial support assistance to meet the unique needs of veterans. 

Note this article has no references. Readers interested in a copy with references should contact the corresponding author: Chad Spangler ([cspangler@outwardbound.org](mailto:cspangler@outwardbound.org)) or download the full paper at: [www.outwardbound.org/lib/file/manager/Outward\\_Bound\\_Veterans\\_Research\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.outwardbound.org/lib/file/manager/Outward_Bound_Veterans_Research_FINAL.pdf)



## OUTWARD BOUND VETERANS

### ***About Outward Bound for Veterans***

Outward Bound for Veterans helps returning service members and recent veterans readjust to life at home through powerful wilderness courses that draw on the healing benefit of teamwork and challenge through use of the natural world.

Service members and veterans take part in wilderness expeditions that are physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging in order to build the self-confidence, pride, trust, and communication skills necessary to successfully return to their families, employers, and communities following wartime service. These expeditions purposefully scaffold wartime experiences (carrying heavy packs, sore shoulders, rubbery legs, sleeping out, strange noises, sweat, dirt, frustration and anger) with authentic achievements to create positive emotional and mental outcomes.

Wilderness activities are used as metaphors for daily life experiences in the pursuit of individual and group excellence, illuminating how the support and collaboration needed to meet Outward Bound goals can positively impact participants' interactions with others at home. Many veterans experienced courage, brotherhood, and a real sense of power and competence while in combat. Outward Bound gives veterans and service members the opportunity to reexperience these strengths in themselves in a different context, thus helping them to transition back to civilian life.

### ***Outward Bound for Veterans***

Outward Bound's first courses for veterans were established through collaboration with Veterans Administration Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) units to serve Vietnam War veterans. Outward Bound renewed the program in 2006 to serve Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, running one such course each year. The 2006 and 2007 courses both received overwhelmingly positive evaluations. Based on this success, in 2008 Outward Bound received a three-year, \$4.3 million grant from the Military Family Outdoor Initiative Project. More recently Outward Bound for Veterans has received the generous support of Holiday Retirement Communities, Fortress Investments, and a network of private donors and charitable foundations that allow us to serve over 600 veterans a year.



# STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING

## *with Outward Bound Germany*

In September 2016 Outward Bound Germany introduced Stand Up Paddling (SUP) as a test project. After successful fundraising via the platform betterplace.com, the project was soon launched with young adults in the course context. Today OB Germany uses 12 boards frequently. The participants enjoy learning a new skill and the Outward Bound philosophy is perfectly supported. The versatility of the inflatable SUPs has especially convinced the OB instructors. For example, the SUPs are used for expeditions to get from one side of a lake to the other, students can share one SUP and then need to coordinate themselves, and the SUPs are also used during course debriefs as a peaceful space in beautiful surroundings. ▶







# "THE ONLY MOUNTAIN WORTH CLIMBING"




## OUTWARD BOUND SINGAPORE'S OUTDOOR EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2017

As part of commemorating its 50th Anniversary, Outward Bound Singapore partnered with the Singapore University of Social Sciences to organize the inaugural Outdoor Education Conference in May, 2017. More than 300 experiential educators, practitioners, and policymakers attended the two-day event featuring keynote speakers Mr. Peter Hillary, the renowned New Zealand mountaineer; Dr. Peter Allison, Associate Professor at Pennsylvania State University, USA; and Mr. Eric Boggs, National Outdoor Leadership School instructor and faculty member at the University of Oregon, USA. In a *Straits Times*-media interview, Mr. Hillary said, "Outdoor learning is social and experiential and has the power to affect your heart and your emotions, which is a very powerful thing," adding that the outdoors "strips away the superfluous" and "puts us into very simple situations where we are forced to reconnect with nature and those around us."

The conference theme, "The Only Mountain Worth Climbing," invited participants to challenge contemporary perspectives on outdoor education and its future role in developing ruggedness, resilience, and leadership qualities in our youths. During the conference, the "Mountains" were used as a metaphor for the various outdoor education approaches that can and should be undertaken to meet the emerging challenges in society today.

A highlight of the event was the Blue Peter Challenge conducted at Pulau Ubin where practitioners collaborated in groups to pit their leadership and team-building skills in various problem-solving scenarios which tested their knowledge of technical skills such as wilderness first aid, camp-craft, and open-water proficiency.

This conference was also an opportunity for participants to learn from each other, hear different perspectives, share innovative practices, renew existing bonds, and make new friends. 

ORGANISED BY

**Singapore University  
of Social Sciences**



IN COLLABORATION WITH









# Wilderness Risk Management Conference

by Rob Chatfield



In early September 1994 a group of 190 individuals gathered in the small Pacific Northwest town of Conway, Washington (population 78), to discuss wilderness safety. Located in the Skagit River delta at the western edge of the rugged North Cascade Mountains, Conway is an eminently suitable location for a group of outdoors people to meet. It is bounded by mountains to its east, Pacific Ocean estuaries to the west, and nourished by the glacier-fed South Fork of the Skagit River. It is also a wintering ground for snow geese and tundra swans migrating from Alaska and Siberia. In other words it's a nice outdoorsy kind of place.

These 190 people had come from around the United States to attend the inaugural Wilderness Risk Managers' Conference. It was the first time in the United States that such a broad representation of the wilderness adventure community had met in one place just to talk about the unique risks of its industry. The conference was a culmination of several conversations that came into focus during June 1992, when the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) convened a meeting of leaders from US-based wilderness education organizations at its Lander, Wyoming, headquarters to discuss how to better communicate and share information about risks in the wilderness. The meeting would establish what became the Wilderness Risk Managers' Committee, a group that included representatives from the American Alpine Club, American Mountain Guides Association, Association for Experiential Education, NOLS, National Park Service, Outward Bound USA, and several other nationally prominent organizations.

This group met again one year later in Boulder, Colorado. A key highlight of the second meeting was an agreement to sponsor a 1994 conference that would "...educate wilderness practitioners on risk management and practical safety skills; share field and administrative techniques in risk management; raise

risk management standards in the wilderness adventure industry; and foster communication and interaction with a broader group of wilderness risk managers." The nascent committee's Conway conference was the beginning of a decades-long collaboration of leading wilderness educational organizations that in as many years brought the Wilderness Risk Management Conference (as renamed in 1998) to 16 US states and one Canadian province.

In the more than 20 years since its first conference, the WRMC (now the more familiar moniker) has grown from 15 speakers and a handful of represented organizations to 76 presenters and 226 different organizations in 2016. What was once a gathering of US industry insiders has now become an event that increasingly draws from the international community and includes people from a broad range of academic and other disciplines including scientific, technical, administrative, economic, safety, risk, and legal. Regarded in the U.S. as the premier event for outdoor professionals to share preferred risk practices, successes, and challenges, the WRMC has also attracted an impressive and varied slate of keynote speakers and presenters that has included renowned mountaineers, widely-read and bestselling authors, leading academics, national park superintendents and rangers, environmentalists, lawyers, and even a NASA space shuttle commander.

In his book "RISK! A Practical Guide for Deciding What's Really Safe and What's Really Dangerous in the World Around You," 2011 WRMC keynote speaker David Ropeik gives a simple definition of risk: "[it] is the idea that something might happen, usually something bad." In the various fields of wilderness and adventure education, however, bad things do not usually happen from exposure to the managed risks of activities or environments. Nonetheless, the WRMC owes its very existence to such an event, as Max McQuarrie and Liz Tuohy explain in





their 2013 paper about the WRMC: “Twenty Years of Practical Solutions for Wilderness Risk Management.”


*In 1989, after climbing Mt. Warren, a young National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) student named David Black was struck and killed by falling rock while descending. In the critical incident review of Black's death, it was learned that there was contradictory rock-fall management approach practices between Outward Bound and NOLS. In trying to understand what happened and why, Black's family challenged NOLS to create dialogue that they felt did not formally exist with and among other outdoor organizations and professionals.*

It was that challenge that led to conversation among senior administrative and safety staff at NOLS about the need for collaboration with other outdoor professionals. And, in turn, it was the recognition of the potential of collaboration among the original members of the Wilderness Risk Managers' Committee that resulted in the development of that first conference held in Conway.

Since 1998, NOLS, Outward Bound USA, and the Student Conservation Association have jointly sponsored and organized the WRMC. Its current purpose is to provide a forum to learn and share common practices in wilderness risk management, and to contribute to a culture of open dialogue among educators, leaders, administrators, students, and other members of the outdoor industry. The WRMC is a gathering of knowledgeable professionals who want to help each other understand and manage risks in wilderness programming. More recently, two US universities (University of Utah and Western State Colorado University) now allow their students to register for credits based on conference attendance, and continuing education/prior learning units/credits are available from various professional associations and bodies.

Previous presentation topics selected from WRMC conferences include Using Case Studies as a Risk Management Teaching Methodology | The Role of Medical Directors in Risk Management | Conducting Internal and External Incident Reviews | Urban Outdoor Program Risk Management | Theory v Reality: Lessons Learned in Crisis Management | Leading Beyond Invincibility | Group-Think, and Other Catastrophic Attitudes | Incident Tracking Database: Improving Safety through Advanced Data Analytics | Fundamental Legal Issues | Updates in Wilderness Medicine | Working with the Media in a Crisis | Human Factors in Decision Making | Culture, Competency and Risk: Where the Three Shall Meet | Applying Risk Homeostasis to Wilderness and Adventure Programming.

As this issue of OBI Journal goes to press, the WRMC will have just concluded its 24th annual conference, in Portland, Maine. Next year's conference is to be held in Portland, Oregon, from October 3 to 5.

Further information about this conference can be found at the WRMC website: [www.nols.edu/wrmc](http://www.nols.edu/wrmc) 



# Defining Outward Bound

**out • ward** [out' werd] *adjective* 1. of or relating to the outside, or exterior

**bound** [bownd'] *adjective* 1. going or intending to go;  
on the way to; destined (usually followed by for) ; headed for; on a trajectory to;

By Iain Peter

During the 2016 OBI World Conference in North Carolina, William Ripley, Director of Learning and Adventure at the UK's Outward Bound Trust, delivered a thought-provoking presentation entitled "Communicating a Clear Message — What Makes Outward Bound Effective." Will outlined the work that OBT had undertaken in refining the definition of Outward Bound so that it could be widely communicated and understood by participants, parents, teachers, customers, and OB staff.

The presentation triggered much discussion and debate amongst delegates and by the end of the Conference it was clear that there was a real appetite for OBI to continue to advance the work we began back in Germany in 2014.

Some of the outcomes of this conversation were:

## Alignment of Schools

It was reaffirmed that OBI needs to continue to present a common approach to Outward Bound so that we can collectively describe what we mean by "Outward Bound."

## Stronger Brand Presence

Discussion of this point resulted in the "new" brand guidelines (<https://outwardboundglobal.sharepoint.com/Branding/Forms/Brand%20manual.aspx>), which have been warmly embraced and implemented by most Schools across the network.

## Improved Definition and Understanding of "What is Outward Bound and How Can We Make It More Effective?"

This discussion point built on the work presented in Germany in 2014 and is captured in the document "Key Elements of an Outward Bound Program," which defined the basis of Outward Bound as:

"To help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings."

To further expand these points, I now present a short summary of what Outward Bound stands for in 2017:

### OUTWARD BOUND'S CORE VALUES ARE:

Courage, Trust, Integrity, Compassion, Cooperation

### OUTWARD BOUND LEARNING FOCUSES ON:

#### 1. Character Development

Outward Bound courses encourage participants to develop greater understanding of themselves, of others, and of the community around them through insight into the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual self.

Key areas of development are:

Self-knowledge, Leadership, and Acceptance of Responsibility  
Tenacity, Self-Reliance, and Teamwork  
Physical Well-being, Courage, and Skills Improvement  
Ability to Transcend Self-imposed Limits

#### 2. Compassion and Service

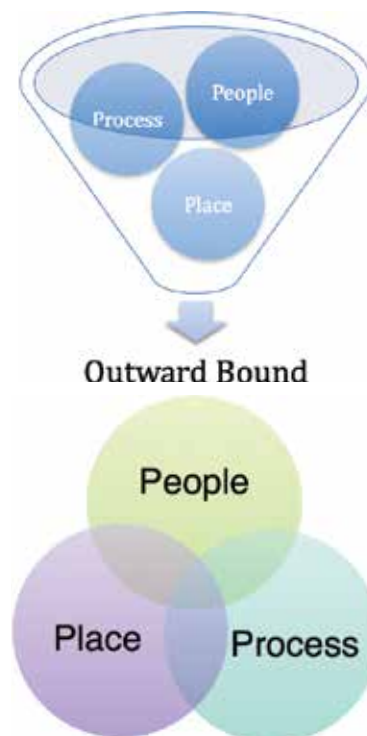
As a values-based organisation, Outward Bound asks course participants to embrace our common humanity, our diversity, and the natural world. Outward Bound courses promote a caring connection among participants, instructors, and the world around them.

Compassionate behavior and a service ethic are essential to successful completion of an Outward Bound course, encompassing both giving to and receiving from others.

#### 3. Social and Environmental Responsibility

A sense of responsibility for one's self, for others, and for the environment are central tenets of Outward Bound's teachings. Participants are asked to make choices and take actions that will result in a positive impact on society and the environment.

Outward Bound achieves this learning through a unique combination of:







## LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE — Our Process

Outward Bound is committed to an educational process based on instruction, action, and reflection. Experiences on Outward Bound courses are intentionally designed, presented, and reviewed to instill Outward Bound's Core Values and Operating Principles in a manner that ensures that the learning is transferable to other situations.

## ADVENTURE AND CHALLENGE IN THE OUTDOORS — Our Place

Outward Bound is recognised as a leader in providing experiential education in the outdoors where activities require special effort and where remarkable experiences involve uncertain outcomes within acceptable risk.

## EXPERT STAFF — Our People

Outward Bound courses are delivered with high standards of quality and risk management. Instructors are trained and experienced in facilitating learning through adventure. They have highly developed outdoor leadership skills and through creative talent, they design and deliver learning-focused programs.

## Our Work in 2017

Throughout this year, Outward Bound International has continued to develop this model. We have refined our thinking and now we believe we have defined what it is that makes Outward Bound special, effective, and unique.

When we combine (and only when we combine) the right People, with the right Process in the right Place we get the full Outward Bound experience and benefit. We believe that this combination of People, Process, and Place is what makes Outward Bound unique — and fundamentally different.

Other methodologies may combine, for example, People and Place, for example on a climbing course, or Process and People (in a structured learning environment) but it is only Outward Bound that combines all three.

It might be helpful to further explain our methodology along the following lines:

## Our Belief

“We are all better than we know. If only we can be brought to realise this, we may never again be prepared to settle for anything else” – Kurt Hahn.

## Our People:

- Trained and experienced facilitators of learning through adventure
- Expert outdoor practitioners
- People with broad experience
- A pool of creative talent which enables development of solutions-focused and innovative programs
- Experienced educators who facilitate learning
- Educators who challenge and impel people to perform
- Highly qualified and experienced outdoor instructors

## Our Process:

- Experiential learning and development using the outdoors
- Practical application of theoretical models with continuous-reviewing and reflection
- Instillation of new behaviours and skills that transfer to the participant's home, school, and work environments and that improve performance

- Focus on personal journey
- Focus on experiential knowledge and transferable skills
- Focus on continuous reviewing and reflection

## Our Place:

- Inspiring and challenging environments that work as catalysts for changing behaviours
- Adventures tailored to the needs and ability of each participant or group, using mountains, lakes, rivers, deserts, jungles, and forests close to our School
- Dedicated venues in areas of wilderness, natural beauty, and rugged outdoor environment
- Natural environments yielding real adventures
- Inspiring locations provide limitless opportunities with a unique and challenging scale of experience

## In Conclusion

If we all can agree to use a common language and common methodologies when we describe and deliver Outward Bound, then we can share and exploit the benefits of:

- Being part of an international organisation
- The research that has been undertaken by the larger Schools which establishes the case for the effectiveness of Outward Bound (<https://outwardboundglobal.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Community%20Impact%20Reports%20and%20Evaluations.aspx>)
- A stronger brand that delivers on the agreed definitions

I hope you agree that this foundation can only help Outward Bound International achieve the mission we agreed to in North Carolina:

*“We make our member schools more effective and more resilient.”*

In future, when you describe Outward Bound to customers, participants, teachers, and Outward Bound staff, try to use the common language of People, Place, and Process.

Although we may all deliver different Outward Bound Programs, we can all be united through our common understanding and our common goal. This will help define our unique brand of experiential, adventurous outdoor learning; and this will in turn make our Schools stronger and more resilient resulting in more life-changing experiences for our participants. 📌







# OUTWARD BOUND BELGIUM'S PROJECT REFLECT: ON THE REFLECTIVE ATMOSPHERE IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

by Dirk De Vilder and Bert Vandenbussche

Outward Bound Belgium has been involved in the European training world for more than 20 years. In 1997 Dirk De Vilder started the first European training on experiential learning with partners from Lithuania, Latvia, and Greece. This resulted later in the foundation of Via Experientia, a training network of four partners ([www.viaexperientia.net](http://www.viaexperientia.net)) which has organized more than 15 long-term training programs on experiential learning. This year the course focused on facilitating groups and leading teams.

Since the founding of Via Experientia, we have been improving our experiential approach. Research on our courses both in Outward Bond and Via Experientia proves that our process-oriented way of working seems extremely powerful in helping diverse groups of people to grow and develop. For example, one can read in “Via Experientia: process and outcomes as they are experienced by the participants” by Aurelija Čepienė and Arturas Deltuva:

*The participants feel the value and deep impact of the course. The course encouraged them to make important changes in their professional and personal lives. The participants are motivated to continue learning and working further in the ways discovered during the course. For some participants the course seems like ‘a peak of an iceberg’, and they are eager to go further and deeper into process-oriented learning both in professional and personal ways. The program of the course has been evaluated as balanced with a logical flow (intensive experience, quality reflection, intensive coached practice, and generalization) and, in the words of one participant, as ‘a top class educational activity.’*

What makes this approach so powerful seems to be the reflective atmosphere that is co-created by the facilitators and learners in our courses. This insight lead us to start a research project in January 2015 on “Reflection as a core transferable competence in higher and adult education.”

This two-year program, called REFLECT, was financed under the action of Strategic Partnerships within the Erasmus program of the European Union. The project brought together partners from four non-formal and four formal higher education organizations from Belgium, Iceland, Italy, and Lithuania. It resulted in the publication *Holding the space: Facilitating reflection and inner readiness for learning* in August 2016.

Within Project REFLECT we did not want to elaborate new conceptualizations or methodologies for reflection, but rather to focus on the “backside” of the reflective process, on those more personal and interpersonal aspects in the lives of groups which an educator can neither direct nor control fully, but which are essential for the quality of the reflective processes. We found instead that the educator can steer those aspects in order to broaden the scope of learning from a more superficial level of problem solving (by straightforward reasoning on cause-and-effect) towards a deeper level of reflection (by inquiring experiences more holistically).

Knowing this, we promote the facilitation within the group of students of a “reflective atmosphere,” i.e., an overall and evolving climate conducive to reflection, or, to put it differently, a mood or tone which pervades the group with qualities that elicit and deepen everyone’s reflective attentiveness.

It is interesting in this respect to mention how the French expression *faire attention à*, which can be literally translated as “to make/create attention for,” also bears the connotation of “taking care of.” It indicates a direct link between the potentiality for being attentive (and therefore for being reflective) and the need to take care of certain qualities in the lives of groups. In this sense, due to an increasing level of emotional safety, explorative inqui-



Holding the space, the final publication of the REFLECT research program.

ry, and open dialogue within the group, learners begin to notice, to explore, and to question deeper layers of thoughts, feelings, values, and intuitions they did not (want to) before, and they are more willing to share those explorations and questions with others.

As a result,

everyone contributes to the evolving reflective atmosphere within the group.

At this point it is important to emphasize that a trainer cannot construct the reflective atmosphere on his or her own by following *this* method step-by-step or by applying *that* trick. He or she can only facilitate the development of the reflective atmosphere by adopting a more indirect, co-creative approach of continued fine-tuning between him- or herself and the learners concerning the content of the reflection as well as some surrounding conditions, which deal with the process of both individuals and group. In a series of ten letters and one postscript in *Holding the space* we described these conditions from the perspective of the trainer. Without being able to go deeper into them in this article, we do want to summarize these conditions as following:

1. Raising awareness within learners to own their learning in personally meaningful ways
2. Developing relationships within the group based on trust, openness, empathy, transparency, dialogue, and feedback
3. Co-creating the reflective process
4. Managing to keep up the steering paradox of intrinsic learning processes
5. Directing the reflective attention of learners
6. Slowing down and valuing moments of not-knowing
7. Deepening your questions progressively
8. Recalling that reflection can never be imposed, only kindly invited
9. Always considering reflection as a broad, deepening, and holistic process
10. Being careful how to assess reflection (or not at all).



Here we want to underline how the development of the reflective atmosphere may be blocked by relying solely on a standardized Q&A dynamic between trainer and learners. "What have you learned during this activity? What went well? What went poorly? What can you do better next time?" are typical questions which (may) limit the reflection process to rational reasoning for problem-solving purposes. You could say that the distance between question and answer is just too short, which results in quick and superficial answers from learners.

This links to the remark of the New Zealand trainer and writer Martin Ringer in his 2008 book *Group Action*:

*When there appears to be only one answer to any question, no further space exist for curiosity or enquiry, with a consequent loss of the reflective space. Therefore, any person [trainer or learner] who consistently makes definitive statements about what is true in the group will potentially close down the reflective space.*


Therefore, it is essential that the trainer does not close down the questioning too soon (for example, after having found the 'solution' to the problem). By a process-oriented way of questioning

he or she should rather "hold the reflective space" for learners, i.e., he or she would be stimulating learners to fully explore their experiences by being receptive and open as well as being inquiring and thoughtful concerning their ideas, feelings, values, and intuitions.

No matter the methodology or conceptualization one adheres to, so Project REFLECT states, the reflection process in groups

gains from the trainer's reflective way of being. We qualified this in the final letter in *Holding the space* as the trainer's "reflexive presence." It refers to his or her intrinsic capacity to hold inside him- or herself a reflective space which helps the learners and groups to deepen their reflection.

Curious to read more about Project REFLECT? You can download the publication *Holding the*

*Space* for free as a pdf on [www.reflecting.eu/project/holding-the-space](http://www.reflecting.eu/project/holding-the-space) 

Contact: [Dirk.Devilder@outwardbound.be](mailto:Dirk.Devilder@outwardbound.be) or [Bert.Vandenbussche@outwardbound.be](mailto:Bert.Vandenbussche@outwardbound.be)

*"When there appears to be only one answer to any question, no further space exist for curiosity or enquiry, with a consequent loss of the reflective space."*



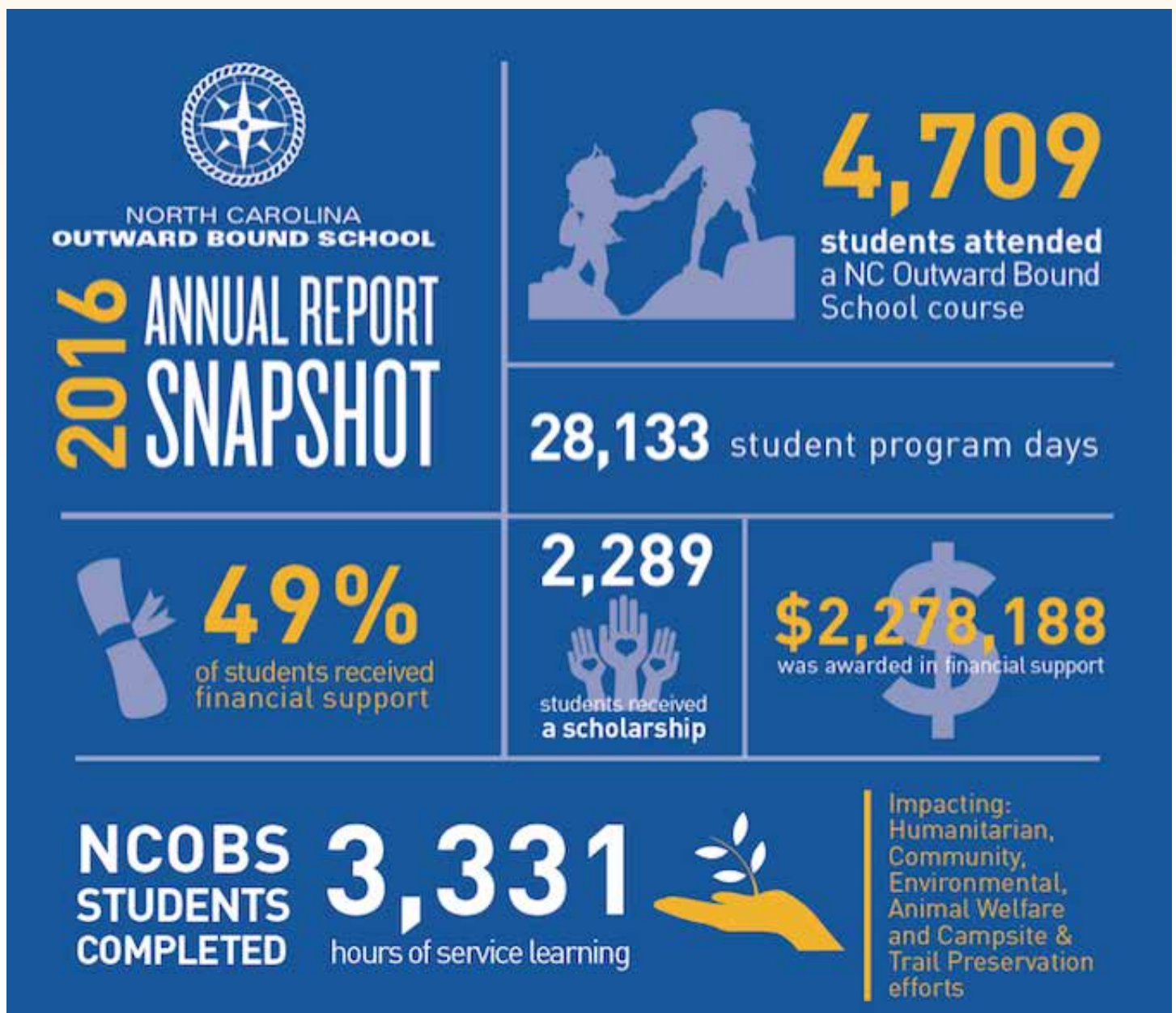
Presentation of the results of the REFLECT research during the alumni meeting of Via Experientia at the Outward Bound Belgium Training Center, August 2016

# TAKING A LOOK → BACK AT 2016

By North Carolina OB School

With nearly 50 years and 100,000 alumni served since our founding, NCOBS' commitment to service is as strong as ever. With your support, 4,709 students attended our programs in the 2016 fiscal year—49 percent of whom received scholarships and other financial support to do so. On behalf of our military veterans, students of all ages, educators, struggling youth, parents, and children, we thank you for your commitment to share Outward Bound with others. With utter conviction in the power of the NCOBS experience to change lives and contribute to the greater good, we strive to serve as our founders did, providing life-changing experiences to people of all backgrounds.

Link to the North Carolina Outward Bound School's Annual Report at: [www.ncobs.org/annual-report/](http://www.ncobs.org/annual-report/) ▶





# BOOK REVIEW



## Holding the Space: Facilitating Reflection and Inner Readiness for Learning

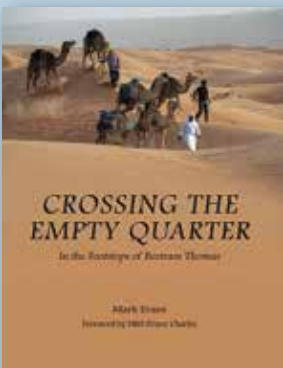
By Bert Vandenbussche (ed)

From Grafische Cel/ LUCA School of Arts, Gent, Belgium. 2016. Free download. 127 pages.

*Holding the Space* is a handbook for educators interested in investigating theories and processes of reflection in learning, based on the authors' work within an international team of educators and researchers participating in the REFLECT project.

In December 2013, six educators from Lithuania, Italy, Iceland, and Belgium met at the School of Arts in Ghent, Belgium to define the project's scope. The organizing belief for the project is that reflection is a critical generic and transferable competency for learning, especially for personal and professional development and lifelong learning.

Instead of providing a recipe, the book is intended to inspire and challenge the reader. Readers are encouraged to choose where to start to put together the puzzle of reflection. Nonetheless, *Holding the Space* has a loose organization including letters from REFLECT correspondents, inspirational stories, a look at the literature of reflection in theory and practice, a story that shows where the concept of inner readiness comes from, and explorations of the care and attention needed to introduce this concept, and of how "blended learning" and reflection fit together. The ebook version of *Holding the Space* can be downloaded for free at: [www.reflecting.eu/project/holding-the-space/](http://www.reflecting.eu/project/holding-the-space/)



## Crossing the Empty Quarter: In the Footsteps of Bertram Thomas

By Mark Evans

From Gilgamesh Publishing Ltd, London, UK. 2016. \$27.80 US. Hardcover. 205 pages.

In his book *Crossing the Empty Quarter*, Mark Evans accomplishes much more than a simple chronicling of his team's inspirational 2015 retracing of the first recorded crossing of the vast Rub' al-Khali desert. He also uncovers the forgotten history of the English civil servant turned explorer, Bertram Thomas, who set out with Omani Sheikh Saleh Bin Kalut in 1930 to cross the Rub' al-Khali—the so-called Empty Quarter of Arabia.

From the southern Omani city of Salalah, the book takes the reader north, by camel and foot, 1,300 kilometers into the foreboding sands of the Empty Quarter, as Evans and his expedition companions, Mohamed Al Zadjali and Amur Al Wahaibi, journey through the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the low-lying desert peninsula of Qatar, where Doha meets the Arabian Gulf, and where the journey concludes—just as it did for Thomas in 1931. Step by step, page by page, the cultural and temporal distance between then and now becomes illusory, as if a mirage, until it disappears into the desert, emerging again only as the skyscrapers of Doha rise out of the sand to greet the desert travelers.

For Evans, who is also General Manager of Outward Bound Oman, the 49-day, 1,300-kilometre journey carried a more salient purpose than simply illuminating the amazing feat of Thomas and Bin Kalut. It was, the epilogue notes, "... to reconnect local young people to their heritage, and create positive role models that young people in Oman could aspire and connect to." Offering a visually rich and well-written account of adventure, challenge, and exploration deeply rooted in history, this book is uniquely well-equipped to raise aspirations—and not just among the young.

# ANNUAL REPORT

2016





# Chair's Letter

It is my privilege, on behalf of the Board, to report on the activities of Outward Bound International (OBI) in 2016.

OBI was created to oversee i) licensing of new Outward Bound Schools; ii) risk management and programme quality standards for all Outward Bound Schools across the network; iii) brand management; and iv) the promotion of communications and networking amongst OBI members. Our mandate states that OBI exists:

To promote and protect the good name of Outward Bound throughout the world, and to assist in the establishment, development, and support of Outward Bound Centers able to provide safe, high-quality programs that fulfill the Mission of Outward Bound.

2016 was a year of consolidation for OBI. Our priorities were:

1. the 2016 World Conference held in North Carolina in early November 2016;
2. ensuring the financial stability of OBI to allow for longer term planning in support of staff and schools;
3. undertaking Board planning and renewal, including strategic development, recruitment and succession planning;
4. engaging with local schools during our Board meetings in Scotland and North Carolina;
5. maintaining support for schools with provisional and exploratory licences.

## 1. 2016 OBI World Conference

OBI, with help and support from Outward Bound Germany, hosted a very successful World Conference in November 2014. The outcomes from that World Conference asked us to focus on:

- creating a central portal for the exchange of substantive information;
- building a stronger, consistent, and recognizable world-wide Outward Bound brand;
- facilitating thought-leadership on the impact of Outward Bound programs;
- supporting staff on a network-wide basis including a network skills audit, staff mentoring and shadowing, exchanges, staff training, and the creation of an expert fund;
- providing information and support of governance models to local boards.

The responsibility of the OBI Board, our Executive Director, and members of the Operations Committee throughout 2015 and 2016 was to advance the goals of 2014 so that we could report on projects developed and implemented when we all met again two years later.

At the 2016 World Conference held in November 2016 in North Carolina, USA, results were presented on:

- a central OBI portal based on SharePoint, which allows for collaborative hosting and sharing of precedents, delivery models, and learning across the OB network;
- inclusive branding for the Outward Bound network with a consistent look and feel while still allowing for individual variances that are reflective of local culture;
- sharing of 'impact reports' that confirm that Outward Bound changes lives positively, and while the descriptions of courses may change from school to school, the teachings of Kurt Hahn do not.

We also asked the delegates, who included representatives from 32 countries and all individual schools in the OBUSA network, what they hoped that OBI would deliver in the time leading up to the next World Conference. They stated clearly that:

- member schools continue to welcome greater involvement with the broader OB community;
- they see the OBI portal as a way to increase communications across the network and assign this very high priority;
- they are looking for more support from OBI although we noted the limited resources available to OBI given a staff of two individuals and that OBI's core emphasis continues to be risk management and program reviews.

We continue to work on systems for sharing knowledge, ideas, and training among OB school staff—indeed, for sharing staff. Plans for greater staff integration will be developed over the next two years. Our staff live globally. They want to be a part of a broad OBI network that allows them to contribute to Outward Bound Schools around the world.

There were five notable takeaways from the 2016 World Conference:

First, the network continues to be strong. Member schools want to be an integrated Outward Bound network facilitated and supported by OBI. OBI must be prepared to lead, guide, and support the developing network.

Second, bi-annual World Conferences are a strong vehicle for integration of the network. Before leaving North Carolina, delegates expressed clear enthusiasm for the next meeting. We are pleased therefore to announce that Outward Bound Oman has graciously offered to host the next OBI World Conference set for January 2019. Plans are already underway.

Third, we invited Board Chairs and former Chairs from around the network to meet together in North Carolina. This is a critical next





completion of additional Board terms in 2017 in accordance with normal business. These expected transitions caused the Board to pause in 2016 to review Board composition, succession, and renewal. Initial discussions were held at our Board meetings in Scotland and refined in North Carolina. In addition, our meetings with current and past Chairs of Outward Bound Schools at the World Conference gave us renewed opportunities to recruit new Board members as we address the expectations of our increasingly diverse network of schools and new areas of growth and focus for Outward Bound. There will be further developments on this front in 2017 and 2018.

#### 4. Scotland and North Carolina

We hold Board meetings in April and November along with a July conference call and additional conference calls as needed during the rest of the year. As is our pattern, Board meetings are held around the world in order that we have an opportunity to visit with local schools. The majority of Board members attend these meetings at their own expense. In 2016, we had the pleasure of visiting the Loch Eil Outward Bound School near Fort William, Scotland, as well as visiting the Table Rock Base Camp for the North Carolina Outward Bound School. We thank our hosts for these school visits with staff and students. There can be no greater reminder for the Board of why we volunteer in support of Outward Bound than to see the immediate and lasting impact that programming has on its participants.

#### 5. Attending to Licensing Matters

A central part of OBI's core activities, along with brand management and risk management, is the provision of oversight for licensing activities across the network. The Board of OBI, on the recommendation of its Operations Committee and Executive Director, was pleased to support Full Licences for OB Germany and for OB Croatia in 2016. The granting of full licences to these two schools is reflective of the efforts of the Outward Bound community and in particular other member schools, as represented by the Board's Operations Committee, as well as by our Executive Director and Associate Director.

We were also pleased to receive the recommendation of the Operations Committee and ED to continue with a Provisional License to Vietnam as well as Exploratory Licences for Holland and the United Arab Emirates. We will provide support to these schools as they progress with their Outward Bound journey towards licensure.

#### CONCLUSION

OBI maintained a strong course throughout 2016. The Board of OBI takes great pride in the role that it plays for the advancement of Outward Bound worldwide. We recognize in particular the endless work undertaken around the world by our Executive Director, Iain Peter, and our Associate Director, Rob Chatfield, as well as the countless hours of additional contributions from the members of our Operations Committee. All are to be celebrated for maintaining modest operational costs while exploring new initiatives. As OBI continues with its steady and stable growth around the world, there are too many helping hands to note. They are all deserving of celebration. It goes without saying that the collaborative and enthusiastic spirit guides best.



Mary M. Thomson  
Chair, Outward Bound International

step for integrating the Outward Bound community worldwide. The focus of the meeting was on the leadership of OBI and its Board, including the introduction of governance models and conflict of interest goals, which with appropriate cultural modification may act as a guide for all Outward Bound Schools.

Fourth, OBI is exceedingly grateful for the generosity of our host schools when a World Conference is held. Although programming and presentations are generally set by OBI's Executive Director and the Operations Committee, the support from the local school and staff is immeasurable in terms of logistics—lodgings and food, transportation, and accessibility. Quite simply, we could not deliver this vital part of our mandate without our hosts welcoming us from around the world and celebrating in the successes of the Outward Bound network. Many individuals deserve our thanks for making the 2016 World Conference such a success, but we extend particular recognition to Whitney Montgomery and his team at Outward Bound North Carolina as well as to the Board of NCOBS for welcoming the Board of OBI in Asheville the evening after the World Conference.

Fifth, on the final evening of the 2016 World Conference, the entire community celebrated the 75th anniversary of Outward Bound at a dinner to conclude our meetings. The Chair of OBUSA, Laura Kohler, was on hand to join in the festivities before everyone departed the next morning for home. With the spirit well-ignited, we can all be assured that the health and stability of Outward Bound worldwide is robust, integrated, and forward-looking to the next 75 years.

#### 2. Financial Stability for OBI

Last year, we reported on an updated funding model for OBI. It provides a formula that will proportionately increase the funding received from larger schools over that from smaller schools. We are pleased to report that this new model was adopted at our Board meeting in April 2016 with support from all of the schools. Importantly, the all-inclusive fees structure covers OBI's core business and includes the costs related to all licensing, trademark protection and program reviews, the latter cost being a particularly difficult one for smaller schools to cover. Thanks to Colin Maund, our Treasurer, and his committee for shepherding this important initiative to conclusion. Ensuring the financial stability of OBI's core business allows for longer term planning in support of staff and schools.

#### 3. Board Planning and Renewal

In early February 2016, we received the sad news that founding OBI Board member, Lorna Wendt, had died following a brief illness. We also said goodbye to Board members Nikhil Mundle, Krassimir Yanev and Georgina Marten, each of whom had completed their terms as Board directors in 2016. We anticipate the



# Mission & Scope of Outward Bound

## Mission statement of Outward Bound International:

*"To help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings."*

Outward Bound International is on a global mission to help improve the effectiveness and fitness of its network of schools through a variety of ongoing and special initiatives. The following five priorities guide the organization's efforts in supporting Outward Bound worldwide.

### 1. Protecting and promoting the Outward Bound brand.

Outward Bound International ensures registration of the trademark in any country with current or potential Outward Bound activity, and manages the organization's reputation by monitoring infringements on names, marks, logos, and designs related to Outward Bound. In recent years domain name protection has received increased focus. To strengthen brand visibility, a website is maintained that serves as a global portal for those seeking information about Outward Bound.

### 2. Maintaining a focus on quality and innovation.

In the last decade, Outward Bound International has developed Risk Management and Quality Review systems. Every two years a detailed risk management assessment is made in each country in which Outward Bound operates, by teams of experienced Outward Bound staff trained by Outward Bound International. While this system is unparalleled in the adventure program field, Outward Bound International has developed a complementary process that systematically examines ways to improve the quality of service development and delivery processes.

### 3. Strengthening risk management standards.

Outward Bound International produces an annual Global Risk management Report on operations. Through its Program Review system, it also works with its member schools to continuously upgrade standards across the world.

### 4. Strengthening financial health.

Outward Bound International is continually trying to expand the number of sources from which charitable contributions are made to the organization. These efforts include offers of Guest Expeditions to interesting regions of the world for supporters who are willing to make a tax deductible contribution to Outward Bound, beyond the trip cost; and the establishment of an endowment campaign to ensure the future of Outward Bound worldwide.

### 5. Fostering free and open communication and collaboration.

In partnership with the schools, Outward Bound International hosts events such as world conferences and staff symposia. Additionally, an annual journal is offered electronically and in print, and an expanding internal website, which offers many resources and ways for sharing them, is available to Board members and the network of schools.

Every year numerous requests are made to Outward Bound International from individuals and organizations interested in bringing Outward Bound to their country. This is a clear tribute to Kurt Hahn and those who have pressed on in service of his bandwagon.

## Board of Directors



Tim Medhurst  
Australia



Krassimir Yanev  
Bulgaria



Eduardo Balarezo  
Ecuador



Georgina Marten  
Ecuador



David Kong  
Hong Kong



Nikhil Mundle  
India



Andrew Smith  
New Zealand



Colin Maund  
UK



Mary Thomson  
Chairman  
Canada



Lorna Wendt  
Vice Chairman  
USA



Mike Perlis  
Treasurer  
USA



Jon D'Almeida  
Ops Com



Iain Peter  
Executive  
Director



G. Kelly O'Dea  
Chairman  
Emeritus



Peter Kyle  
Chairman  
Emeritus



Bill Phillips  
Chairman  
Emeritus

# Serving Outward Bound



## OBI Boards Worldwide

Each country in which Outward Bound operates has a slightly different board structure depending on the cultural norms and government structure for charitable organizations. The essential element is that each Outward Bound school serves a diversity of young people with a governing board comprised of volunteer, non-paid community members that oversee its mission and operations.

## Governing Board

The Governing Board of Directors is given the legal corporate authority and responsibility for an organization's formation and operation, for its stability, and for providing links to other organizations and parts of the community. The board can mean the difference between public understanding and support of programs and public apathy or even antipathy. Boards that understand their role and fulfill their responsibility are essential to the well-being of not-for-profit organizations such as Outward Bound.

## Advisory Board

An advisory board is designed to assist the Executive Director and Board in making informed decisions for the organization and generally promoting the organization to a larger constituency. Some of its duties include: promoting better understanding of the purposes of Outward Bound and the objective of its programs, maintaining standards consistent with accepted ones for similar agencies, and making useful recommendations on future direction to maintain the relevance of the organization.

Serving on a nonprofit board has its rewards: Helping extend an organization's mission effectiveness and reaching out to underserved populations. The benefits, too, can be a powerful attraction: serving with a diversity of people toward a common goal and broadening your network of professional and social connections within your community. But what if your community is global? What if mission effectiveness means starting a school in another culture or on another continent? What if reaching out means crossing the international dateline? What if the underserved are school girls from the Sultanate of Oman, or street children from Johannesburg, or a group of corporate executives from Sri Lanka? What if your network includes people from every continent, except Antarctica? You'd be a board member at Outward Bound International, that's what.

Outward Bound International's 15-member board is responsible for ensuring OBI's mission and providing governance to its staff and volunteers. The mission of Outward Bound International is to help improve, promote, protect, and extend the good name of Outward Bound, worldwide.





# Treasurer's Report



The Outward Bound global network has again grown across the world and combined revenue has again exceeded US\$100m for the financial year ending 2016. Each Outward Bound School is financially independent and each accounts for, and has responsibility for, its own financial operations.

This report covers the operations of Outward Bound International (OBI) the coordinating body of which each school is a member and which awards licences to schools on behalf of Outward Bound Global who are the ultimate trademark owner.

Excluding exceptional items, funding for OBI has remained flat this year with income from schools almost at US\$226, 627 compared with \$223,245 in 2015. In 2015 there was an exceptional payment from a member school related to a fundraising initiative that has not reoccurred, so overall income has fallen from US\$399,603 to US\$244,350. Operating expenses have risen from US\$285,365 to US\$304,841, an increase of 7% largely caused by increased costs across a number of areas including an overdue staff bonus and the world conference costs.

The decreased income and increased costs have resulted in a loss of US\$60,491 for the year and a reduction of US\$60,833 in reserves. This is in line with expectations and better cash collection means that overall cash assets increased during the year from US\$826,670 to US\$843,375.

Despite the loss this year, management are confident that the long-term funding of OBI is clear and that we have budgeted for a neutral budget in 2017. Having put the long-term funding of OBI on a sound footing, the Company will be capable of fulfilling the remit of the member organisations and the conditions of our contract with OB Global.

# Financial Report

## Outward Bound International Inc. Comparative Statement of Financial Position As of December 31st, 2016 (Expressed in US\$)

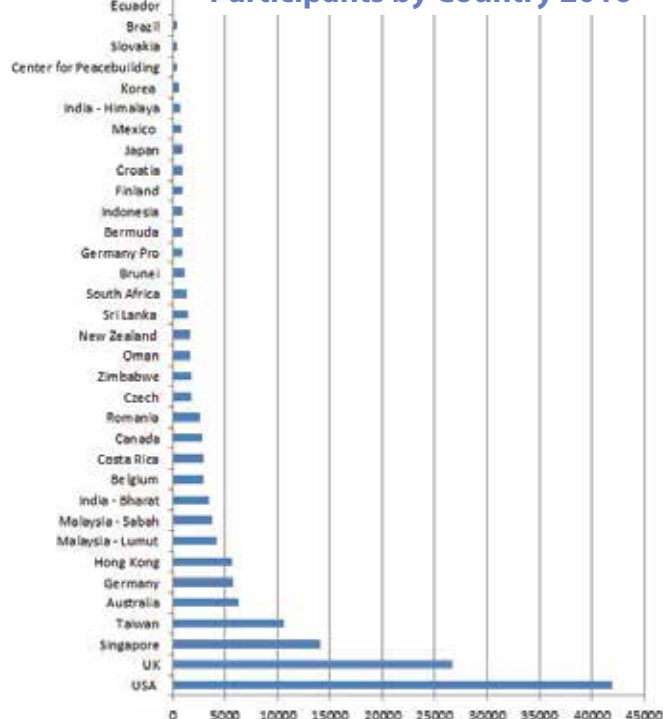
	2016	2015
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets:</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents - unrestricted	\$843,375	826,670
Restricted cash – funds held for others	-	14,800
Prepaid Expenses	2,757	-
Receivables from OBI Schools, less allowance for doubtful accounts of \$12,017 and \$15,000 for 2016 and 2015, respectively.	77,440	39,356
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>923,572</b>	<b>880,826</b>
<b>Property and equipment</b>	<b>3,759</b>	<b>-</b>
Accumulated depreciation	(375)	-
<b>Property and equipment</b>	<b>3,384</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$926,956</b>	<b>880,826</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities:</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$163,004	56,041
Funds held for others	14,800	14,800
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>177,804</b>	<b>70,841</b>
<b>Net Assets:</b>		
Unrestricted	749,152	809,985
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>749,152</b>	<b>809,985</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$926,956</b>	<b>880,826</b>

## Outward Bound International Inc. Comparative Statement of Activities For the Year Ended December 31st, 2016 (Expressed in US\$)

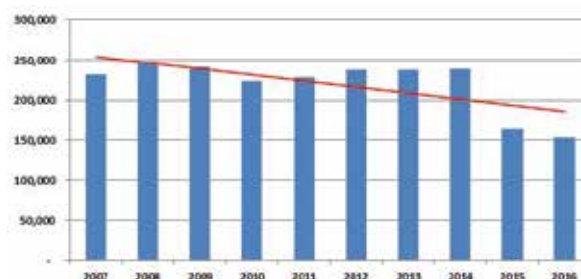
	2016	2015
<b>Revenue &amp; Support:</b>		
Fees from OBI Schools	\$226,627	223,245
Contributions	17,723	26,223
Special Events	-	150,135
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>244,350</b>	<b>399,603</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>		
Bank charges	5,298	-
Bad debts	-	15,000
Depreciation	376	-
Legal & professional	49,746	46,183
Office supplies and miscellaneous	1,036	1,991
Personnel	189,110	171,391
Printing and publications	9,023	6,639
Rent	14,455	7,000
Software	4,568	-
Telephone and internet	3,039	1,512
Travel	14,537	35,649
World Conference	13,653	-
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>304,841</b>	<b>285,365</b>
Operating income (loss)	(60,491)	114,238
<b>Other Income (Loss):</b>		
Other income	-	31,741
Investment income	357	2,776
Unrealized gain on investments	-	9,988
Loss on currency conversion	(699)	(3,039)
<b>Total other income (loss)</b>	<b>(342)</b>	<b>41,466</b>
Increase (Decrease) in net assets	(60,833)	155,704
Net assets - beginning of year	809,985	654,281
Increase (Decrease) in net assets	(60,833)	155,704
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$749,152</b>	<b>809,985</b>

# Participation & Outward Bound Schools Worldwide

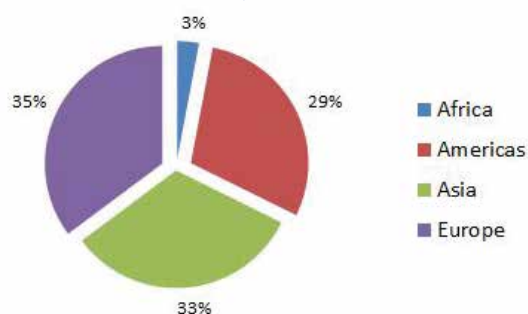
**Participants by Country 2016**



**Outward Bound Participants Worldwide 2007 - 2016**



**Participants by Region 2016**



## Australia

[www.outwardbound.org.au](http://www.outwardbound.org.au)

## Belgium

[www.outwardbound.be](http://www.outwardbound.be)

## Bermuda

[www.outwardboundbermuda.org](http://www.outwardboundbermuda.org)

## Brazil

[www.obb.org.br](http://www.obb.org.br)

## Brunei Darussalam

[www.kkbs.gov.bn/program.htm](http://www.kkbs.gov.bn/program.htm)

## Canada

[www.outwardbound.ca](http://www.outwardbound.ca)

## Costa Rica

[www.crrobs.org](http://www.crrobs.org)

## Croatia

[www.outwardbound.hr](http://www.outwardbound.hr)

## Czech Republic

[www.outwardbound.cz](http://www.outwardbound.cz)

## Ecuador

## Finland

[www.outwardbound.fi](http://www.outwardbound.fi)

## Germany

[www.outwardbound.de](http://www.outwardbound.de)

## Germany Professional

[www.outwardbound-professional.de](http://www.outwardbound-professional.de)

## Hong Kong

[www.outwardbound.org.hk](http://www.outwardbound.org.hk)

## India-Bharat

[www.outwardbound.org.in](http://www.outwardbound.org.in)

## India-Himalayan

[www.outwardboundindia.org](http://www.outwardboundindia.org)

## Indonesia

[www.outwardboundindo.org](http://www.outwardboundindo.org)

## Japan

[www.obs-japan.org](http://www.obs-japan.org)

## Korea

[www.outwardbound.co.kr](http://www.outwardbound.co.kr)

## Malaysia

[www.outwardbound.my](http://www.outwardbound.my)

## Mexico

[www.obmexico.org](http://www.obmexico.org)

## Netherlands (Exploratory Status)

## New Zealand

[www.outwardbound.co.nz](http://www.outwardbound.co.nz)

## Oman

[www.outwardboundoman.com](http://www.outwardboundoman.com)

## Romania

[www.outwardbound.ro](http://www.outwardbound.ro)

## Sabah

[www.outwardbound.com.my](http://www.outwardbound.com.my)

## Singapore

[www.obs.nyc.gov.sg](http://www.obs.nyc.gov.sg)

## Slovak Republic

[www.outwardbound.sk](http://www.outwardbound.sk)

## South Africa

[www.outwardbound.co.za](http://www.outwardbound.co.za)

## Sri Lanka

[www.obs-lk.org](http://www.obs-lk.org)

## Taiwan

[www.obtaiwan.org](http://www.obtaiwan.org)

## UAE (Exploratory Status)

## UK

[www.outwardbound.org.uk](http://www.outwardbound.org.uk)

## USA

[www.outwardbound.org](http://www.outwardbound.org)

## Vietnam (Provisional)

## Zimbabwe

[www.outwardbound.org.zw](http://www.outwardbound.org.zw)

## Outward Bound International

85 Grampian Road  
Aviemore PH22 1RH  
United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0)1479 812544

Mobile +44 (0)7836 642162

Email [execdir@outwardbound.net](mailto:execdir@outwardbound.net)





Australia Belgium Bermuda Brazil Brunei Canada Costa Rica Croatia Czech Republic  
Ecuador Finland Germany Hong Kong India Indonesia Japan Korea Malaysia Mexico  
New Zealand Netherlands Oman Romania Sabah Singapore Slovak Republic  
South Africa Sri Lanka Taiwan UAE UK USA Vietnam Zimbabwe