

Research and analysis on the benefits of international opportunities

CFE Research & LSE Enterprise report for the British Council



Enterprise



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The British Council commissioned CFE Research and LSE Enterprise in May 2014 to conduct research to examine the impact of international experiences on individuals, employers, the economy and society. The research findings presented in this document draw on a survey of and depth interviews with individuals with and without international experiences as well as case studies of six programmes. The primary research was informed by two literature reviews which are reported separately: one exploring UK competitiveness and skills needs, and a second investigating the evidence on the provision, scale and benefits of different types of international experiences.

The purpose of the research is to provide evidence to inform a report that will be produced by the British Council setting out the benefits of international experiences to a UK audience of senior policymakers, business leaders/employers, education and culture sector stakeholders, think tanks and the media. It is hoped this will stimulate interest from these groups and increase the level of support for international opportunities for young people. The research will also inform future British Council strategy in this area and future campaigns to encourage the take up of international education programmes. This purpose is set within the larger context of the British Council's work, a major strand of which lies in internationalising education, sharing the UK's expertise and in providing opportunities for global collaboration.

Summary of the methodological approach

A total of 1,148 UK residents between the ages of 25 and 65 completed a telephone or online survey, of whom, 712 had international experiences and 436 had no international experience (the comparator group). Individuals with international experience were categorised based on the duration of their international experiences, with those under one month defined as *light*, those between one to three months defined as *medium* and those over three months defined as *deep*.

New qualitative evidence on the impact of participation in international education opportunities was collected through follow-up interviews with nine individuals who had responded to the survey. A further six interviews were conducted with those who had become successful in their careers to explore their reflections and insights on the value of their international experiences.

Six case studies were produced to explore different types of international experiences and how these generate both short and long-term benefits and impacts. Four case studies *Erasmus*, *Language Assistants*, *GVI internships* and *Raleigh International* involve international travel and provide exposure to another country accompanied by a structured network of support. The other two case studies, *Connecting Classrooms* and *United World Colleges*, are school based programmes that focus on the development of a global mindset and ethos through curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Two literature and evidence reviews were undertaken to support and inform the primary fieldwork. The first examined the skills that the UK needs to remain internationally competitive. This was

primarily focused on ‘macro-level’ analysis, linking economic competitiveness with skills formation and education at a national level. It also involved reviewing ‘micro-level’ evidence on the skills that graduates need in the labour market (most notably, ‘employability skills’) to help them progress in their careers, and increase employer competitiveness in the national and international economy. Where existing evidence made it possible to consider the role of international experience in supporting the identified skills priorities for the UK, this was explored. The second review focused on the provision of international opportunities, international statistics and evidence on the take-up of such provision and the scale of the resulting benefits. It considered the outward mobility of UK-domiciled individuals and the benefits offered by international education experiences through a comparison of the UK with key comparator countries such as the United States and Germany.

Summary of key findings

Expanding what we know about those participating in international opportunities

The comprehensive review of existing evidence and literature with regard to the uptake of international experiences demonstrates there remains a lack of extensive data collection and research into the scale and impact of international experiences. This reflects the findings from a number of previous reports and the views of organisations including: the House of Lords European Union Committee; the National Union of Students; the British Council; the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Higher Education Academy.

The review of existing literature very clearly identified a pressing need for new evidence with regard to participation in international education and international opportunities. Findings from the survey in this study show that amongst UK respondents the three most common types of international experience were *work experience abroad*, *international travel* and *school exchange programmes*. Quite a low proportion had taken part in university study abroad. Of the 62% who had international experience, 58% were classified as having had *deep* experience, whilst 42% had *light or medium* experiences.

The UK survey respondents who had not participated in international opportunities were generally aware that they exist. Of those without international experience a significantly greater proportion of individuals with a degree (83%) were aware of potential opportunities, when compared to those respondents without (72%). Furthermore, those in higher social grades were more aware (85%) that such opportunities exist, than those in lower social grades (71%). More action is arguably needed to increase awareness of international opportunities amongst women, those without university education and amongst people in lower skilled occupations. During our survey fieldwork it was challenging to identify sufficient individuals with international experience, suggesting that these people may constitute a minority of the general population.

Three factors have a significant and positive impact on the probability of an individual taking part in international experiences:

- *having international experience within the family;*
- *speaking a foreign language; and*
- *having a degree.*

Men are also more likely to take part in international experiences than women: of our survey respondents 68% of males had international experience compared to 43% of females. This suggests that the gender gap in participation in international experiences is a potential avenue for future research and action.

Unsurprisingly, people with foreign language proficiency are more likely to have had international experiences than those without (72% of survey respondents who spoke a foreign language against 45% of those who did not). It is important that young people in the UK are equipped with the language skills that enable them to participate in a broader range of international opportunities. It should also be recognised that international experiences can have a strong impact on language development.

Of the range of possible programmes that offer international experiences, generally the most well studied are those in higher education. The top destinations for UK outward international student mobility are the United States, France, Ireland, Germany and Australia. Given the lack of data collection, higher education student mobility is also the only form of international experience where robust comparisons are possible between the UK and key comparator countries. We find that the UK has a lower absolute number of outwardly mobile students, compared with the US and Germany, but a higher proportion of students overall in comparison to the US.¹ Furthermore, whereas the UK and the US have largely maintained numbers over the past decade, Germany has seen a significant increase in the number of internationally mobile students, in both absolute terms and as a proportion of its student population. The increase in Germany's outward mobility of students from 2005 coincides with their introduction of tuition fees. Given that tuition fees have since been abolished in Germany, it will be interesting to monitor how their outward student mobility changes in the future.

Evidencing impact: employability and intercultural skills

The benefits of international experience have been well-researched and can be understood in terms of the development of *intercultural skills*. These include a set of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts. Amongst the most well-established theorisation of this is Milton J. Bennett's *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) which offers an explanation of how intercultural skills are developed, and provides a means of measuring intercultural competency. This model describes the stages of development from *ethnocentric* attitudes (denial, defence and minimisation of cultural difference) to *ethno-relative* attitudes (understanding, accepting and adapting to other cultures).

¹ Outbound internationally mobile students from the UK, Germany and US. [Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.]



Both existing evidence and this study confirm that the key factors in the development of intercultural skills and competencies are the experiences of other cultures, including using new languages, meeting people of other cultures or nationalities, and learning new customs. Such experiences offer the potential to develop communication skills, cultural awareness, behavioural flexibility, and social responsibility.

Over 90% of survey respondents with international experiences agreed that their experiences had increased their levels of confidence. What is more, the survey suggests that people with international experiences feel that the experiences impact strongly on a range of skills and attributes. In terms of skills developed, international experience has the greatest impact on communication skills and on the ability to work with people from other countries and cultures. As an example, 80% of those who had studied higher education overseas perceived that it had an impact on the development of their verbal communication skills. Three-quarters (75%) reported that it had a positive impact on their analytical and critical thinking skills. Working internationally appears to have the greatest impact on the development of a creative mindset; 70% of those who had worked internationally agreed that the experience has impacted them in this way. Indeed, overall working abroad appears to have the most significant impact on individuals' skill sets, followed by university-level experiences and travel, with school experiences having the least impact. Nevertheless, a large proportion of our survey respondents did report that their participation in school initiatives helped them to develop their skills, with 73% of those that had participated in school initiatives saying it had helped them to work well with people from other countries and cultures. Early experiences at school level may well also lead on to a greater propensity to seek international experiences as an adult, something supported by our qualitative interviews.

All of the 15 depth interview respondents were very positive about the impact of their international experiences, particularly on their skills development, but they also reported associated benefits for their employment and career prospects. 12 of the 15 depth interview respondents reported that their international experiences had helped them to develop their language skills, as well as increasing their confidence, independence, problem-solving skills, resilience and determination. The interviews also provide evidence that international experiences, which involve working with people from other backgrounds and cultures, can lead to the development of an intercultural mindset and what could be best described as *intercultural competence*.

Existing literature reveals that the greater the degree of cultural difference between the individual and the host culture, the greater the opportunities to develop intercultural competence. Both the existing evidence and this new research support the claim that intercultural competence is not developed by international travel per se, but through the experience of *cultural difference*.

The existing evidence and our research findings show that a range of different international experiences can deliver a common set of benefits, although the duration of the experience clearly does matter. A study by Zarnik (2010) showed that short-term study programmes have minimal impact on the development of intercultural sensitivity. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the benefits of international education are proportional to the duration of the experience, so shorter

experiences have a less significant impact on intercultural competence, but are judged as being useful nonetheless. So whilst it may take more than one international experience to fully develop intercultural competence to the stage of ethno-relativism, even short-term experiences can play an important part in initiating the motivation to develop cultural understanding.

Evidencing impact: labour market and employment outcomes

Beyond influencing career decisions, several interview respondents described how their international experiences had brought about tangible professional impact, through enabling them to find a job, or to demonstrate valuable experience on their CV. The new data from our survey also shows that international experiences impact strongly on the skills and intercultural competences of most individuals, while impacting on the careers and earnings of a large minority. Furthermore, over 50% of survey respondents who had taken part in some form of international university experience reported that their participation had helped to boost their overall attainment and enabled them to secure a job that met their interests.

The average salary earned by individuals in the survey working full-time was £38,673 for those with international experience and £32,755 for those without. However individuals in our sample with international experiences are also more likely to hold higher level qualifications. In fact, once we control for other factors, including highest level of qualification, it seems that that we cannot evidence a significant association between international experience and earnings. The same holds true even if we consider only those individuals who had deep international experiences. Consequently we can only conclude that those individuals educated to degree or equivalent are more likely to have had international experiences and that it is their higher level qualifications that are most likely to result in a wage premium rather than their international experience. This reflects the findings of previous studies in this area.

As also highlighted in our review of the literature, academic research has noted the value of international experience in boosting the value of a degree and/or as an additional credential which helps to differentiate the individual from other potential candidates and thereby aid their employment prospects. This view was also shared by those who we interviewed for this study.

Evidencing impact: innovation and UK competitiveness

Innovation is seen as critical to the economy and to improving productivity. Many factors influence innovation, but skills that support innovation include problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication and multicultural openness, many of which are developed through international experiences. Indeed our survey for this study suggests that international experiences do have a positive impact on people's ability to innovate in the workplace.

Just under half of the survey respondents with international experience had taken part in specific types of innovative activity. Just over half (52%) of individuals that had deep international experiences had been involved in research and development, compared to 38% of those with only light or medium experiences. Similarly, 49% of individuals with deep international experiences had

participated in the development of a new or significantly-improved good or service, compared with 37% of those with light or medium experience.

Those with deep international experiences were more likely to attribute their involvement in innovative activity to their participation in international opportunities (47% for research and development, and 56% for introducing a new or improved good or service, attributed this to international experience). Most of those who felt that their international experiences had contributed to innovation had experienced some form of work abroad.

Evidencing impact: enhancing social and cultural capital

All interview respondents were able to identify a range of impacts resulting from their international experiences. Most viewed the impact of their experiences as being formative, gradually developing and becoming apparent throughout their careers and lives. Long-term impacts included greater personal and professional confidence, independence and a positive outlook. Shorter-term impacts were also experienced, such as improved understanding, new skills and immediate gains such as new friends, new networks of contacts and/or the ability to complete higher level study.

Certain international programmes featured in the case studies seem to offer notable potential to contribute to increased social and cultural capital and to realise collective societal benefits. One particular example is Raleigh International. Research undertaken by Leicester Business School suggested that 93% of Raleigh Expedition participants are more willing to share their time, skills and knowledge to help others, and are more likely to participate in volunteering activities in the future. These are attributes and benefits that Raleigh seeks to engender in participants and are consequently key objectives of their programmes.²

Individuals who responded to our survey were also asked to rate their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10. We found that those with international experiences were no more likely (average of 7.70) on average to be more satisfied with their lives than those without international experiences (average of 7.53). So we find no significant link between having international experiences and overall life satisfaction.

Identifying evidence gaps: suggested areas for further research

Quite clearly gaps remain in the evidence on both the scale and benefits of international experiences of all types. This is due to a lack of data collection at national and international levels, the paucity of research in this area, and a lack of published or accessible statistics on the take-up and impact of existing programmes. Better co-operation and co-ordination of data collection is needed in order to improve the evidence base on the scale and impact of international experiences. There is also arguably a need to better promote the benefits of international experiences both to

² Key findings cited online at: <http://raleighinternational.org/about-raleigh/impact/impact-on-participants-todo>, taken from Andrew Rothwell, Brandon Charleston, 'International Volunteering: Employability, Leadership and More', *Education and Training*, (2013).

individuals and employers, articulated in terms of employability skills, knowledge, confidence and other personal benefits.

Added to this, we suggest further exploration of:

- *the relationships between international experiences and employability, salaries, career progression, entrepreneurship and innovation, and how impacts vary by type of experience;*
- *why people choose to undertake or not undertake international experiences, and the role of individual background and characteristics in the decision-making process; and*
- *how the destination of international experience and the model of experience affect the impact achieved.*



01. INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

This report presents research and analysis exploring the benefits of international experiences, drawing on evidence collected through a telephone and online survey, telephone interviews and case studies.

The British Council commissioned CFE Research and LSE Enterprise in May 2014 to conduct research to examine the impact of international experiences on individuals, employers, the economy and society. The research findings presented in this document draw on a survey of and depth interviews with individuals with and without international experiences as well as case studies of six programmes. The primary research was informed by two literature reviews which are reported separately: one exploring UK competitiveness and skills needs, and a second investigating the evidence on the provision, scale and benefits of different types of international experiences.

The purpose of the research is to provide evidence to inform a report that will be produced by the British Council setting out the benefits of international experiences to a UK audience of senior policymakers, business leaders/employers, education and culture sector stakeholders, think tanks and the media. It is hoped this will stimulate interest from these groups and increase the level of support for international opportunities for young people. The research will also inform future British Council strategy in this area and future campaigns to encourage the take up of international education programmes. This purpose is set within the larger context of the British Council's work, a major strand of which lies in internationalising education, sharing the UK's expertise and in providing opportunities for global collaboration.

The research conducted is notable in the broad approach it takes, encompassing a wide range of international experiences, from longer periods of travel, to working abroad and education programmes. Each part of the research makes a strong case for the value of international experiences. The survey shows that international experiences impact strongly on the skills and intercultural competences of most individuals, while impacting on the careers and earnings of a large minority. The interviews provide more depth on the value of international experiences, particularly in relation to skills development, but also on the associated benefits for employment and career prospects. Finally, the case studies outline in detail specific examples of international experiences and explore the ways in which these impact on the individuals who take part and the key benefits.

Method

We conducted the following research activities between May and August 2014:

- *Telephone and online survey of a sample of UK adults with and without international experiences to capture data on key areas, including employment and career history, skills levels and salary.*
- *Qualitative interviews and case studies to understand both the impacts of these experiences and the mechanisms through which these impacts are achieved.*
- *Desk-based review of literature and data on UK skills needs and international experiences.*

A brief description of each part of the research is given below and further information about the methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

TELEPHONE AND ONLINE SURVEY

A telephone and online survey was undertaken with a sample of individuals from across the UK, both with and without international experience. All respondents had been resident in the UK for the majority of their life and were aged between 25 and 65 years. In the absence of an existing sampling frame, we drew upon a number of commercial databases to generate the sample and ensure it reflected the breadth of international experience of interest, including those targeted at social grades A, B and C1. Collectively, this resulted in a total sample of 1148 – 712 people with international experience and 436 without. The number of individuals with international experience was boosted in order to enhance the opportunities for data analysis. This amounts to a significant sample of individuals with international experience both in terms of size and breadth of opportunity and therefore contributes considerably to the current evidence, much of which to date has tended to focus upon international education within higher education. That said, it is important to acknowledge that the extent to which the sample is representative of the population from which it is drawn is largely unknown. This is also applicable to the sample of individuals without international experience which data suggests is skewed in terms of gender, ethnicity and social grade.

INTERVIEWS

To complement the survey findings and add a greater depth, we conducted 15 qualitative interviews with individuals who had had an international experience. These included:

- *6 interviews with a range of high profile, senior and influential individuals to obtain their reflections and insights on the value of their own international experiences.*
- *9 interviews with respondents to our quantitative survey. Interviewees were diverse in regard to profession and type of international experience gained, in addition to other key attributes. Where the interviews uncovered unexpected information (such as a much shorter experience than expected), we sought to recruit additional respondents to ensure enough qualitative data was available.*

CASE STUDIES

To explore how skills are developed through different types of international experience, and how these lead to benefits in both the short- and longer-term, we produced six case studies of different types of international experience. The case studies drew upon multiple data sources to highlight the mechanisms through which international opportunities are delivered and the way they are configured results in the outcomes and impacts observed. The case studies involved semi-structured interviews with representatives from specific schemes including senior leads and

delivery staff and analysis of secondary data held by the organisation responsible for the activities and made available to the research team.

DESK RESEARCH

To draw on existing evidence, we conducted two desk based literature reviews.

- *A literature review on opportunities for international experience in the UK, and comparison with the US and Germany. This review investigates the evidence on the provision, scale and benefits of different types of international experiences.*³
- *A literature review on UK competitiveness and skills needs. This review summarises the skills the UK needs to remain internationally competitive, including overarching issues, skills as a driver of competitiveness, and specific skills that have been identified as important.*⁴

Both reviews drew on published academic and grey literature as well as data sources, such as those provided through the websites of the World Economic Forum, the OECD and UNESCO.

This report

This report summarises the findings from the survey, interviews and case studies, before finishing with key points and conclusions. The detailed evidence from the desk research is provided in two separate documents.

³ CFE Research and LSE Enterprise (2014) *Research and analysis of the benefits of international educational opportunities: A literature review on the opportunities for international experience in the UK and in comparison with the US and Germany*. London: British Council.

⁴ CFE Research and LSE Enterprise (2014) *Research and analysis of the benefits of international educational opportunities: A literature review on UK competitiveness and skills (needs)*. London: British Council.

02. SURVEY FINDINGS

This section provides a summary and commentary on key findings from the survey of individuals with and without international experience.

This section summarises the findings emerging from our telephone and online survey. Those who had participated in international opportunities responded to a series of questions regarding the nature and impacts of their experience, whilst individuals with no experience were asked about their awareness of opportunities and employment history to date to provide a comparison. Throughout this section, a small number of comparisons between those with and without international experience are made, with the majority of the analysis relating to the differences in outcomes observed based upon the duration of their experience. Further information about the definitions applied can be found in Appendix 1.

Participation in international opportunities

Of those surveyed who had international experience (712), 58% were classified as deep experiences whilst 42% were light or medium.⁵ Analysis to determine whether any particular groups were more or less likely to take part in international opportunities indicates that a significantly greater proportion of individuals in the following groups had taken part in an international experience:

- *Males [68% of males had international experience compared to 43% of females]*
- *Those aged between 25 and 45 [69% of those aged between 25 and 45 had international experience compared to 57% of individuals aged between 46 and 65]*
- *Those who had family members with international experience [68% of individuals who had family members with international experience stated they had been abroad compared to 55% of respondents whose family members did not have international experience]*
- *Individuals with foreign language proficiency [72% of respondents who spoke a foreign language had international experience compared to 45% of individuals with no foreign language proficiency]*
- *Individuals with family members possessing foreign language proficiency [67% of individuals with a family member who spoke a foreign language had international experience compared to 59% of respondents with family members who had no foreign language proficiency]*
- *Individuals with a degree [74% of individuals with a degree had international experience compared to 50% of respondents who did not possess a degree]*

⁵ Deep experience is defined as lasting over three months compared with under one month for light and one to three months for medium.



- *Individuals in social grades A or B [68% of individuals classified in social grades A or B had international experience compared to 56% of respondents classified in social grades C or D]*
- *Individuals whose main wage earning parent was classified in social grades A or B [75% of individuals whose main wage earning parent was classified in social grades A or B had international experience compared to 64% of respondents whose main wage earning parent was classified in social grades C or D]*
- *Individuals with a parent who had a degree level qualification [80% of individuals who had a parent with a degree had international experience compared to 61% of individuals whose parent did not hold a degree].*

Regression analysis to further explore the determinants of international experience indicated that, when the above factors were controlled for, four had a significant and positive impact on the probability of taking part in international experience: having international experience within the family, speaking a foreign language, having a degree and being male. International experience within the family is likely to increase not only an individual's knowledge of the opportunities available, but also their understanding of the costs and benefits of taking part. Meanwhile, having a degree may open up career and study pathways involving opportunities to go abroad. The gender gap in participation in international experiences is a potential avenue for future research. The social grade of the main wage earning parent and parental education was also used as a proxy for levels of advantage, but these were not significant in terms of a relationship with international experiences. Caution should be taken with the results from this regression, as it is difficult to determine the direction of the relationship in all instances. For example, international experience may result in individuals being able to speak a foreign language, as opposed to language skills resulting in people taking part in international opportunities. Additionally, unobservable characteristics (such as ability) that cannot be included in the model may also affect the size and significance of the associations found.

The three most common types of experience that those with international experience participated in were work experience abroad, international travel and a school exchange programme. There were significant differences in participation across the range of international opportunities by various characteristics, including gender and individual social grade, with key tables provided in Appendix 2. The types of opportunities highlighted have been placed into one of four groups – university (U), school (S), travel (T) and work abroad (W) (Figure 1).

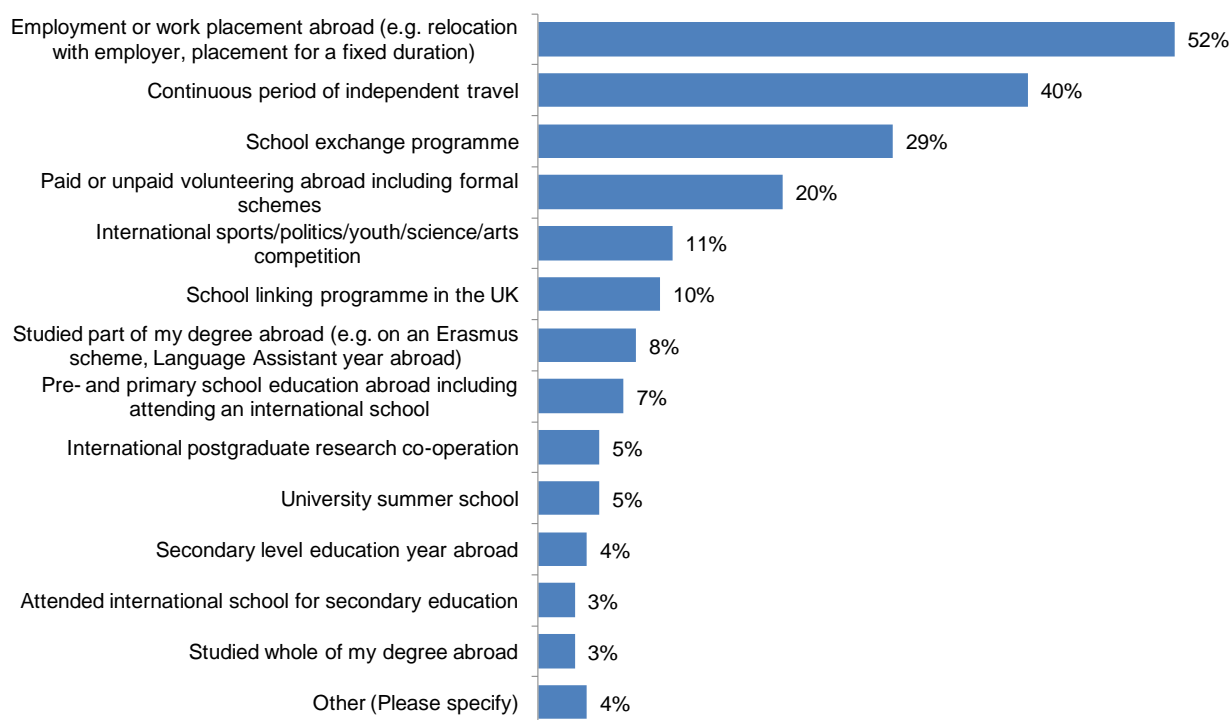


Figure 1: Summary statistics for participation in international opportunities (Base: Respondents with international experience = 712)

Table 1 indicates that compared to other types of opportunity, a low proportion had taken part in a university experience abroad. A large proportion of individuals with international experience in our survey had completed a period of paid or unpaid work experience abroad.

Type of experience	Frequency	Percent
University	120	17
School	294	41
Travel	326	46
Work	436	61

Table 1: Participation in different types of experience (Base: Respondents with international experience = 712)

NON-PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

It is difficult to estimate the proportion of the general population that has or has not had international experiences. During the survey fieldwork it was challenging to identify sufficient individuals with international experience, suggesting that the experiences are held by a minority of the population – however, further research would be needed to investigate this further. Amongst the individuals in our sample without international experience, a large majority (75%) said that they were aware of international opportunities. Analysis to determine whether there were any differences in knowledge of international opportunities by various characteristics revealed that a significantly greater proportion of individuals with a degree (83%) were aware of such opportunities, when compared to those respondents without a degree (72%). Additionally, a significantly greater proportion of those in social grades A or B (85%) stated that they knew that



these opportunities existed, compared to those in social grades C or D (71%). It is perhaps not surprising that those with a degree and/or in social grades A and B are more aware of these opportunities, as higher education institutions and industries that offer jobs that place individuals in social grades A or B are likely to offer more chances for individuals to go abroad. No significant differences were found by parental education or occupation. There were, however, significant differences by gender, with a significantly higher proportion of males (85%) aware of international opportunities compared to females (71%). Greater awareness amongst men may help to explain why more men participate in international experiences than women.

The majority of our sample collected through this research had international experience so these comparisons are based on a small sample of individuals who did not take part in international opportunities. As such, further research to develop a fuller understanding of the factors that influence awareness and take-up of these programmes and experiences and the reasons for the gaps in participation would be useful.

Whilst 34% of individuals agreed or strongly agreed that international experience could have benefitted their career prospects and opportunities, there was almost unanimous agreement amongst this group that they had not missed out on a job, promotion or pay rise due to their lack of international experience.

KEY POINTS

- *Participation in international experiences is associated with higher education levels, better language skills, gender (males more likely than females) and international experiences within the family.*
- *The majority of those with international experience in our study had undertaken paid or unpaid work experience abroad. Continuous periods of independent travel and school exchanges were also common.*
- *Non-participants in international opportunities were generally aware that these opportunities existed, although there were differences by gender, as well as education level and social grade.*
- *Non-participants did not believe that their lack of international experience had impacted on their job, promotion or pay prospects.*

Involvement in innovative activity

WHAT IS INNOVATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Innovation within an economy can be either technological or non-technological. Within our survey, we concentrated on examining individual involvement in technological innovation. We asked respondents to indicate whether they had been involved in research and development activities, as well as their in the introduction of new or significantly-improved goods and services. Research and development within organisations is often the initial step to inventing or discovering new technologies or production processes, which can benefit both the firm and wider society. For

example, if the invention helps to reduce a firm's costs, the firm may experience a rise in profits and may also be able to pass on these benefits to consumers in the form of lower prices. Alternatively, new inventions may give firms a competitive edge in the national and global market, boosting their sales and reputation. Innovation is the vital ingredient in improving the long-term economic growth prospects of an economy and can lead to gains in competitiveness and productivity.

CAN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE LEAD TO INVOLVEMENT IN INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY?

Just under half of those with international experience had been involved in research and development activities, as well as in the introduction of new or significantly-improved goods or services to the marketplace. However, it was those individuals with deep experience who were more likely to state they had been involved. Just over half (52%) of individuals with deep experience had been involved in research and development, compared to 38% of those with light or medium experiences. Similarly, 49% of individuals with deep experience had participated in the development of a new or significantly-improved good or service; the proportion was 37% for those with light or medium experience.

Those individuals involved in innovative activity were asked to indicate the extent to which their participation was attributable to their experience abroad. Over two-fifths (44%) of individuals agreed or strongly agreed that they could attribute their involvement in research and development activities to their time abroad; 49% attributed their involvement in the introduction of a new or significantly-improved good or service to their international experience. It is also worth noting that there was a difference in ratings between those with deep experience and those with only light or medium experience. 47% of those with deep experience agreed or strongly agreed that they could attribute their involvement in research and development to their international experience, compared with 38% of those with light or medium experience. Similarly, 56% with deep experience agreed or strongly agreed that they could attribute their involvement in the introduction of a new or significantly-improved good or service to their international experience, compared to 35% of those with light or medium experience.

The vast majority of those with deep experience in these instances had completed a period of paid or unpaid work abroad. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between an individual's involvement in innovative activities, the type of international experience and the length of the experience in order to understand the key driver.

WHAT SKILLS ARE NEEDED TO BE INNOVATIVE AND CAN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE HELP DEVELOP THESE QUALITIES?

A recent OECD publication⁶ discussed the different types of skills required for innovation to occur. Alongside subject knowledge and technical skills, it highlights the importance of generic and 'soft'

⁶ OECD (2011). 'Skills for innovation and research'

skills. Our survey asked participants to indicate whether or not they possessed the particular attributes that the OECD study indicates are important in enabling innovation. These were:

- *Problem solving*
- *Thinking critically*
- *Creativity*
- *Working in a team*
- *Communication skills*
- *Multicultural openness for understanding and communicating*

In Table 2, we report the proportion of individuals with international experience who agreed or strongly agreed that they possessed one of the listed skills. Across all of the skills, the majority of individuals with international experience agreed or strongly agreed that they did indeed have that particular attribute. Teamwork, problem-solving skills and ability to work with people from other countries/cultures were the three attributes that these respondents were most likely to say they possessed, with creativity being the least likely.

	Participant in international experience (% agree or strongly agree)
I have a creative mindset	66
I have strong problem-solving skills	83
I have strong analytical and critical thinking skills	73
I have excellent verbal communication skills	72
I work well with people from other countries and cultures	81
I work well in a team	82

Table 2: Proportion of individuals with international experience who agree they possess the skills and attributes (Base: Respondents with international experience = 712)

Individuals were then asked to state the significance of their travel, work or study abroad in developing the aforementioned skills. To get a better understanding of whether there was any variation in the level of impact by type of experience, we analysed the responses of those individuals whose only study abroad experience was at a university along with the responses of those whose only experience was a school-based scheme. For most attributes, large majorities reported that their international experience had had a positive impact on a particular skill, rating the level of impact as 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale (Figure 2). Overall, international experience appears to have most influence on communication skills and the ability to work with people from other countries and cultures; it has least impact on critical thinking skills, particularly for those who had school-based experiences.

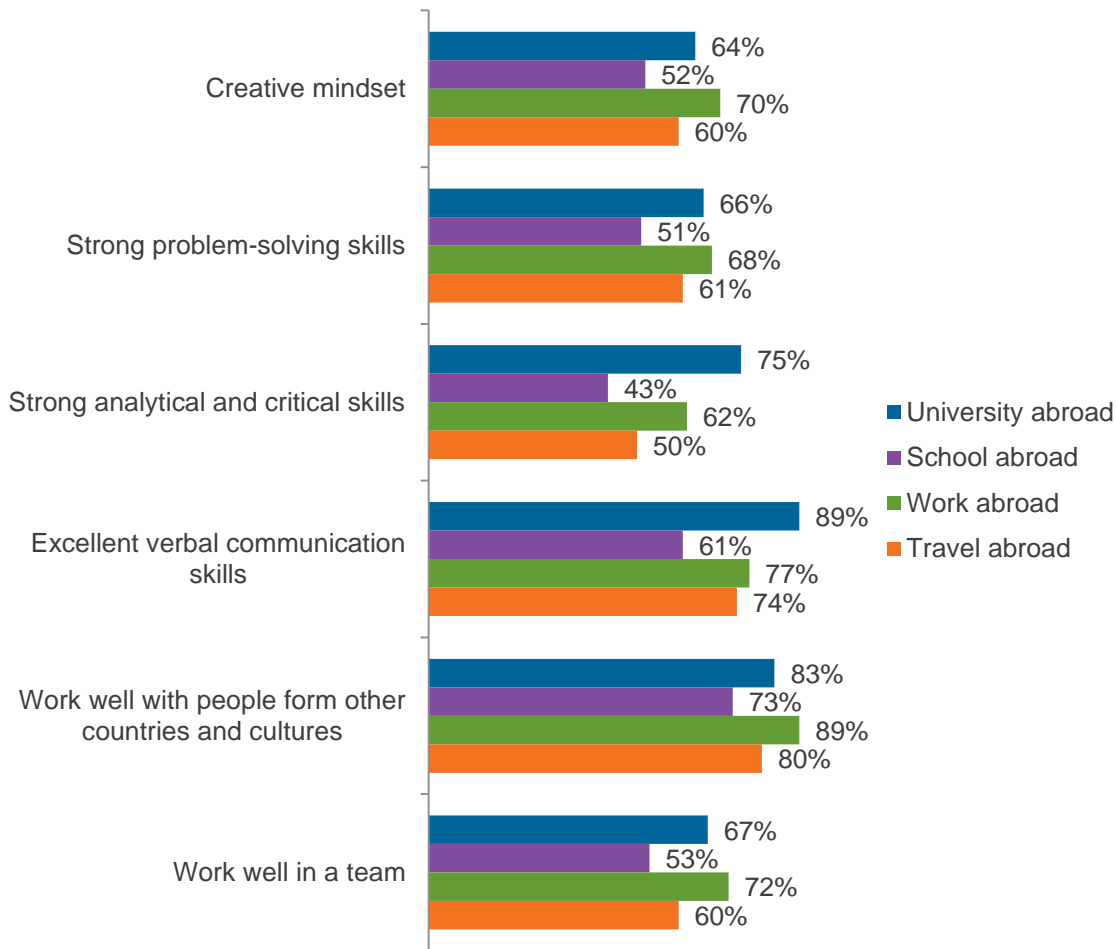


Figure 2: The percentage of individuals who gave a score of 4 or 5 to the significance of their international experience to developing the above skills and attributes (base = variable)

It is evident that university experiences are having a greater impact on skill development for individuals than school experiences. Indeed, university experiences abroad, alongside working abroad, are the most valuable types of experiences with regards to building an individual's skill set which subsequently could help them to become more innovative in the workplace and beyond. However, as only a small number of our sample had studied abroad and completed a university experience only (n=54) the statistics provided on the impact of going to a university abroad should be treated with caution. A far greater number had completed a school experience only as part of their study abroad (n=228).

KEY POINTS

- *Innovation is vital to sustaining long-term economic growth within an economy.*
- *Those with deep international experience were more likely to attribute their involvement in innovative activity to their participation in international opportunities.*
- *International experience can have a large impact on the development of skills that are often needed to be innovative.*

— *In particular, international experience can help develop communication skills and the ability to work well with people from other countries and cultures.*

Impacts for the individual

LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

The questionnaire covered a range of labour market outcomes experienced by individuals who had taken part in international experiences, as well as by those who had not participated in such activities. The average salary being earned by an individual with international experience and working full-time was £38,673; those without international experience were earning on average £32,755. However, by running a regression which enabled us to jointly control for numerous other factors which may influence the relationship we established that once an individual’s education level is accounted for, there is no significant association between international experience and earnings. This is likely to be a result of the fact that individuals with a degree are more likely to have international experience and that a degree delivers a salary premium in today’s labour market. Hence, we cannot evidence from this survey that having international experience will lead to better future pay for individuals. The same conclusion was also reached when we compared those with deep experience to those who had not participated in international opportunities.

We also asked respondents a number of questions regarding their satisfaction with their job, current role and life in general. As Table 3 demonstrates, there was little difference in job and career satisfaction between individuals with and without international experience. Indeed, when we ran regression models that jointly controlled for other factors that may impact on satisfaction alongside international experience, we found that there was no significant relationship between participating in international opportunities and satisfaction with current role or career to date. Those who responded to our questionnaire were also asked to rate their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10. The average satisfaction rating amongst individuals without international experience was 7.70, whilst it was 7.53 for those who had participated in international experiences. Furthermore, additional regression analysis which controlled for other factors that could influence satisfaction with life confirmed that there was no significant link between having international experience and life satisfaction. The same results were reached for the above satisfaction outcomes when we compared those with deep experience to those with no international experience.

	Overall (%)	Non-participant in international experience (%)	Participant in international experience (%)
Current role	71	72	70
Career to date	68	68	68

Table 3: The percentage of individuals who were satisfied or very satisfied with their current role and career to date (base = variable)

The survey required respondents to provide their current job title so we could we could assign them to a social grade. We then investigated whether there was any relationship between having international experience and being in social grades A and B. Considering just these two variables

we find a significant relationship. However, once we control for other factors, such as an individual's qualifications and the social grade of their main wage earning parent (a potential proxy for socioeconomic status), there is no longer a significant link between international experience and being in social grades A or B. The same conclusion is reached if we were to compare those with deep international experience to those individuals who had not participated in any international opportunities.

	Non-participant in international experience (%)	Participant in international experience (%)
Social grades A or B	41	53*
Social grades C or D	59*	47
Base	321	523

Table 4: The percentage of individuals with and without international experience in each of the two social grade categories

When looking at female survey respondents only, a significantly greater proportion of women with international experience are employed full-time, when compared to females without international experience.

	Non-participant in international programme (%)	Participant in international programme (%)
Employed full-time	37	45*
Employed part-time	38*	25
Unemployed	4	5
Doing something else	21	25
Base	272	361

Table 5: Cross tabulation of employment status by whether or not an individual has international experience (for females only).

There were no significant differences in employment status by international experience for males. Also, there were no significant differences in employment status by type (e.g. work only, travel only etc) or intensity of experience for either gender.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT CULTURES AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Although the findings above suggest that having international experience will not boost your labour market and employment outcomes, this does not mean to say that taking part in international experiences does not have any impact on an individual's career. Those who had taken part in international opportunities were asked to reflect on the influence that their experience had had on their knowledge and understanding of international topics, as well as different cultures. As we can see from Table 6, understanding of foreign cultures and countries, alongside ability to communicate with those from different backgrounds, were the two main types of knowledge and understanding possessed by this group of individuals. The one type of knowledge which individuals said they did not have was knowledge of foreign markets.



	Participant in international experience (% agree or strongly agree)
I have good knowledge and awareness of international affairs	61
I have good knowledge and awareness of foreign markets	27
I have a good understanding of foreign countries and cultures	70
I am confident in my ability to communicate with people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds	71
I actively seek to explore and learn about other countries and cultures	68

Table 6: The percentage of individuals who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the above statements about their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and international issues (Base: Respondents with international experience = 712)

We proceeded to ask participants with international opportunities about the significance of the influence of each type of experience on their knowledge and understanding of international issues and different cultures. Figure 3 suggests that overall international experience can have a big impact on an individual's knowledge and understanding. Overall, work experience abroad has the largest impact on developing one's knowledge and understanding of international issues and various cultures. Again, the question in our survey asked about the influence of studying abroad on developing these attributes. In order to understand whether any differences existed between those with university and school experiences, we considered those individuals whose only study abroad experience was at a university, as well as those for whom their sole experience was a school initiative. The percentages reported for university experiences should be treated with caution because of the low base from which these percentages are formulated ($n < 50$). In this context, whilst international experience is clearly beneficial for individuals in this respect, these advantages can also be useful for wider society and the economy. As we saw in the previous section, one of the characteristics often possessed by innovative people is multicultural openness, which international experience can help develop. Furthermore, in an increasingly globalised world, having knowledge of other countries can be useful for employers looking to expand their markets or to collaborate with organisations outside of the UK.

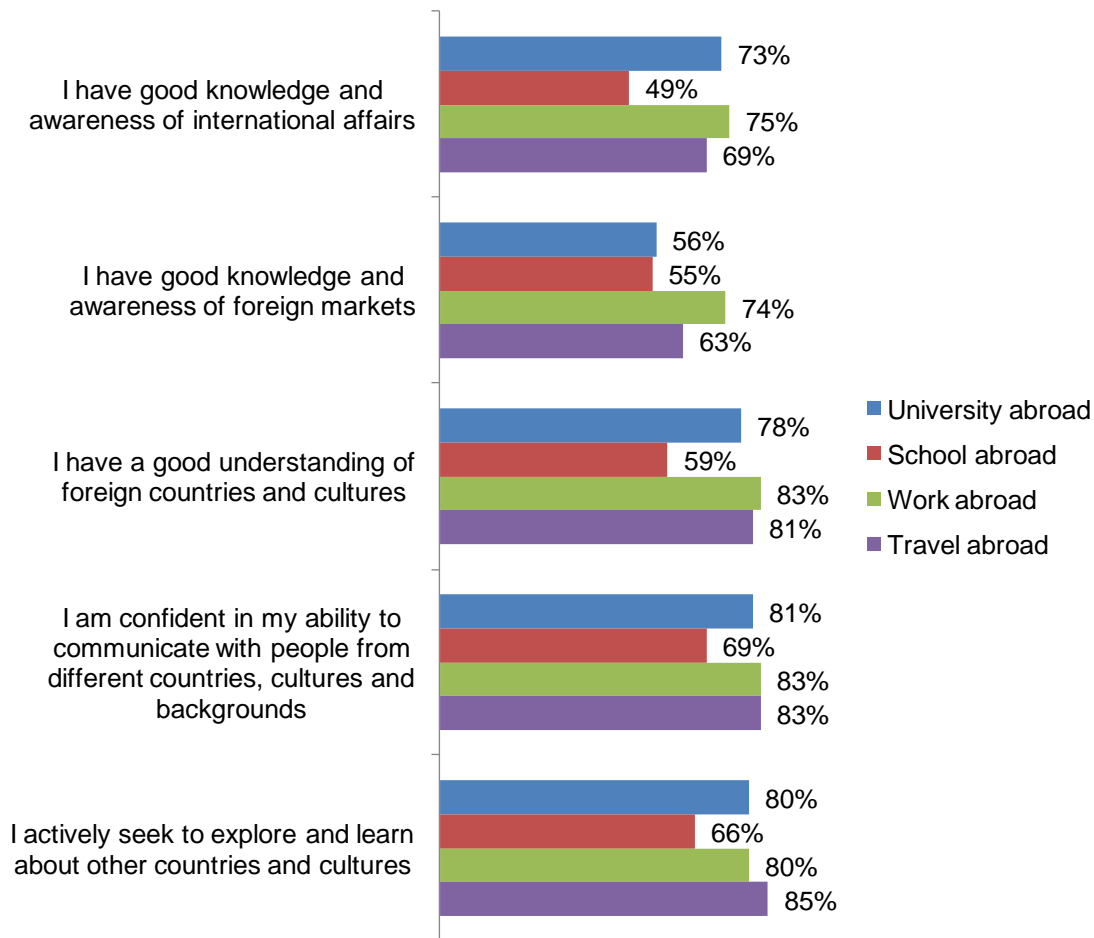


Figure 3: The percentage of individuals who gave a score of 4 or 5 to the significance of a specific type of international experience to developing the above knowledge and understanding (Respondents with international experience; base = variable)

ADDITIONAL SKILLS GAINED FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Aside from the skills and attributes discussed earlier that can help individuals to become more innovative, we also asked respondents to indicate some of the other key qualities they believed they possessed. Table 7 demonstrates that a large proportion of individuals who had participated in international experience stated that they were determined and independent, but also willing to listen to ideas that others put forward. Large majorities also said that they had good organisational skills and the ability to adapt to different situations. The only skill or attribute for which a large percentage of our sample with international experience highlighted that they did not have was proficiency in a foreign language.

	Participant in international experience (% agree or strongly agree)
I am confident/proficient in speaking a foreign language	26
I am open to/willing to listen to ideas that other people suggest	92
I am confident with adapting to new and unfamiliar situations	82
I am comfortable with working on my own/I am self-reliant	90
I have a resilient/determined character	78
I have excellent planning and organisational skills	74

Table 7: Percentage of individuals with international experience who agreed or strongly agreed that they possess the above skills and attributes (Base: Respondents with international experience = 712)

Across all these various skills and attributes, a large proportion of respondents rated the significance of their international experience in making a positive contribution towards the development of these qualities at 4 or 5 out of 5 which further demonstrates the value of taking part in international opportunities. Adapting to new situations and confidence with working on one's own are the two qualities that are particularly developed through international experience. Overall, work abroad appears to have the biggest influence on a person's skill set, with school experiences having the least impact. Having said that, a large percentage did believe their participation in a school initiative helped them to develop a variety of skills. University programmes abroad again have a larger effect on skill development than school experiences abroad; however, we had a very low number of individuals for whom their only study experience was a university initiative (n<50) and the results should be treated with caution.



Figure 4: The percentage of individuals who gave a score of 4 or 5 to the significance of a specific type of international experience to developing the above skills and attributes (Respondents with international experience; base = variable)

OTHER BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Amongst those people who had international experience, we asked respondents to highlight the main impacts of their study, work or travel abroad. First, looking at the impact of studying abroad on the individual, the biggest influences were on personal development and forming new friendships. Furthermore, when we look at university and school experiences separately, we find that over 50% of respondents who had taken part in some form of university experience abroad believed their participation had helped boost their overall attainment and secure a job that met their interests.

	Study abroad [overall] (%)	University experience abroad (%)	School experience abroad (%)
It enabled me to develop as a person	73	74	67
I formed a new network of friends	56	57	47
It encouraged me to continue studying/learning	49	59	41
It improved my grades/results	40	51	33
It enabled me to get a job that met my interest	35	53	26
It enabled me to secure a job	34	47	23
It encouraged me to look for future opportunities to study abroad	32	36	26
It enabled me to maximise my earnings	30	40	22
Base	342	53	223

Table 81: The percentage of individuals who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the above statements about the impact of studying abroad

We also asked respondents to indicate exactly how their international study experience had helped their personal development. 95% of individuals who had only been on a type of university experience as part of their study abroad agreed or strongly agreed that their experience had boosted their confidence; this compares to a figure of 79% amongst those who had been on a school experience abroad. Taking part in a university experience abroad also had a large influence on an individual's tolerance and curiosity, with 82% and 85% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their experience had improved their tolerance and curiosity respectively. The corresponding figures for tolerance and curiosity amongst individuals who had been on a school experience abroad were 73% and 80% respectively.

Similarly, the biggest impact of work experience abroad (either paid or unpaid) was on personal development. 93% agreed or strongly agreed that their time working abroad had helped to increase their confidence. 81% of individuals who had worked abroad agreed or strongly agreed that their work experience had increased their tolerance; a similar figure (77%) reported it had raised their curiosity. Besides personal development, respondents stated that the main impacts of working abroad were on their efficiency and professional achievements. Although international work experience was not as influential on labour market outcomes, just under 40% agreed or strongly agreed that their experience had helped them with their career aspirations or earnings.

	% who agree or strongly agree with the statement about working abroad
It enabled me to develop as a person	84
It encouraged me to continue learning	60
It improved my professional achievements	60
It improved my professional efficiency and effectiveness	59
It has expanded my professional network	57
It made me more aware of different career paths I could take	56
It encouraged me to look for future job opportunities abroad	43
It helped me to realise/decide upon the ideal career path for myself	42
It enabled me to access immediate or short-term job opportunities more broadly	41
It enabled me to access immediate or short-term job opportunities in my chosen career path	38
It has helped me to more quickly progress towards my long-term career aspirations	38
It helped me maximise my earnings	36

Table 9: The percentage of individuals who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the above statements about the impact of working abroad (Base = 415)

The main impact of an extended period of travel abroad was again personal development. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that it had boosted their confidence. In comparison to work abroad, we found that travel abroad had a bigger effect on an individual's curiosity, with 87% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were now more curious. As with international work experience, 81% agreed or strongly agreed that it had improved their tolerance.

	% who agree or strongly agree with the statement about travelling abroad
It enabled me to develop as a person	84
I formed a new network of friends	61
It encouraged me to look for future opportunities to study or work abroad in other countries	46
It encouraged me to look for future opportunities to study or work abroad in the same country	41

Table 20: The percentage of individuals who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the above statements about the impact of travelling abroad (Base = 314)

KEY POINTS

- *When comparing those with and without international experiences, our survey found no association between international experience and a range of labour market outcomes, including salary, job and career satisfaction, as well as life satisfaction.*

- *International experience can help to develop knowledge and understanding of different cultures and international issues.*
- *This knowledge and understanding can be important to employers in an increasingly globalised world, and also help further develop the skills required to be innovative.*
- *The largest impact on the individual from international experience was personal development, with confidence, tolerance and curiosity built through participation.*

03. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of the key findings from our depth interviews with individuals who have had a wide range of international experiences.

This section summarises the key findings from a series of qualitative interviews with a range of people who had some form of international experience. The findings are illustrated with indicative quotes and provide a basis for triangulation with the quantitative data collected through the survey.

Impact on personal and professional development

Interview respondents were able to identify a range of impacts resulting from their international experiences. Most viewed the impact of their experiences as being formative, gradually developing and becoming apparent throughout their lives and careers. Long-term impacts included greater personal and professional confidence, independence and a positive outlook. Shorter-term impacts included improved understanding of different cultures, new skills and abilities, and immediate gains such as a new job or new friends.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT CULTURES AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

The majority of respondents interviewed described how their international experiences had widened their understanding of foreign cultures and countries, and almost all respondents cited this as a key impact. This was true for all interviewees even where their international experiences had taken place in countries perceived to be similar to their country of origin. This may suggest that it does not matter where you go for international experiences, there are significant benefits to be realised.

Well I suppose the main impact it has had on me is when you live abroad, you get to grips with how people think in other cultures. I know the United States isn't deemed to be very different from ours, but actually I did find it quite different... It gave me a view of what it's like living in a different culture.

— 07 – Dancer, took part in a school exchange programme

I absolutely love travel and I think it's the best thing anyone can ever do to be honest with you. I think it broadens your horizons, makes you more confident as a person and it's great to get out of your bubble and see other cultures. Even if you go to westernised countries, like Australia and Canada, as well. So it's still different experiences from a different culture.

— 10 Market researcher, travelled overseas for 1 year+



Several respondents reported that their international experience had enabled them to empathise with people from other cultures both during and following their visit. Respondents indicated that through their international experiences, cultural differences – such as different behaviours or customs – became less prominent in their minds and they believed that as a result, they had developed a more ‘rounded’ humanitarian perspective.

It gave me a real sense of being able to connect across cultures in a very everyday way, understanding that whatever differences there are people are still looking for food, looking for shelter, there are very basic. I guess it humanised my understanding of the world, there are very basic needs that all humans have. I guess it developed a more humanitarian consciousness.

— 01 Academic, attended an international college for 1 year+

Several interviewees felt that their international experiences had helped open their minds to new perspectives and to become more receptive to different ideas or points of view from other cultures. In some cases this also led individuals to re-examine their own perceptions.

I mean it [their international experience] was fundamentally those things, which are not to make assumptions about people, and not to presume who they are. You need to be pretty open when you're going in, and seeing them, and listening to them. I think that's stayed with me.

— 03 Senior business leader, attended an international college for 1 year+

When I sit and look at the news, and they portray stories about the world in a certain light, I'm very much aware that in [other countries] they portray the same stories in a different light altogether. So I think it makes you aware of kind of keeping an open mind about things, and about issues, and trying to work out what's really going on as opposed to what you're told, because I think in a culture you're taught to think in a particular way. I think for me, that's one of the main impacts, really.

— 07 Dancer, took part in a school exchange programme

Interviewees were able to describe and explain a range of different mechanisms through which their international experiences had increased their knowledge and understanding of other cultures. In some cases this related to specific events that they had experienced whilst in other cases the process was more formative and developed through sustained or repeated international experiences, either during young life or later in an individual's career.

Primarily, what emerged from the depth interviews was that it was the process of immersion in another country or culture that was the key mechanism to developing a better understanding of different cultures and countries. Exposure to people from other countries and cultures in a personal or professional context facilitated new understanding of those cultures and this held true across a range of different activities.

Working on a cruise ship I was working with Filipinos, South Africans, Australians... You know there's people speaking Patois around you, there's the South Africans speaking Afrikaans, they've all got their different cultures and also it definitely makes you a little bit more open to people, more receptive to people and their cultures.

— 10 Market researcher, travelled overseas for 1 year+

Some interviewees indicated that their knowledge and understanding of different cultures was formed as a result of certain specific events or incidents encountered during their international experience. One respondent, who undertook an international work placement in Macedonia, explained that the change in their personal and professional context helped them to develop a better appreciation of other cultures. In this case, the combination of socioeconomic instability and the possibility of conflict led to a profound experience, in a sense, a “*culture shock*”.

It was very, very frontline stuff... It was fascinating. It was challenging but every day, you're learning, you're taking in so much. It was culturally so different and yet, geographically, not that far away... The personal side of things was absolutely profound, in terms of getting you out of this cocoon that I had been operating in and many of us operate in, in your own life and business context and friends and networks and business colleague networks. This was thrown into something completely and utterly different. Literally, from one week I was flying business class and staying in the hotels and nice restaurants... The following Monday, I'm staying on a couch in a host family's home.

— 02 Consultant, worked overseas for 1 year+

Several interviewees believed that improved understanding of other countries and cultures is developed gradually, and may be the result of a series of different experiences. One interviewee acknowledged that their experience had raised their levels of intercultural knowledge and understanding, and noted that this happened spontaneously, as a result of visiting several countries.

Well, I suppose I did without really thinking about it, so yes, my general knowledge would've gone up, and because I went a variety of countries I would have absorbed an understanding of particular cultures

— 15 Healthcare professional, worked overseas for 6 months-1 year

Several interviewees stressed that international travel in itself is highly enjoyable and that often one international experience leads an individual to seek further opportunities to explore and learn about other cultures. This further illustrates the process of gaining an improved understanding of different cultures through different international experiences over time.

Once you have been out there, you want to go out and continue international travel and going away and exploring new places. So my next plan is I want to do South America, so they're the next ones in mind to do.

— **10 Market researcher, travelled overseas for 1 year+**

I came back to a normal job, but there was this taste [for travel], and I couldn't get it of the system and that took me on the path I'm going now.

— **02 Consultant, worked overseas for 1 year+**

Well, I think you actually read more as well. I think you'll keep an eye more on current affairs. I think you do because you know something. You can identify with the place if you've been there.

— **08 Teacher, attended an HE-level exchange programme for 1 year+**

The sustained cultural interest described above may also extend into individuals' professional lives. For one interviewee, their initial international experience strengthened an existing interest in other cultures and shaped their research interests as an academic. This illustrates the way in which international experiences can have a direct impact on career choices and progression.

There was always for me a sense of curiosity about the world anyway, and a real sense, not that other cultures were a threat, but they were something that would enrich in life, and I guess I developed that more and more. Just a kind of appetite for encountering and enjoying, seeing the very positive things about cultural difference.

— **01 Academic, attended an international college for 1 year+**

Similarly, another respondent described how their international experiences in compulsory education had helped to shape their entire career, which now has a strong emphasis on working at an international level. For this interviewee, the early experience of being abroad in childhood triggered a lifelong interest in working and learning abroad.

It's one of the things that drives me to work at an international level today. I know, regardless of how developed you consider a country, based on a whole load of indicators, there is always something to be learned from being in a different culture, where someone approaches something differently. Even if you are in an environment that has more money, more training and education opportunities, there is always something to be learnt from experiencing how someone else from a different upbringing and a different environment tackles the same challenges. That really, really drives my desire to do international things and be involved in international things.

— **06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+**

NEW NETWORKS, FRIENDS AND RELATIONSHIPS

One of the key impacts described by interview respondents was developing new friendships and networks of contacts through their experiences.

I have got a lot of foreign friends... It certainly influenced my happiness through keeping in touch with and visiting friends in foreign countries. Yes, it's probably reinforced my outlook because I found people with a similar outlook to mine; I found them all over the place.

— 14 Engineer, worked overseas for 1 year+

So work as a tour leader was absolutely perfect, because I got to know a lot of local people that I'm still really good friends with.

— 13 Teacher, worked overseas for 1 year+

One individual explained that by attending international college, which by nature involves a very broad demographic of pupils, they were able to develop a wide network of people with diverse nationalities and cultures.

I guess the other one that we haven't really talked about, and it's practical, is network. It's given me a global network that feels very, very committed and very easy, you know, because these are just my schoolmates really, but they do live everywhere and lots of them are doing interesting things. So it's given me a network which has been really helpful professionally.

— 03 Senior business leader, attended an international college for 1 year+

IMPACT ON STUDYING AND LEARNING

Several interviewees described how their international experience had impacted on their attitude to learning. Some respondents felt that their international experience had encouraged them to continue studying and had steered the direction of their studies, for example, by raising their academic interest in international or cross-cultural issues.

There was so much about that experience that I didn't understand, culturally, around Communism and around those kinds of structures...which is why...I ended up studying Eastern European Studies.

— 06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+

One individual perceived that the language skills they developed while overseas had directly led to improved attainment in higher education by enabling them to achieve a first degree classification.

I spent a year abroad, so when I came back, my spoken languages were so good, that they helped me to get a first...OK, maybe you could say that I took time off from my degree for a year, but in fact, at the end I got a first, so it kind of made a lot of sense.

— 05 Author, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

INFLUENCING CAREER DECISIONS

In addition to the development of a broad range of employability skills, international experiences were also very influential in steering individuals' chosen career pathway. A number of individuals indicated that their international experience had significantly influenced their decisions regarding their career progression and their professional development. For some this was about reaffirming or refining their future career path whilst for others their experience had inspired them to pursue a new direction.

The impact in the short-term was to change my outlook on what I wanted from my career, what I wanted in the company I was in, the possibilities that I could see of a company stepping up to do more than just a handful of volunteers, to almost industrialise this thing. That became the personal mission, if you will. It impacted me, in terms of very much all that I'm doing.

— 02 Consultant, worked overseas for 1 year+

I did come back with the determination of knowing what I wanted to do, career-wise, and I don't know how or why I decided on that... I did come back with a clear path, which I followed, in terms of my career. I had, for a while, thought after my nutrition degree I would go back into the food industry... going away gave me a breather to think about, actually, what were my priorities, not people around me, and it allowed me to decide that I wanted to be a dietician.

— 15 Healthcare professional, worked overseas for 6 months-1 year

Basically, the experience inspired me and motivated me to try and engage with policy making and decision making at a European level.

— 06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+

My whole career now is based on understanding, explaining French culture in a book. So basically, it opened my eyes to the differences between our culture and other cultures, and that is now my career, analysing foreign culture.

— 05 Author, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

PROFESSIONAL IMPACT

Beyond influencing their career decisions, several respondents stated that their international experience had a direct impact on their employability. For some, the experience had given them the practical/technical skills they needed to pursue a vocation:

I learnt how to teach English when I was abroad, which enabled me to live [later] for about three or four years in Paris, you know, and get a job very easily.

— 05 Author, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

My year abroad obviously helped me with my language skills... I couldn't have become a teacher, a languages teacher, if I hadn't done that, so it definitely had an impact on my career.

— 11 Teacher, took part in an HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

I went on to be an English language teacher for a short time before becoming an actor. But I've also got jobs occasionally through being a German speaker – for example I did a commercial in a forest once speaking German!

— 04 Actor, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

For others, the experience was perceived to have helped differentiate them from other candidates and enhanced their CV which in turn had enabled them to find and secure a job.

I think it was really good on my CV for the future job interviews, showing that I travelled for a year and was able to do the logistics of arranging that, etc, stood me in good stead.

— 15 Healthcare professional, worked overseas for 6 months-1 year

It [international experience] shows a determination and a certain personality, doesn't it, that you're prepared to take risks and opportunities as they come your way.

— 15 Healthcare professional, worked overseas for 6 months-1 year

Some interviewees felt that the benefits of international experiences were not always realised immediately. Often the experience acted as a catalyst and provided the foundations on which a future career could be built.

After graduating from university, I did some English teaching, mainly abroad, and then I got a job in publishing bilingual dictionaries, again using my languages. Then I got a job as a journalist on an English language magazine in France. Then I had, I wrote a novel which became a hit...which allowed me to give up the day job and become a full time writer.

— 05 Author, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

I ended up getting connected to the then-UK Disabled People's Organisation. They then put me on their international committee and I got to engage with more international staff, but only because I had taken myself to the international level already. I got to an international level, I

was then discovered by the UK level, or equivalent organisations, and then that facilitated me getting involved in the international stuff, rather than working my way up.

— 06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+

Impact on specific skills and attributes

Beyond the impact on an individuals' life and career path, it was also evident from the interviews that international experiences have a positive influence on an individual's skills and attributes. Building on our quantitative survey findings, our qualitative interviews provided insights into how international experiences had benefited individuals through the development of a range of both personal and employability skills.

Almost all of those participating in depth interviews believed that their experience had helped them to develop their language skills (to a varying degree), as well as to increase their confidence, independence, problem-solving skills, resilience and determination. This section looks in more detail at the different types of skills and attributes developed.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Proficiency in a foreign language was one of the primary skills which many interviewees described developing through their international experiences. Most respondents had some degree of ability in a foreign language before their experience. However, they explained how being fully immersed in the country and surrounded by native speakers had accelerated their learning and fluency in the language.

I went to this great little market town, and was the only English person there – so it was a completely new experience and really forced me to learn the language and 'fit in'. While I was living there I was surrounded by German speakers all of the time and was constantly learning German and even learning the local dialect – so my fluency increased dramatically. I became practically fluent in one year. I'd done O-level and A-level, but being there is the best way of learning.

— 04 Actor, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

However, increased proficiency of foreign language skills was not universal among the respondents, with two respondents explicitly stating this was not important to them, and several noting that their language ability remained only at a basic level.

Beyond foreign language proficiency, a number of interviewees perceived that being immersed in a country and speaking an unfamiliar language helped them to develop their wider communication skills. This is particularly important in order to fully bridge language or cultural barriers. For instance, one interviewee emphasised the importance of thinking carefully, not only about what you are saying, but how something is said. In a sense therefore, the individual develops their

communication skills, in addition to learning another language, learning to convey meaning in a precise way, and sensitively to a different audience.

How I think working in an international environment has helped me is when you're working with people whose first language isn't English you have to think about the language you use to explain things and the words you use. You have to think very, very carefully and you have to learn how to be precise and concise and minimise ambiguity.

— 06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+

The respondent continued, explaining that developing communication skills in this way has become an integral and crucial part of their career.

Actually, for me, professionally, that has been a key skill set for me being good at my job because, actually, my job is translation but it's translation between technical policy English and young people's English.

— 06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+

Similarly, another respondent explained that their international experience was beneficial in that it helped them to develop a more adaptable and versatile communication style and to tailor their message for different audiences.

It got me thinking about language skills and how to communicate with people, and that I found that really, really useful. So when I went on to teach English, and I realised I needed to change how I was speaking to people-like the level of speaking, the level of difficulty.

— 13 Teacher, worked overseas for 1 year+

Linked to this, one interviewee noted the importance of developing patience and active listening skills in order to help overcome language barriers and facilitate effective communication successful between speakers of different languages.

You had to be a bit patient and listen to people expressing themselves and try to work out what they really wanted to say...So there's a skill in that.

— 03 Senior business leader, attended an international college for 1 year+

CONFIDENCE WITH ADAPTING TO NEW AND UNFAMILIAR SITUATIONS

A key attribute raised by most of our depth interviewees related to how their international experience had helped them to develop confidence when adapting to new or unfamiliar situations. Interviewees, explained how collective, international experiences had broaden their personal perspectives about where to live and work, essentially opening up more opportunities for them.

I think living abroad as a young person, gives you a much broader perspective on life. ...it opens up the planet to you. So you're suddenly not scared of moving anywhere. I mean, I lived in lots of different towns, mainly towns in Germany, and I just feel I could settle down almost anywhere now.

— 05 Author, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

One respondent noted that the experience of studying at an international college and travelling ultimately set them up to overcome any fears about working in an unfamiliar location.

I think perhaps if I hadn't been through the college experience and also travelling out to India on my own to spend time with my parents or actually travelling around India with friends, I probably would have been more wary of that experience. Whereas in fact I just thought, 'Well look, the world's out there, I'm here, I want to encounter it, let's go and see what happens.' So I think it made me feel less fearful of the world.

— 01 Academic, attended an international college for 1 year+

INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE

Undertaking an international experience enabled many interview respondents to develop a greater sense of independence. This was particularly apparent for young people, with several interviewees describing how they believed their international experience had enabled them to mature as a person and to be more independent. This was brought about primarily by the fact that individuals were away from home, in an unfamiliar environment and separated from their traditional peer group.

Because you were isolated from your friends, and all the people you'd left behind, you had to be independent, and become immersed in the culture.

— 04 Actor, took part in HE-level exchange programme for 6 months-1 year

Definitely become independent. You have to think; there's a lot of situations where you're out there on your own so you have to think on your own and make decisions for yourself without having to rely on other people.

— 10 Market researcher, travelled overseas for 1 year+

Some individuals felt that their experience had helped them to develop a new sense of resilience, resolve and determination. One interviewee explained that witnessing extreme circumstances in a war-torn part of the world that was struggling economically gave them a new sense of determination and 'stubborn' drive to use their own skills to try and address the problems they were facing.

To a certain extent, resilience and determination, I suppose. I've always, probably, been reasonably stubborn, but in terms of coming back from this thing with such a strong resolve to

try and address systemic issues around why these people are living in poverty or development and why the market has failed them, so a real stubborn resolve to try and disrupt the system.

— 02 Consultant, worked overseas for 1 year+

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

A key impact noted by a number of respondents related to the development and enhancement of problem-solving skills. Again this closely relates to the fact that individuals were in an unfamiliar situation where they had to take responsibility for dealing with any problems or issues that arose. Several interviewees described how they had been in situations which required them to think creatively about how to solve problems, particularly where there was a language barrier, and most felt that these were transferable skills applicable across a range of other scenarios. One interviewee explained how taking on a leadership role while overseas acted as a catalyst for developing problem-solving skills.

Yes, problem solving...especially in Cambodia or Thailand, you turn up to get your coach and your coach isn't there or it just drops you off in the middle of nowhere and it's a lot of trust, you're just waiting for the next form of transport to come and get you. If it doesn't you have to sort something else out.

— 10 Market researcher, travelled overseas for 1 year+

I think being in a strange environment, an alien environment, especially when you don't speak the language, it increases your problem-solving skills. If you don't have language on your side you have to think about other ways that you can find a solution.

— 06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+

So when I was tour leading, basically if there was a problem, I had to solve that problem. So it got me thinking on my feet a lot, and that's been something which has been great to come back and different interviews to talk about those skills. So certainly problem solving and thinking on my feet.

— 13 Teacher, worked overseas for 1 year+

PLANNING AND ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

A key skill developed through international experiences relates to planning and organisational abilities. In several instances, interviewees made a link between the development of planning and organisational skills while travelling and subsequent career progression.

[You need] organisational planning skills because you have to plan where you're going and how you're going to get there, what you're going to need when you get there...[In my work] I

was sending teams all around the country and organising events. So I guess because I'd got used to planning and organising trips that helped me plan and organise the workforce.

— 10 Market researcher, travelled overseas for 1 year+

TEAMWORK

Another key skill mentioned frequently in interviews was team-work. Again respondents (unprompted) made a link between the development of team-working skills through their international experience and applying those skills in their workplace.

The kind of international opportunities that I've had have increased my teamwork and group-based skills. Also, I guess, related to that, and again it goes back to self-awareness, it's given me a greater understanding of what my skill sets are and how I can contribute in a group dynamic.

— 06 Consultant, took compulsory education overseas for 1 year+

Summary of interview findings

We interviewed 15 people with a range of different international experiences, nine of which had responded to the survey and six which were recruited through a purposive sample from known or influential professionals. The types of international experience described included attending an international college, working overseas, higher education exchange programmes, school exchange programmes and travelling. The interviews add depth to the survey finding and provide rich examples of the broad range of impacts associated with those experiences.

Overall, respondents felt their international experiences had directly improved their international awareness and understanding. This included helping them to develop a better understanding and appreciation of other cultures and seeing things from a new perspective. For several respondents, their original international experience was a catalyst for a life-long interest in travel and learning about other cultures.

The in-depth interviews supported the findings from the survey which identified that people with international experiences credit them for helping them to develop a range of useful skills and attributes. Most of the respondents had travelled to countries where English was not the first language, and in these cases, foreign language skills had been developed, in some cases to a high level of proficiency. Wider communication and listening skills were also felt to have been developed as a direct result of the international experiences.

Interviewees described how they developed their intercultural competency through working with people from other backgrounds and cultures, developing an open mindset and willingness to listen and learn from other cultures.

All of the interview respondents were able to describe how their international experiences had helped them to develop their confidence, independence and self-reliance. Being in an unfamiliar environment and away from their support networks, respondents were forced to be self-reliant and to develop effective ways of responding and adapting to new circumstances. Many described how their problem-solving and planning skills had improved as a result of dealing with challenges they had faced whilst abroad. Some respondents also felt that the international experience had helped their team working skills.

Many of the skills and attributes which interviewees described developing through their international experiences contributed directly to them gaining employment and/or developing their careers. International experience had led to the development of specific skills, for example enhanced language skills, and/or more generic, transferable employability skills. In addition to problem-solving and organisational skills, the employability skills commonly cited included team working, communication and intercultural awareness. Wider impacts such as embarking on further study, enhancing an individual's CV and building networks of professional and personal contacts were also linked to international experiences.

Overall, interviewees were able to explain how their international experiences had helped them to develop a broad range of skills and attributes which has in turn enriched their personal and professional lives. This held true for respondent with a diverse range of different international experiences.

04. OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

To add further understanding of how international experiences bring about benefits, we conducted six case studies of programmes offering different types of international experience. The programmes utilise a range of different approaches to bring international experiences to individuals, including through international volunteering, school partnerships and curriculum development, globally-focused internships, international college study, higher education exchange and language teaching. Each case study provides background information to the programme and its activities, and provides detail on how international experiences are provided. Following this, each case study aims to provide discussion about how the programmes develop participants' skills and attributes, and what benefits and impact ultimately ensue from this.

Approaches

The first point to note is that the case studies illustrate the potential diversity of experiences that can be supported through formal programmes. The approach, host countries and target beneficiaries vary in each, as does the level of funding and other support available. Some volunteering and internship opportunities are entirely funded by the participants, while the higher education exchange, the teaching abroad programme and links between schools receive a level of external funding. The aims of the programmes are also somewhat different. The internship and volunteering programmes are ultimately looking to make a difference to the host country. The higher education, language teaching and school level activities are, on the other hand, more focused on providing an enriching experience through exposure to a different culture and the potential to build longer-term cultural links between countries.

Even within a single case study, the experiences and journey of an individual can vary significantly. For instance, the internship programmes offered by GVI differ markedly from each other, despite sharing some common features. While all HE-level mobility in Erasmus⁷ ultimately follows a similar configuration (with a student spending a period of their studies abroad at a partner university), the individual experience of each student is unique, and dependent upon the nature of their studies and objectives agreed with their university. This is also the case with Language Assistants, who will have a unique experience, depending on the school they join, the country they teach in, and the specific terms of their period of employment.

Despite the diversity of experiences and approaches, the four case studies that involve international travel (Erasmus, Language Assistants, GVI internships and Raleigh International) all seek to provide participants with exposure to another country through a structured, supported programme. The scale and nature of the support varies from case to case, but it is this which distinguishes these programmes from more self-directed international experiences, such as travelling or working abroad as an individual venture. The two school-level case studies

⁷ The programme has been known as Erasmus+ Higher Education since 2014

(Connecting Classrooms and United World Colleges) do not necessarily involve a particular international experience, and focus instead on developing a global mindset and ethos through curricular and extra-curricular activities, links to schools in other countries, and through mixing with students from a range of countries.

How individual skills and attributes are developed

Again, the mechanism through which skills and attributes are developed share common features across the case studies, but with considerable variation within and across cases in terms of the details of the experiences. The programmes that are aimed at adults, or young adults, arguably share a common “theory of change”, which could be summarised as follows: exposure to a structured or supported programme in another country gives participants opportunities to develop a number of skills and attributes that are of value. These include independence and resilience, through having to cope with unfamiliar or challenging circumstances, as well as developing an international mindset and intercultural competence by virtue of spending an extended period in another country. Depending on the programme and destination country, language development is also included, particularly for the Language Assistants programme, through either language courses, or less structured development.

Although the programmes are supported and structured, often the experience is deliberately informal, with opportunities for highly experiential learning through doing. This is important, because having to overcome challenges and work practically can be integral to a programme’s logic of developing independence and problem solving skills. For example, on programmes such as those offered by Raleigh International, the ‘wiring’ underpinning the programme is hidden, with the participant subjected to minimal bureaucracy throughout their entire journey. This enables the participant to have a genuine and user-dependent experience, where the programme activities and outcomes may be heavily affected by the individual. Behind the programme, however, is a firm framework designed to ensure that individuals have a productive and safe experience while visiting their host country.

The theory of change for the two school-level case studies are slightly different, as the schoolchildren do not necessarily travel to another country, but an international ethos is imparted through curriculum and experiential learning. In the case of Connecting Classrooms, links are made at a distance between schools in different countries, and improvements are made to pedagogy, curriculum and teacher professional development. In this case, the theory of change is essentially that the improved teaching and curriculum, and links between participating schools, create more and better teaching of global citizenship. This in turn supports young people worldwide to demonstrate enhanced knowledge, skills and understanding for work in a global economy, and ability to contribute responsibly to society locally and globally. Similarly, United World Colleges seeks to impart an intercultural mindset to students through an international curriculum and a strong institutional ethos, including mixing with students from all over the world in a variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Benefits

The level of evaluation evidence available varies across the programmes, but there is considerable evidence of benefits to the individual participants, which echo those identified through the survey and qualitative interviews for this research. Where an individual has been abroad as part of the programme, individual character, resilience, independence and confidence are all perceived to be developed. The volunteering and internship case studies in particular noted leadership and team working skills as key benefits of participating in the project-based work that is common on these programmes. Many of these skills support enhanced employability and personal effectiveness, and international experiences were commonly noted as impacting on career and future education aspirations. In some cases, such as the internships programme or Erasmus, participants also gain qualifications or academic credit through the experience, or career-specific work experience (e.g., Language Assistants), which also support employability and future career aspirations. By virtue of the fact that more employable individuals tend to succeed in the labour market, this indirectly brings benefits to the wider UK economy and society.

In the case of the two school-level programmes, the prime benefit for individuals is a greater intercultural and global outlook. This is developed as a result of international perspectives delivered through the curriculum, links to schools in other countries, and/or the opportunity to mix with young people from other countries. In the case of United World Colleges, this outlook is felt to contribute to ethical and international outlooks in future careers of alumni.

In two of the cases in particular (Raleigh International and GVI), the primary aim of the experience is to bring about benefits to the host country through voluntary contributions to valuable projects. However, in addition, the programmes seek to support the learning and personal development of participants who return from the experience with new skills and as active, engaged citizens with a more global outlook (Raleigh). Similarly, the Language Assistants programme also seeks to bring about benefits to host schools and countries by having a native language speaker as part of their teaching staff. All of the case study examples seek to build intercultural awareness among participants which is felt to have a number of benefits for society and the economy.

Unequal access to international programmes was highlighted in some of the case studies, particularly those that were not supported by governmental funding and relied on individual funding or fundraising. Clearly, where a participant is responsible for funding an experience, those with greater financial resources have fewer barriers to participation. In the example of United World Colleges, bursaries and grants are available to support students from less affluent backgrounds to attend the college. Similarly, while travel costs must be met by students looking to join the Erasmus and Language Assistants programmes, many universities offer financial support to cover all or part of these expenses. Often scholarships or bursaries are offered on a means-tested basis, facilitating access for those students from lower income backgrounds.

Further details on the individual programmes can be found in the six case studies that follow.

CASE STUDY 1: RALEIGH INTERNATIONAL

This case study offers insight into two significant international development programmes offered by Raleigh International; Raleigh Expeditions, and the Government funded International Citizenship Service scheme.

Key facts about the Programme

Programme name (s)	Raleigh Expeditions International Citizen Service
Organisations involved	Raleigh Expeditions: Raleigh International For International Citizenship Service: Department for International Development, VSO (lead partner), Skillshare International, International Service, Progression, Raleigh International, Restless Development, Tearfund.
Duration	Raleigh Expeditions: varies from 5 to 10 weeks, with option to extend in some cases. International Citizen Service: 10 weeks.
Funding (if applicable)	Raleigh Expeditions: Self-funded, normally through sponsorship and fundraising International Citizen Service: UK Government (Department for International Development), with additional sponsorship and fundraising by volunteers
Approximate throughput / headcount	Raleigh Programme participants: 40,000 since 1984. Raleigh Expeditions: 35,000 International Citizen Service: 14,000 by end of 2015.

Background

Originally established in 1984 as Operation Raleigh, Raleigh International is a sustainable development charity, aiming to inspire and support young people to engage in international volunteering, to participate in international development, and bring positive outcomes for communities across the world. In its 30 year history, Raleigh have provided expedition opportunities to some 40,000 young people, within a total of 43 countries. Raleigh International works alongside a wide range of Government, non-government, professional, social and cultural organisations in the UK and overseas, to access diverse cohorts of potential volunteers and to ensure a wide range of international volunteering opportunities.

Raleigh International aim to deliver meaningful and sustainable impacts to communities and for this reason, the countries and regions engaged with change over time. Raleigh's operations are currently focused in five countries, including Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Tanzania, India and Malaysian Borneo. Through all of their programmes, Raleigh aims meet three core objectives. First, programmatic work must be *meaningful and high quality, delivering real change and benefits to host communities*. Second, volunteers must *learn and grow through the experience, gaining new skills, values and competencies*. Third, participants must return from their experience as active, engaged citizens, with a broader, more global outlook. Crucially, an aspiration of the programmes is to enable participants to carry forward enhanced global and cultural values into further activities after the programme has finished.



How the Programmes develop individual's skills and attributes

Raleigh International offer informal, and highly experiential learning through a range of structured and bespoke programmes. The two largest of these are Raleigh Expeditions, and International Citizen Service.

- Raleigh Expeditions:** *These are challenging programmes that bring together diverse groups of young people to contribute to sustainable development projects in Borneo, Costa Rica & Nicaragua, Nepal and Tanzania. The expeditions are open to volunteers of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds, and all are based in communities and environments where support is needed. Participants can choose to undertake 5, 7 or 10 week expeditions, for which full training and induction support is provided. Participants are able to take part in community-based, environmental and adventure-based projects. The cost of participating in the 10 week, 7 week, and 5 week versions of the expedition are £3,150, £2,550 and £1,950 respectively. Candidates looking to join a Raleigh Expedition typically engage in fundraising or sponsorship to cover these costs, and to finance flight and Visa expenses. While expeditions are run constantly throughout the year, applicants are encouraged to apply as far in advance as possible ahead of the start of the expedition.*
- International Citizenship Service (ICS):** *Led by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), International Citizen Service is a UK government funded development programme that aims to bring together young people to make a difference in some of the poorest communities in the world. Raleigh is one of nine key consortium organisations involved in delivering ICS. ICS aims to fight poverty and bring better outcomes to communities in Nepal, Nicaragua and Tanzania through 10-12 week long volunteer projects. Raleigh ICS projects focus on water and sanitation, and natural resource management, and aim to create a significant and tangible impact in the host country, as well as promote personal development for volunteers. ICS volunteers may be aged between 18 and 25, and individuals can apply to be a volunteer team leader if aged 23 or above. A new strand of the programme, ICS entrepreneurs, aims to support economic development in poorer communities in Nicaragua and Tanzania, and involves volunteers working with small businesses and social enterprises to lift communities out of poverty through economic development. Across all organisations involved, ICS will give a total of 14,000 young people from the UK and developing countries the opportunity to volunteer and fight poverty in some of the poorest communities of the world by the end of 2015.*

Raleigh Expeditions and ICS differ in a number of ways, notably around how each is funded, the age ranges for participation, and the specific configuration of activities available on each programme. However, fundamentally, both programmes utilise the same delivery methodology and share common aims and values tied in with Raleigh's organisational values and objectives. Both Raleigh Expeditions and ICS projects involve objectives and activities relating to one of five thematic areas of relevance to the community or country in which they are based:

Key themes underpinning Raleigh International's Programmes		
Increasing Environmental Protection and Community Resilience	Water and Sanitation	This theme focuses on increasing awareness of water sanitation, and increasing access to clean water. This may be through infrastructure development projects to develop new water systems, or educational activities designed to increase hygiene and holistically improve water sanitation in a community.

	<i>Natural Resource Management</i>	This theme focuses on helping communities to understand and manage their natural resources effectively. This in turn prevents degradation of the environment and brings health benefits to communities.
	<i>Community Resilience</i>	This theme aims to help communities become more resilient to unexpected change and natural disasters. Raleigh's projects aim to create new livelihood opportunities, diversify production, and offer access to education and health facilities.
Inspiring Young Leaders	<i>Develop young leaders and active global citizens</i>	A key part of Raleigh's approach focuses on working through, for and with youth to inspire and make positive change in the places they work. There is a dual priority to develop the knowledge, skills and values of young people, in terms of their leadership potential and their understanding of global issues so that they have the attitude and drive to take positive action after the expedition. This is delivered in the 'Raleigh Way' – diverse teams of youth volunteers delivering grassroots projects through experiential, facilitated, challenge-based and supported learning.
	<i>Creating National Societies</i>	Both Raleigh Expeditions and International Citizen Service enlist national volunteers from the host countries, in order to maximise social and cultural interaction for all participants and to facilitate local learning and development. National volunteers are encouraged to form and run national societies, to fundraise and carry forward sustainable development activities after the end of the programme.
Overarching themes	<i>Behaviour Change in communities</i>	A key aspect of all Raleigh Programmes is to influence positive behaviour change in communities, through sharing knowledge and best practices, especially around hygiene and staying healthy. Several Raleigh programmes engage with schools, children and young people in host communities, to teach proper hygiene practices through fun participatory events and activities.
	<i>Behaviour Change in young people</i>	The other key aspect of the Raleigh Programmes is to influence the young people so they continue to do their part in driving sustainable development. The Raleigh definition of youth leadership is: "An individual who is aware of their own values and perceptions and respects the diversity of others; recognises that we live in an interdependent world; cares about social justice, sustainable development and the environment; and using their leadership and team skills, take personal responsibility and action to make the world a better place".

Table 31: Key themes underpinning Raleigh International's programmes

The journey of an individual volunteer undertaking an opportunity at Raleigh varies considerably, depending on which programme they engage with, and which specific activities they choose to undertake. However, despite this degree of variation, all Raleigh opportunities are set up managed within a robust framework of guidelines, and all participants follow a consistent process to ensure the best possible experience for all, and to ensure safety. This helps to ensure that all participants behave in an appropriate manner within the territory they are visiting, respecting the customs of local communities. In particular, participants are requested to abstain from drinking alcohol, which may compromise their safety in some environments or regions. However, despite the necessary boundaries and rules specified by Raleigh, all programmes are designed to be highly flexible, challenging, and shaped by the individual. Therefore, participants are supported and 'hand-held' during the initial stages of their placement, but empowered to shape and develop their own experience for themselves, and develop confidence through informal learning.

Raleigh Programmes are happening continuously, so volunteers are able to apply at any point during the year, for upcoming placements. While applicants can complete the application cycle in around a month, it is strongly recommended that all candidates start their application at least a year to 18 months before the beginning of the programme. This is particularly important where significant fundraising is required, such as on Raleigh Expeditions, or where medical and VISA arrangements must be completed. Applicants complete a paper-based application form and assessment, to determine if the individual is right for the opportunity. These initial stages lay important foundations for the rest of the programme, since the requirement to apply and to coordinate independent fundraising requires drive and commitment on the part of the candidate.

Once approved, upcoming volunteers attend initial training in the UK, to help prepare them for their projects and for living in the host community. On arrival in the host country, participants undergo an additional induction period to reiterate the skills and knowledge covered in initial training, and help to bring together the volunteer groups, which by their nature are highly diverse. This is crucial also to ensure that volunteers have a certain level of understanding about the project activities, and the culture and customs of the host country, enabling them to benefit as much as possible from exposure to their new environment at an early stage. Following this, the programme starts and volunteers are posted to their host communities in groups. All participants are given the opportunity to lead their team, and all are encouraged to shape the development of project objectives, and are expected to continuously review their project's outcomes and their own learning. All volunteers, whether undertaking an Expedition or International Citizen Service are required to set goals for themselves at the beginning of the programme, which are continually developed with volunteer leaders while in post. At the end of the experience, there is a chance for all participants to reflect through a final review.

Programme benefits and impact

As part of its core mission, Raleigh International is fully committed to making a sustained and positive impact, both on the countries and communities in which they operate, and on the skills and personal development of volunteers. Raleigh work closely alongside research professionals to evaluate the impact of their work and develop and improve their programmes. Many of these evaluations are concerned with the personal and professional development of volunteers, including the impact of the experience upon generic skills and competencies, but also cover discrete topics such as employability and the impact of volunteering upon disadvantaged young people. Other research has also focussed on evaluating some of the key themes of its programmes, including the role of young people in international development.⁸

The benefits and impact that Raleigh Programmes have for participants is expansive, significant, and highly subjective depending upon the individual and their own ambitions and goals. To

⁸ Jigsaw Consulting, *Independent evidence case study report: Raleigh International*, (2015). Available online at: <https://raleighinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Report-on-Raleigh%E2%80%99s-Work-to-Deliver-Water-Sanitation-Hygiene.pdf>

evaluate the impact of participating in Raleigh Programmes upon volunteers, Raleigh has commissioned notable external research from the Institute of Public Policy Research (2009), the University of Edinburgh and Liverpool John Moores University(2007), De Montfort University (2010) and Jigsaw Consulting (2015). Through this research, and through ongoing internal reviews with programme participants, a wide range of individual impacts have been noted. While there is no single lens through which to view and categorise these impacts, common themes may be identified, since participation in Raleigh Expeditions and International Citizen Service have both been noted to bring about positive character development, robust leadership abilities, and professional development

Character Development: Participation in Raleigh volunteering programmes brings about significant character development, with participants benefitting from increased confidence, personal resilience and mental toughness. Research by IPPR found that 94% of participants felt that their confidence in their own abilities had increased, and 79% said that they had a greater sense of control over their own lives.⁹ Doctoral research undertaken by Dr Simon Beames concluded that participants developed a certain degree of new mental resilience, and became more willing to take on challenges.¹⁰ Similarly, A quantitative study conducted by Liverpool John Moores University found that individuals became more resilient and able to motivate themselves to respond to challenges even when the “chips are down”.¹¹

Positive attitude is a key attribute that volunteers develop. They want to have a go. Afterwards, you could give them challenges and they'll be much more likely to say, “Yes, I'll have a go at that”, because they've experienced similar things and seen the value of their contribution.

— Raleigh International Programme Lead

Leadership and team working skills: There is clear evidence that participation in both Raleigh Expeditions and ICS impacts positively upon an individual's leadership abilities, increasing their preparedness to influence group situations, plan and lead group projects, and mediate between different teams. Through their research IPPR found that 89% of Raleigh Volunteers reported an increased ability to lead or encourage others, and 87% reported an increased ability to work as part of a team. Research by Liverpool John Moores University also found particularly clear evidence that Raleigh Volunteers became more confident working with and leading others.

Career and professional development: Participation in Raleigh Programmes increases individuals' career aspirations, and expands individuals' capacity to engage in ongoing education. IPPR's research found that a very high proportion of participants felt that their experience had enhanced their career ambitions. The research also found that individuals were more inclined to pursue employment in countries outside the UK, demonstrating the effectiveness of international volunteering at broadening an individual's professional horizons. The research suggests that

⁹ Ippr, Rallying Together: A research study of Raleigh's work with disadvantaged young people, (2009), p. 4.

¹⁰ Beames, S., 'Expedition and the social construction of the self', *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, 9(1), 14-22, (2005), p.1

¹¹ Liverpool John Moores University, The University of Edinburgh, Raleigh International Pilot Study Report, (2007), p. 2.



individuals' academic horizons are also broadened, with some participants becoming more aware of the benefits of further and higher education as a result of their Raleigh experience.¹²

Volunteering has the potential to help turn an individual's life and career around. We had one participant who was involved in gangs as a young person, unemployed and using drugs. She became involved with a youth agency that we partner with, and joined our Raleigh Expedition programme. She went through the experience and completely raised her expectations and aspirations, went on to gain a degree and a career afterwards

— Raleigh International Programme Lead.

Another study produced by Leicester Business School and published in *Education + Training*,¹³ found that participants saw their Raleigh Expedition experience as important for building their CV, with 71% of participants feeling that Raleigh International provided the best possible work experience at their time of life. Ongoing research by Raleigh International indicates that individuals feel that their overall employability and attractiveness to employers has increased, and enables candidates to stand out. Evidence suggests that completing a Raleigh programme enhances individual's professional aspirations and confidence, and in the opinion of participants, at least, makes them more employable. While there is no clear evidence base showing that individuals who complete Raleigh Programmes achieve more throughout their career, it is clear that participation has positive knock-on effects for career and professional development.

Active, engaged citizens: There is strong evidence to suggest that participation in Raleigh activities improves an individual's own sense of 'global citizenship' and cross-cultural awareness. IPPR found through their study that international volunteering increased individuals' own global and cultural awareness, and their awareness of inequality in the world, with 94% of participants stating that their understanding of other people's cultures and backgrounds had increased as a result of their programme. Research evidence also indicates that participants became more comfortable dealing with people from different cultures and countries, and became more sensitive to the customs and beliefs of those from other cultures. Evidence also suggests that participation in a Raleigh Expedition increases an individual's ability to work and live alongside people that they did not know before.¹⁴ Crucially, participation in Raleigh volunteering opportunities increases individual's sense of responsibility and capacity for greater civic participation.

A valuable impact is our programmes influence upon people life choices and ethics. There is a classic example of one volunteer leader, who was an investment banker, but took some time out to be a volunteer leader, returned to investment banking, but moved into ethical funds because they were influenced by the experience they had.

— Raleigh International Programme Lead

¹² Ippr, Rallying Together, p.8.

¹³ Rothwell, A. Charleston, B., 'International Volunteering: employability, leadership and more', *Education + Training Journal*, vol, 55, no. 2, (2013), pp. 159-173.

¹⁴ Beames, S., 'Expedition and the social construction of the self', p. 18.

Evidence also suggests that 93% of Raleigh Expedition participants are more willing to share their time, skills and knowledge to help others, and are more likely to participate in volunteering activities in the future, an attribute that Raleigh fully supports and sees as a key objective of their programmes.

Whether participating in Raleigh Expeditions or ICS, Raleigh International recognises that the benefits and impact of participating vary on an individual basis, and most of all, are emergent, with some impacts becoming evident immediately, and others appearing much later in someone’s life or career. It is difficult to disaggregate and attribute longer term impacts to participation in Raleigh Programmes directly, particularly given that the impact research discussed above is self-reflective in nature, and often undertaken with participants a relatively short time after their experience. However, drawing upon findings from a research initiative¹⁵ that included a literature review of international volunteering studies, Raleigh have developed a theoretical framework highlighting a range of immediate and longer term outcomes that may be realised on both an individual and wider basis (Figure 5 **Error! Reference source not found.**).

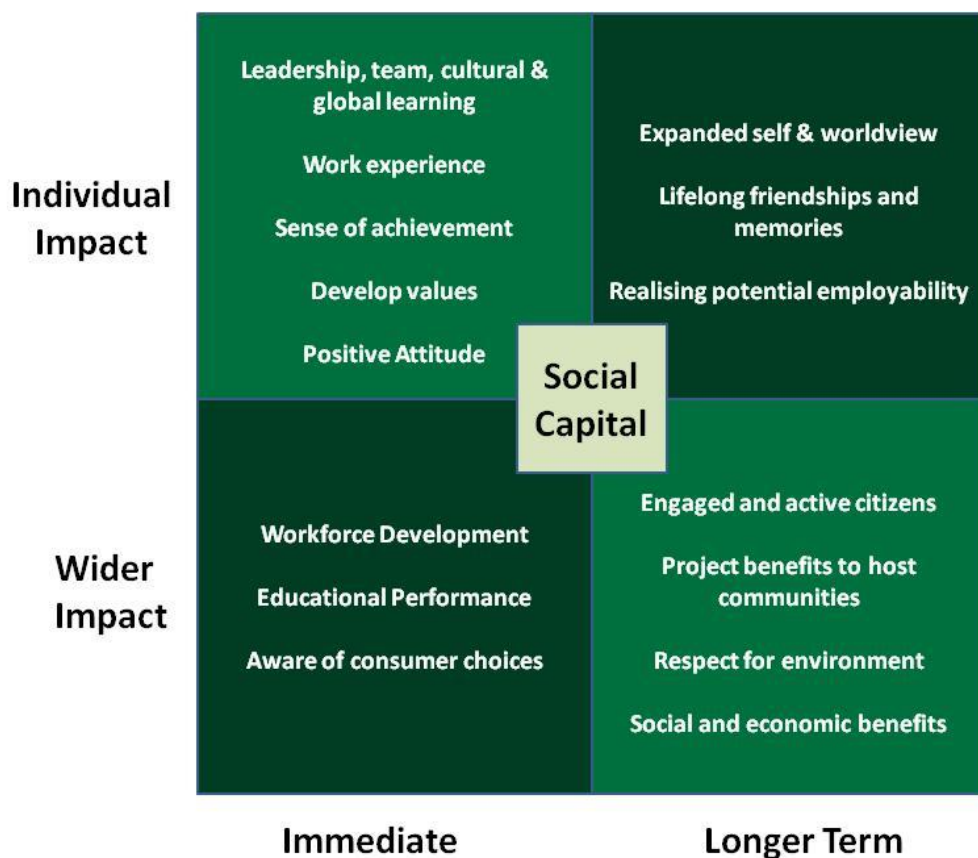


Figure 5: Potential Outcomes of Raleigh Volunteering Programmes (Source: Raleigh International)

¹⁵ Charleston, B., Knowledge Transfer Partnership research, Birkbeck College, University of London. (2010).



Beyond individual impact, it is also clear that Raleigh's international volunteering programmes have the potential to have a 'multiplier effect', where wider impacts upon economy and society may be seen. While some outcomes or impacts will emerge much later after the Programme for the individual and/or society, all possible benefits combine and contribute to overall social capital, i.e. the collective social and economic benefits from having participated.

CASE STUDY 2: CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

This case study provides insight into the British Council's flagship schools-centred global citizenship programme, Connecting Classrooms.

Key facts about the programme

Programme name	Connecting Classrooms
Organisations involved	British Council, Department for International Development
Duration	Four years (2012-15)
Funding (if applicable)	£42.9m
Approximate throughput / headcount	31,000 schools across 50 countries

Background

Connecting Classrooms is the British Council's flagship global schools programme, working across 50 countries to develop global citizenship in schools. The programme builds on the legacy of the original Connecting Classrooms programme, and the Global Schools Partnership programme, which concluded in 2012/13. Now in its third year of delivery, the current programme is the British Council's largest individual schools based programme, and a key part of their overarching schools strategy. The programme jointly funded by the British Council and the Department for International Development, utilising a total of £42.9m to develop and deliver support and infrastructure to schools in over 50 countries, and reach out to some 31,000 schools. Besides the UK, Connecting Classrooms operates in key regions of relevance to the British Council's work, including South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, East Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Americas. The programme is led from the UK, but comprises a global team extending into all of the British Council's operational regions.

Connecting Classrooms builds upon the Global Schools Partnerships (GSP) programme and Connecting Classrooms legacy programme, in order to bring a single, global schools offer to the UK market. The current iteration of Connecting Classrooms was conceived in response to the findings of an ISOS review of global education programmes, which found the two legacy programmes to be duplicative in terms of aims, but utilising different systems of delivery. The central aim of the programme is to enable young people worldwide to develop and demonstrate enhanced knowledge, skills and understanding for work in a global economy, and to know how to contribute responsibly to society locally and globally. Through its activities Connecting Classrooms aims to deliver more and better teaching of global citizenship, and improved pedagogy in key curriculum areas in both the UK and overseas.

How the programme develops individuals skills and attributes

The programme is designed ultimately to benefit and impact upon young people across the world, through developing links with partner schools in other countries, and supporting better teaching of global citizenship. As such, engagement with teachers is an important part of the programme, and influencing and improving school infrastructure to engage globally is the key mechanism through which the programme works. The programme is comprised of four key activity streams, each combined into an overall work plan, that is reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis. These are:

- **School partnerships:** *School Partnership grants are the primary component of the programme, accounting for approximately half of all programme activities. This strand of the programme delivers £1,500 grants to schools working in partnership across countries to enable teachers to meet face-to-face, observe teaching practice, learn from each other and develop joint curriculum products for their students. A total of 5,634 development grants will be issued on a competitive basis to schools in the UK that demonstrate a strong commitment to working with a partner school overseas and developing pedagogic practices. Schools that successfully demonstrate progress in developing their partnership with another institution, or undergo changes in teaching practice are eligible to apply for a follow-up partnership grants for up to two further years. This directly benefits students through bringing a greater international dimension to the school's ethos and teaching, thereby developing their international and intercultural awareness and global citizenship skills.*
- **Professional development:** *The programme provides a range of professional development opportunities for teachers, including global citizenship modules to support teachers to internationalise their curriculum and build and sustain their relationships with partner schools, ICT support modules to support their networking, teaching and engagement with other schools online, and English for international exchange modules to help teachers with limited English language skills communicate with other teachers around the world. CPD modules are delivered via a network of dedicated training staff, and a bespoke web-based system, 'Schools Online'. This aims to provide an improved experience of the curriculum for students, supported by new high quality materials and teaching practices. Through exposure to an extended and improved curriculum on global citizenship, students' international knowledge, skills and understanding are enhanced.*
- **School Leadership:** *In addition to professional development for teachers, Connecting Classrooms provides a range of leadership training for head teachers, aiming to support them to foster and embed international and intercultural values and understanding into the strategy, ethos and curriculum of their school. School leaders can select training from a total of 23 modules, including generic management training and skills, and key issues of relevance to policy makers and the education sector as a whole. Connecting Classrooms aims to strengthen the leadership skills of 3,283 teachers by June 2015. Ultimately, through a stronger institution-wide acknowledgement of international values, students are more likely to benefit from new curriculum both during and after the programme, and there is greater support to instil Global Citizenship values (described below) across the school.*
- **Accreditation and Awards:** *Connecting Classrooms also provides a means to recognise and accredit schools existing internationally-focused partnerships and activities. Through the programme schools can gain the British Council International School Award, a quality mark which communicates the school's international understanding and ethos, and links institutions with others around the world.*

The British Council is well placed to support schools to develop an international dimension to the curriculum, and to reflect on progress, by benchmarking programme engagement against other

schools and systems around the world. To coordinate and direct school engagement on such a large scale, the programme builds relationships with education stakeholders and policymakers within each participant country, including agencies, ministries of education, curriculum bodies, head teachers, and other individuals with jurisdiction over education establishments. This is important to build partnerships between schools and their pupils, while meeting the requirements of local education governance.

Schools that are interested in registering for Connecting Classrooms can access a bespoke digital infrastructure, Schools Online, which allows easy matching with a partner school in another country, access resources and CPD materials, and the ability to coordinate an equitable partnership between institutions, including exchange visits. Utilised across all of the British Council's school-centred programmes, the system has successfully enabled schools to communicate with minimal impact on programme budgets. Schools Online is open to all schools, and thus adds significant value through providing free resources and materials for teachers, head teachers and other professionals in the education sector. The system may also be used to apply for the schools partnership grant and set up visits for teachers between partner schools. Overall, the British Council aims to engage a total of 31,000 schools using the system.

Despite the considerable scale of the programme, the level of direct financial input given to participating schools is relatively low, with school partnership grants issued on a competitive basis. Using programme funding, the British Council aims to award around 9,628 partnership grants across the three years of the programme. The total amount of funding awarded to a school partnership depends upon the number of institutions involved, with £3,000 available for a standard bilateral partnership, and amounts of £4,500 for a group of three schools engaging. The partnership grant essentially funds teacher mobility, to enable staff to visit partner schools in other countries to learn from their practices, and work together to develop new curriculum products. Beyond this, participating schools effectively invest in the programme in kind, through the use of internal resources, such as teaching staff time, to complete CPD and training modules.

Programme benefits and impact

The size of Connecting Classrooms reflects its strategic importance to the British Council, and to the UK Government, both to bring a greater international dimension to teaching in schools worldwide, and to build trust and cultural understanding between countries through the classroom.

The programme is designed to impact upon the education sector, by influencing international curriculum development and teaching practices, and the skills of teaching professionals and school leaders. A key priority for the programme, therefore, is to ensure robust and expansive engagement with the UK education sector, linking schools worldwide and bringing about potentially lasting partnerships.

More importantly, Connecting Classrooms aims to deliver impact to young people, by enhancing understanding, knowledge and skills relating to the concept of Global Citizenship. Global Citizenship is concerned with identifying oneself not only as a member of a specific community, but as a citizen of the world, with shared values and beliefs with others globally.¹⁶ Connecting Classrooms provides infrastructure to support school pupils and education professionals to develop their strengths in the following core positive skills and qualities:

- **Themes:** *Identity and Belonging; Fairness and Equality; Rights and responsibilities; Sustainable Living; Conflict and Peace*
- **Skills:** *Self-awareness; Empathy; Conflict Resolution; Creative Thinking; Critical thinking; Communicating; Collaborating; Taking Action.*
- **Outlooks:** *Positive sense of identity; Open to new ideas; Sense of interdependence; Desire to make a difference; Commitment to rights and responsibilities; Commitment to peace; Commitment to justice; Commitment to sustainability.*¹⁷

Understanding both the extent to which the programme engages with the education sector effectively, and the extent to which it develops the qualities of school pupils and education professionals is important to understand the programme's overall impact. It is vital that the British Council and the DFID are able to continually monitor success, impact, and benefits brought by the programme, to ensure strong programme performance, overcome challenges, and to support departmental accountability, given the importance of justifying budgetary investment. To ensure this, the programme is underpinned by a monitoring and evaluation system enabling detailed analysis of programme inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact against key milestones (see Table 42 below). This includes key data on programme engagement with schools and teachers, and views from education professionals on the impact of the programme upon their skills and levels of global engagement. Survey data is collected quarterly, providing time-series performance information and a framework for further triangulation with qualitative evidence.

¹⁶ <http://activecitizens.britishcouncil.org/content/global-citizenship>

¹⁷ For a full description of Global Citizenship Themes see: www.britishcouncil.org/gcthemes__skills__outlooks_en.pdf

Aim	Target by June 2015
Young people worldwide demonstrate enhanced knowledge, skills and understanding for work in a global economy and know how to contribute responsibly to society, locally and globally	70% of students surveyed by external evaluator demonstrate improved global citizenship outlook, skills and awareness
	70% of students surveyed in the school demonstrate improved attitudes to diversity, awareness of strengths and challenges in own and partner communities
More and better teaching of global citizenship, improved pedagogy in other curriculum areas, in schools in the UK and overseas engaged through the programme	12,800 unique schools engaged
	90% of schools engaged reporting improvements to global citizenship teaching practice
	75% of schools engaged reporting improved teacher pedagogical skills in other curriculum areas
	90% of schools engaged with enhanced global citizenship provision in the curriculum and ethos of the school
More schools across the UK and overseas have productive and lasting school partnerships	5,634 schools in partnership
	9,628 grants awarded
	2,532 schools in partnership
	75% of schools progressing through the partnership journey
	31,076 schools registered on Schools Online
	3,000 schools collaborating using schools online
More teachers across the UK and overseas with improved professional skills related to global citizenship and other areas of the curriculum	15,152 teachers completing CPD courses in global citizenship, English or IT.
	700 teachers achieving accreditation through CPD courses
	90% of teachers confirming their global citizenship competencies, and professional skills in teaching other curriculum areas improved through CPD on the programme
Participant schools across the UK and overseas strengthen their leaders skills and their curriculum's focus on international dimension and best practice	6,620 schools awarded ISA or overseas equivalent accreditation
	3,283 school leaders involved in leadership training
	90% of school leaders confirming they have acquired enhanced skills as a result of leadership training

Table 42: Summary of Connecting Classrooms aims and milestones

To support the internal monitoring described above, external evaluations are also commissioned, to bring together internal MI with fresh fieldwork data, and independently audit key outcomes and impacts. Most recently, an independent evaluation and audit, published in February 2014 has provided an assessment of mid-programme achievements, utilising a bespoke survey of 51 participating schools, and qualitative interviews with head teachers, teachers and pupils. Taken together, the external evaluation and internally gathered MI data provides a robust source of evidence to assess programme impact.

Emerging evidence suggests that the Connecting Classrooms programme has been successful to date. The external evaluation of the programme, published in February 2014, confirms that the programme was on track to meet or exceed all targets.¹⁸ The results of the external evaluation produced very similar findings to those gathered through the British Council's own internal monitoring and evaluation, providing confidence in the positive findings that have emerged so far. Data from the external evaluation and internal monitoring systems show significant engagement

¹⁸ Hirst B. and Associates, *Connecting Classrooms UK Evaluation and Audit 2013/14*, Feb 2014, p. 7.



with schools and teachers had taken place by February 2014, with at least 2,200 UK schools engaged with the programme, either through school partnerships or professional development courses accessed online. At the time of evaluation over 1,200 partnership grants had been issued, over 500 courses had been delivered with teachers, more than a 1,000 schools had fully achieved ISA accreditation (a British Council award that recognises a school having significantly embedded international learning and values within the teaching and ethos of the school).

Evidence suggests that Connecting Classrooms is having a clear impact on schools, particularly upon teacher development and upon the skills and attributes of students. Key emerging findings from survey evidence collected from teachers includes:

- 93% schools engaged report enhanced global citizenship provision in the curriculum and ethos of the school
- 89% schools engaged report improvements to global citizenship teaching practice
- 75% of schools report students have improved global citizenship outlook, skills and awareness
- 71% schools report that their international work has influenced, or will influence their school improvement plan (SIP)¹⁹

At the school level, the primary benefits are focused on the professional skills of teachers and school leaders, through which global citizenship teaching and outcomes are enhanced. Primarily, the programme offers a means for education professionals to better network with schools overseas, and provides learning materials and classroom resources to bring a greater international focus into the classroom. The programme helps to improve teaching and strengthen pupil engagement with learning, by improving the richness and depth of teaching at the school, using the international dimension to motivate pupils and develop skills. At the very least, Connecting Classrooms provides a mechanism for schools to create a positive agenda to improve their performance and standing.

“Many schools have very explicitly used the international connection and international dimension as a way of enhancing what is going on in their schools. I know of examples where schools have completely turned themselves around as a result of their engagement with the school overseas.... there’s much that schools can do to enhance their international aspect, and it gives them that nice mechanism to use for getting disengaged people in the classroom to contribute and to develop their employability skills so it gives them a positive road to go down.”

— British Council

Of course, it should be recognised that supporting the development of Global Citizenship values in schools is an intrinsically gradual process, and cannot be achieved through the actions of any one programme or instantaneous intervention. Survey data collected is often self-reflective, and based on the assumptions of teachers and pupils at a set point in their development. Connecting Classrooms essentially *influences* attainment in core skills, *contributes* towards the development of

¹⁹ Hirst B. and Associates, *Connecting Classrooms UK Evaluation and Audit 2013/14*, Feb 2014, p. 17.

international values in schools, and *motivates* pupils. While delivering immediate impacts, in the form of new partnerships, curriculum, professional development and teaching practices, the real impact of the programme will be realised more fully over the long term, through indirect contribution to the development of individuals' skills, life and career.

“If this programme gets it right, and if teachers and young people engage seriously with the programme...then you hope that the benefits start on the first day...and those are things they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. They will carry with them into further and higher education, they will carry with them into their family lives, they will carry with them into the economy.”

— **British Council**

The long-term benefits and impact of the programme will take some time to be fully realised. As the programme nears completion, more work is needed to involve and influence policymakers, particularly to increase the exposure of the programme to schools and maximise usage of programme resources, such as Schools Online. It may be that there is a role for the Department for International Development to increase the visibility of Global Citizenship in England, for example, and where possible embedding the principles and activities of Connecting Classrooms within Education policy in the future.

CASE STUDY 3: GLOBAL VISION INTERNATIONAL, INTERNSHIPS PROGRAMME

This case study provides insight into the Global Vision International internships programme, which offers internships across the globe to UK citizens.

Key facts about the Programme

Programme name	GVI Internships
Organisations involved	Global Vision International (GVI), a range of local NGOs
Duration of programme	10 years (2005-2015)
Duration of internship	From 4 weeks up to 30 weeks
Funding (if applicable)	Privately funded by participants, at £1500 to £8000
Approximate throughput / headcount	Recruited, trained and developed over 24,000, across all programmes (i.e., including volunteering and internships)

Description and background of the programme

Global Vision International (GVI) is a UK-based organisation founded in 1997 that organises 3 main types of programmes: internships, international volunteering and learning programs. This case study focuses on the internships component, which has been implemented by GVI since 2005. GVI's overarching objectives are contained in its mission, which is 'to build a global network of passionate people united by their passion to make a difference'.

GVI operates across the globe, in Africa, Europe, Asia, and Central and Latin America, with a specific focus on countries covered by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. GVI organises the internships in conjunction with local NGOs, such as Save the Children, the Red Cross, or local National Parks or conservation NGOs. Internships cover a wide variety of fields, ranging from socio-economic development (e.g. education, healthcare, working with children) to environmental issues (e.g. maritime conservation, climate change).

GVI offers two types of internships that differ in length and content. The first type of internship, 'Internship with placement', includes two modules. The first module consists of 12 week training and mentoring that prepares participants for the second module, which consists in turn in a work-placement period of variable length, usually 12 weeks. The work-placement is open to candidates who complete successfully the first module and is carried out either within GVI itself or with a GVI local partner organisation. The second type of internship, 'Internship without placement', only includes the training module, up to 12 weeks.

GVI does not target a specific group of individuals for their programmes and anyone can apply through an online application, which is followed by a Skype interview to assess the suitability of the candidate for a specific internship; successful candidates are then evaluated on a weekly basis.

throughout the duration of the programme. Typical participants include young people who wish to gain practical work experience, soft skills and boost their employability upon completion of secondary education, during their higher education study and after graduation, GVI Internships also attracts ‘career breakers’ who wish to change their field of occupation and use GVI internships to this end. GVI internships programmes are completely funded by participants’ fees, which are variable according to the type of internship (with or without placement), destination and content/subject of the placement. Prices vary from around £1,500 for internships without placements to over £8,000 for longer internships with placement.²⁰

The participants’ experience

As outlined in the previous section, participants’ experience mostly falls into two categories: training and work-placement. The specificities of the activity vary according to the type of internship and its content/subject. As per the GVI website, there are at present 21 different internship opportunities, each of them entailing specific activities. The current internship opportunities are listed in the table below. They cover over 10 countries, and include conservation, teaching, hospitality, community development and social science.

Internship type	Country	Duration
Marine Conservation and PADI Instructor Internship	Mexico, Yucatan	24 weeks
Marine Conservation and PADI Divemaster internship	Mexico, Yucatan	24 weeks
Wildlife Conservation internships	South Africa	24 weeks
Marine Conservation and PADI Divemaster internship	Indian Ocean, various countries	24 weeks
Marine Conservation and PADI Divemaster internship	Seychelles	24 weeks
Conservation internship	Costa Rica	24 weeks
Community development internship	Mexico	24 weeks
Teaching internship	Fiji	24 weeks
Marine Conservation and PADI Divemaster internship	Fiji	24 weeks
Teaching English and TEFL internship	Thailand	24 weeks
Conservation internship with elephants	Thailand	24 weeks
Safari Field Guide Course	South Africa	23-50 weeks
Teaching internship	Laos	24 weeks
Teaching internship	Costa Rica	24 weeks
Teaching internship	Nepal	20 weeks
Teaching and Community Development internship	South Africa	24 weeks
Teaching internship	India	24 weeks
South African National Parks internship	South Africa	24-48 weeks
Social Enterprise Programmes	UK	4 weeks
Social Science internship	Mexico	4-12 weeks
Social Science internship	South Africa	4-12 weeks
Social Science internship	Kenya	4-12 weeks

Table 13: Summary of available internships, GVI. Source: GVI website

²⁰ Further technical details are available on: <http://www.gvi.co.uk/find-a-program/>



During the internships, participants gain first and foremost practical experience on the ground, which is directly relevant should they decide to seek future employment

There are also main components – in particular in the training part of the programme – that are recurrent and constitute ‘horizontal skills’ that all the participants tend to be imparted, regardless of the specific work-placement that they will be undertaking, such as language, teamwork and leadership training. The following items are other main elements that form participants’ experiences during and after GVI internships:

- *Appointed GVI Internships Mentor*
- *Learning and training around specific global issues framed around the UN Sustainable Development Goals*
- *Weekly one on ones reviews*
- *Team work and Leadership training*
- *Personal project to be presented to peer group*
- *Final evaluation*
- *Certification and summary of training and experience received*
- *Confidential professional reference*

Other training is specific to the Internship but Marine or Environmental Conservation Internships generally include:

- *Research training*
- *Wildlife identification techniques*
- *Leading biological surveys course*

Community Development based Internships generally include:

- *Child Protection Training*
- *Teacher training*
- *Lesson planning*
- *Classroom management*

It should be noted that a number of participants have gone on to work for GVI itself. About half of GVI’s current staff is composed by former participants in the internship programme.

Impacts of the programme

The impact of the programme can be analysed from two different perspectives. On one hand, there is the impact of the programme on individual participants, on the other there is the impact the programme aims to have more broadly on society, through the agency of its participants and the outcome of its projects. GVI surveys its Alumni regarding impacts of the program on them and has

found that 100 % of participants felt that they learned about global issues through participation in the program. In addition, GVI records the work of the program and frames its impact around UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Starting from the individuals, the main impact is on their career prospects. Through the internships they acquire formal and informal instruments to boost their future career opportunities. Certifications and qualifications (such as those mentioned in the previous section) as well as the work-placement itself are valuable items on individuals' CVs. The network of contacts acquired through the GVI internships was also mentioned as something equally important, even if this is more of an informal outcome of the programmes. Benefits for the participants are not only limited to the career sphere, but extend to their personal development; among others, skills and abilities such as teamwork, leadership but also self-confidence and a sense of 'global understanding' are mentioned as important benefits that participants may seize through the training and the work-placement. The specific content of the internships, whether teaching, conservation, or community development, also contribute to specific knowledge and experience of these fields, as well as numerous work-related transferable skills. Depending on the type of internship, specific skills and knowledge gained include conservation techniques, animal tracking, SCUBA diving, and so forth. Systematic evaluation of the skills and knowledge gained, and subsequent impact is not available, but anecdotally, it is clear that the internships are felt to have a significant positive impact on skills and personal development.

GVI also aims to make a broader impact on society. This is done through participants' professional life but also through their everyday behaviour. Indeed, most participants, once finished the internship, continue working in organisations that seek to make an impact on broader society, such as developmental NGOs; but also those who do not stay in this type of professions are expected to uphold in their everyday life the values of GVI, for instance by supporting a migrant settling down in a new city – an expression of the global understanding and awareness mentioned earlier. The content of the individual internships also brings various benefits to the host countries/organisations, such as contributing to research, data collection on wildlife or habitats, community development through supporting sustainable practices, teaching people, or running health workshops.

The GVI programme has many positive features that tend to be associated with most international work and/or educational experiences, which include an increased inter-cultural awareness of the participants, their exposure to diverse cultures, and the possibility of accessing international networks of like-minded individuals that may prove important in participants' future personal and professional life. Several internships also include courses for language learning, for example, Spanish lessons on the Community Development internship in Mexico.

In addition, it is also worth noting that GVI operates Service Learning programmes for schools and universities, including several UK, US and Australian universities. The programmes vary in length but serve as introductions to global issues and sustainable development and that start of the learning pathway. The programs are open to students from age 15 and up.



It has been noted by GVI Chief Executive Steven Gwenin that the financial support for internship experiences is often lacking, and therefore the recipient of such experiences tend to be consistently people from better-off backgrounds, whilst disadvantaged young people are often unable to access these programmes. The unequal access to international experiences is certainly a limiting factor which could be only addressed by relaxing the financial constraints to participating in such initiatives, for instance through public support, as well as by providing more information on the available international opportunities to young people, and the benefits – individual and collective – associated with them.

CASE STUDY 4: UNITED WORLD COLLEGES

This case study provides insight into the United World Colleges International Baccalaureate Diploma, which is offered through a number of colleges worldwide.

Key facts about the Programme

Programme name	United World Colleges International Baccalaureate Diploma
Organisations involved	United World Colleges
Duration of programme	Two years
Funding (if applicable)	Varies; Funded by the student, UWC schools and colleges offer scholarships

Description and background of the programme

United World Colleges (UWC), founded in 1962, deliver a series of study-abroad programmes in 15 colleges world-wide. UWC colleges offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB Diploma) programme, targeting students aged between 16 and 19 years old. The IB Diploma is one of the world's most well regarded and widely known secondary school qualifications and is recognised by the world's leading universities.²¹ Currently, UWC has colleges in the following countries: Swaziland, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Italy, UK, the Netherlands, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, Canada, USA, and Costa Rica, Germany, Armenia and mainland China.

The programme is centred on the concept of 'experiential education', which means providing a holistic experience to the participants, not limited to academic activities but encompassing a broad range of extra-curricular activities and services to society (section 2 describes the activities in closer detail). The figure below shows in a synthetic way UWC's educational model.

²¹ UWC, The International Baccalaureate, (available online at : http://www.uwc.org/uwc_education/curriculum/international_baccalaureate/default.aspx).



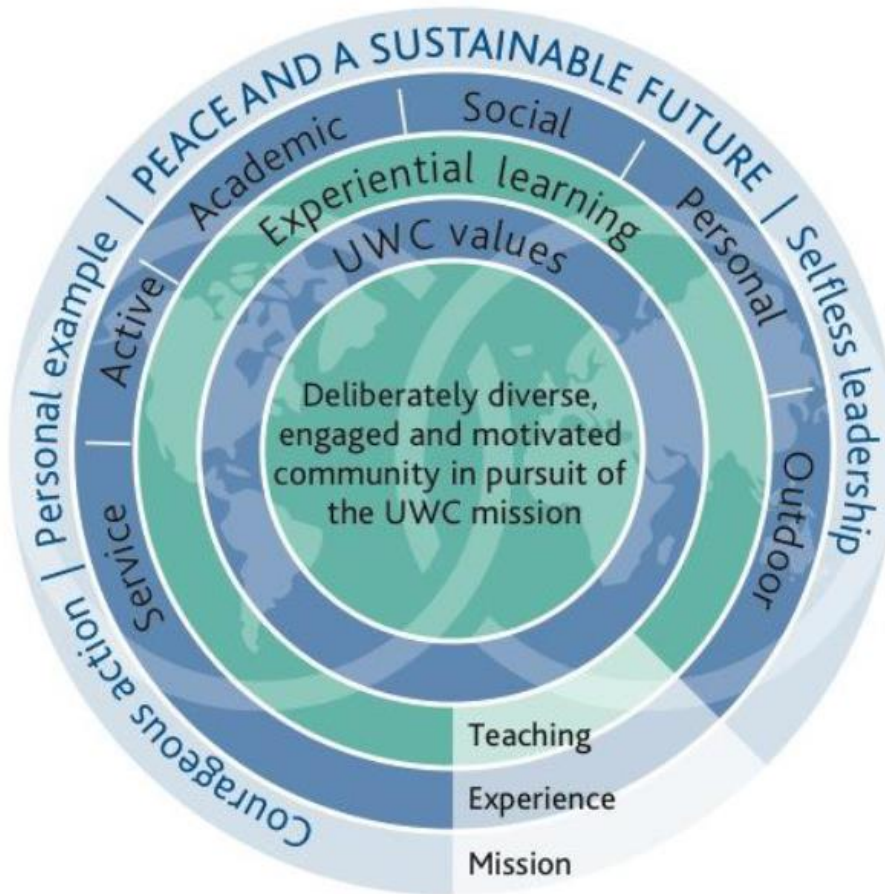


Figure 6: UWC's educational model (Source: UWC, 2013)

The educational model implemented by UWC is instrumental to fulfilling the organisation's mission, which is to make 'education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future'. The mission is underpinned by the following key values:

- *International and intercultural understanding*
- *The celebration of difference*
- *Personal responsibility and integrity*
- *Mutual responsibility and respect*
- *Compassion and service*
- *Respect for the environment*
- *A sense of idealism*
- *Personal challenge*
- *Action and personal example*²²

²² UWC, UWC colleges and programmes Statement of values and principles, (2003). Available online at: http://uwc.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2013/v/valuesprinciples.pdf

In order to fulfil this mission, UWC selects students from everywhere in the world through national committees, formed for the most part by volunteers and UWC’s alumni. The selection committees are charged with the task of selecting students with a background as diverse as possible, to ensure that the UWC programme leads to people from different countries *and* from different socio-economic backgrounds coming together. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring equality of opportunity for participants from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This translates into two practices. First, selection of participants is not only based upon proven merit (i.e. past curricular achievements) but also upon potential merit. In this respect the selection process entails various steps (including interviews, as well as in some instances an away-day) to test participants’ attitude and potential for learning beyond their past achievements, which may have been influenced by their socio-economic background. Second, a set of scholarships is available for participants from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent these students from participating in the programme. Scholarships are funded by governments, international donors, and philanthropic donations (often by UWC alumni), while the rest of the programme cost (which is estimated to be in the region of 50-60 million \$ per year) is funded through school fees paid by participants.

The participants’ experience

As discussed in the previous section, participants go through a process of ‘experiential education’ which entails curricular and extra-curricular activities. Usually, the programme has three key building blocks, as show in Table14.

Element	Description
Academic activities	It is the part that leads students to obtaining the IB Diploma. It is important as it allows students to very often go on to top-class universities
Service to the community	It entails students providing various services to their local communities. This ranges from volunteering in retirement houses to organising and running search and rescue teams
International awareness	This is achieved through thematic days focussing on specific topics of international relevance. An example of such an activity is the HIV/AIDS awareness day, which not only included information sessions and discussions on the topics, but also the opportunity to experience the constraints HIV/AIDS places on life over the course of a day, for example by simulating the significant medication requirements placed on sufferers.

Table 14: Three main elements of experiential education

Throughout all the activities, participants are exposed to processes of learning by doing, critical thinking, and constant exposure and contact with a very diverse body of fellow students. There are three core modular parts to the Diploma:

— *The Extended Essay – a 4000 word essay on a subject of the students’ choice.*

- *Theory of Knowledge (TOK)* – This explores the nature of knowledge across disciplines, encouraging an appreciation of other cultural perspectives.
- *Creativity, action, service (CAS)* – Involvement in artistic pursuits, physical activity and community service. At UWC, community service is a highly valued part of education and CAS activities go far beyond the requirements of the IB Diploma.

Impacts of the programme

The impact of the programme has not been evaluated in a systematic way by the UWC, although some evaluation studies are in the pipeline, and will be undertaken in the near future. Nonetheless, available evidence and interviews suggest that there are two main impacts that the programme has: the impact on participants and the impact on society at large.

With respect to the impact on participants, there are tangible benefits of participating that accrue to them. The most immediate is the ‘UWC-brand’ that is well-established and appreciated by top universities world-wide. It is very common that UWC alumni progress to prestigious institutions that increase their chances of a rewarding career. Interviewees stressed that the UWC network is a central benefit that alumni enjoy. The benefits attached to a network of alumni that live and work across the whole world is seen as a key asset on personal and professional grounds, particularly for networking.

However, the impact that UWC has through its alumni on society is deemed even more important than the individual impact on students. In line with the mission of the organisation reported in section 1, UWC aims to create broader societal benefits through the professional and personal lives and actions of their alumni. For instance, many alumni are employed in international organisations or NGOs whose missions are to improve other people’s livelihoods. However, it has been noted that *what* alumni do is not UWC’s main concern; rather, UWC’s emphasis is placed on *how* they do it. For example, one UWC alumnus who progressed to a career in the legal sector promoted within his firm a culture of change that entailed low fees and pro-bono activities to ensure that individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds could also access high-quality legal services. The UWC values are thus intended to nurture individuals who create positive change and show leadership through their personal example. It is expected that this example permeates both their professional careers, and their everyday interactions with the wider world and their communities throughout their lives. Whether taking on a leadership role as a captain of industry, or starting a sustainable environment project in a small village, UWC alumni are encouraged to take on the role of agents of change, rather than just pursuing personal success. This type of impact that UWC aims to have on society through its alumni is best captured by one of the guiding principles that UWC schools and colleges commit to:

“UWC schools and colleges offer life defining experiences for young people, enabling them to discover the possibility of change through courageous action, personal example and selfless leadership. This education enshrines a commitment to the balanced development of the whole person; that is its task is to encourage an integrated development of human potential across a

range of different dimensions, including the intellectual, moral aesthetic, emotional, social, spiritual and physical.”

— UWC²³

UWC offers some key lessons for the design of international experiences. UWC programmes are based on a constant exchange (intellectual, practical, experiential) between participants with very diverse backgrounds. This seems crucial to achieve the programme’s core objectives, including enhancing international and intercultural understanding and the celebration of difference, which are objectives shared by many international programmes. However, international *and intercultural* understanding can only be achieved if a programme brings together participants from various countries *as well as various socio-economic backgrounds*. Thus, the efforts made by UWC to make the programme accessible for students from disadvantaged background is a key principle that should be considered by all international programmes to ensure that international experiences are not exclusive domain of students from better-off backgrounds. UWC’s programme is an example of researching diversity on two dimensions, provenance/nationality on the one hand and socio-economic background on the other.

A second aspect has to do with the depth of the experience. UWC programmes allow for deep immersion and exposure to intercultural experiences thanks to the structure of the programme that brings together participants in a variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities. The three core parts of the IB Diploma work synergistically to influence students and bring about increased intercultural understanding. Since UWC students live together, four to a room, for two years, this immersion and exposure goes deeper than the academic programme alone. Colleges frequently create deliberate pairings placing students together from across cultural or religious divides. By this simple act of living and studying together the students discover that there is far more that unites than divides them and on this basis often life-long friendships are forged. The sum total of these experiences is the key way in which UWC helps to bring about true intercultural understanding.

²³ UWC Guiding Principles, (2010), accessible at: http://www.uwc.org/uwc_education/guiding_principles.aspx



CASE STUDY 5: ERASMUS+ HIGHER EDUCATION (ERASMUS)

This case study provides insight into the European Union’s flagship educational exchange programme in higher education, Erasmus (since 2014, Erasmus+ Higher Education).

Key facts about the Programme

Programme name	Erasmus+: Higher Education (Erasmus)
Organisations involved	European Commission, (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) British Council, Ecorys UK
Duration	1987 - onwards
Funding (if applicable)	Erasmus+ (umbrella programme): €14.7 billion (2014-2020) Erasmus+: Erasmus (HE-activities): €4.8 billion

Background

Erasmus is the European Commission’s flagship educational exchange programme for higher education students, teachers and institutions, and has become in its own words the “world’s most successful” student mobility programme²⁴, having supported over 3 million students to go abroad to study or train as part of their course. Almost all universities in participating countries are involved with the Programme, spanning 33 participating countries, of which 28 are EU member states. The Programme enables students to transfer to a university or a company in any one of the other 32 participating countries, for a period of between 3 and 12 months.

Erasmus was formally introduced in 1987 with the aim of increasing student mobility within Europe, and the aspiration of helping students to become internationally competent and well-prepared for job requirements in a closely interrelated European economy. The Programme seeks to create more and better opportunities to increase the skills and competencies of HE students, attract the best talents from abroad, and to maintain strong international links between universities. The Programme also aims to contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy through supporting greater employability and links between partner countries, support the Bologna Process and policy dialogue between strategic partner countries.²⁵

While the purpose of Erasmus remains fundamentally focused on student mobility in higher education, the Programme has grown and broadened significantly in scope since its introduction and now includes staff mobility as well as a strategic partnerships strand. Erasmus has been incorporated into a number of different wider strategic programmes, including Socrates and Socrates II (1994-2006) and the recently concluded Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013). In 2014 Erasmus and its sister initiatives from the Lifelong Learning Programme were combined with

²⁴ European Commission, A Statistical Overview of the Erasmus Programme in 2011/2012, (November 2013), p. 9.

²⁵ European Commission, Erasmus+: The EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, p.25.

a range of other key European programmes, including the Youth in Action Programme, Erasmus Mundus, Alfa and Edulink, to form the new Erasmus+ Programme.

As an umbrella for all engagement and mobility activities, Erasmus+ seeks to promote synthesis and cross-fertilisation between the different fields of education, training and youth activities, promoting international mobility, partnership and engagement through a single, widely recognised brand. The programme is designed to contribute directly to European 2020 targets for educational attainment, the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework, and to enhance the European and international dimension in sport and youth engagement. Erasmus+ receives a total of €14.7 billion of funding over the period 2014-2020, with the UK budget totalling approximately €1 billion. Approximately two-thirds of UK funding is used to fund mobility for individuals within an organisational framework, with the rest allocated to engagement activities between universities, colleges, and schools, business, the youth sector and other bodies. Generally, the brand name Erasmus+ supersedes all previous programme names and refers to all mobility and engagement activities together, but the term 'Erasmus' has been most closely associated with activities related to the field of higher education mobility.²⁶

Each participating country has a national agency to administer the Programme on behalf of the European Commission. In the UK, Erasmus+ is managed in partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK.²⁷ The British Council holds responsibility for school and HE related activities, including mobility for higher education students and staff, mobility for school staff, and mobility for young people and youth workers. The key responsibility of the British Council is to act as an intermediary between the European Commission, UK government and institutions in the UK, to promote the programme and its benefits, facilitate and monitor participation and to disseminate the results and impact.

How the Programme develops individuals' skills and attributes

Erasmus is driven by a desire to enhance individuals' intercultural understanding and contribute to strong international and academic relations between countries, through student mobility, staff mobility and strategic partnerships. Facilitating and supporting student mobility between HEIs is the fundamental mechanism for delivering benefits to HE-level students within Erasmus, and indeed across other educational levels and sectors for Erasmus+ as a whole. Under Erasmus+, every participating HEI must have an approved Charter, the European Charter for Higher Education, which includes a commitment to internationalisation at organisational level. Individual mobility is, however, the most visible component of the Erasmus Programme, both currently and historically accounting for more than half of the overall programme budget. Within the Erasmus+ umbrella, €11.39 billion of the overall €14.7 billion budget is focused on the delivery of education

²⁶ European Commission, Erasmus+ Programme Guide, (2014), p. 10.

²⁷ For information see: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/about/uk-national-agency>

and training activities, and almost €5 billion is used within the Erasmus mobility programme pertaining to higher education.²⁸

The Erasmus student journey begins with an application made by the individual via their home university. The process varies from institution to institution, since Erasmus is not available as an option on all courses. The period abroad is underpinned by a framework of agreements and documentation that provide formal authority and support. Institutions signed up to the Erasmus charter agree in principle to provide academic recognition for successful completion of the time abroad, so participation in Erasmus is treated as an integral part of the student's degree course. To support high quality mobility activities, with maximum impact on participating students, the Erasmus placement is designed to respond to students' degree-related learning and personal development needs, and placements are sought that benefit students' subject areas or interests.²⁹ The placement may be for either study or work. While on a study placement, students are effectively students of the host institution, and participate in learning activities alongside non-Erasmus students. Students are encouraged to make the most of their time abroad by engaging in extra-curricular activities in addition to their studies. Students on work placements, whether paid or unpaid, will expect to have their work experience accredited. The type of accommodation chosen by Erasmus students varies depending on the host institution and country visited, with many opting to stay in university accommodation.

Universities are allocated an Erasmus budget to distribute non-repayable grants to participating students. On average, students receive a total of €272 per month (EU average, 2012/13) to assist with their living costs overseas, although this varies depending on the rate set by the national agency and the chosen destination country. Erasmus students do not need to pay tuition fees to the host institution.

Programme benefits and impact

A period of international study for European students was seen as exceptional until around 20 years ago. Since it was introduced, Erasmus has seen not only a constant increase in the number of students taking part, but also in the quality and diversity of the activities proposed. Now, through Erasmus+ as a whole, it is envisaged that a further 4 million individuals will participate between 2014 and 2020 from a wide range of mobility, study and training opportunities provided, including 2 million students within higher education.³⁰

Despite the considerable size of the programme in Europe as a whole, UK students account for a relatively small proportion of Erasmus participants. In 2013-14, just 15,566 UK students were engaged with the Erasmus Programme, accounting for approximately 0.5% of the UK student

²⁸ For summary information, see: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/about/budget>

²⁹ European Commission, Erasmus+ Programme Guide, (2014), p. 35.

³⁰ European Commission, *Erasmus: Facts Figures and Trends*, (2014), p. 5.

population. This sits in contrast to some other European members, with Spain, Germany, France and Italy all producing more than 20,000 Erasmus students per year.³¹

The value of Erasmus to individuals' attainment, skills development, employment and career is recognised in much of the material concerned with the programme. Erasmus is expected to help students become internationally competent and well prepared for job requirements in a closely interrelated European economy. It is expected that the experience of studying abroad will contribute to the personal development of the student, by enhancing a wide range of skills, competencies and qualities. Case study material gathered and produced by both the European Commission and the British Council give a strong flavour of the value and impact of the Erasmus Programme from the student perspective. Reports submitted by participating HEIs to their national agencies following the conclusion of the programme provide a source of qualitative data that provides insight into how Erasmus affected students and their careers. The views stated serve to demonstrate the programme as an extremely positive experience and opportunity, and it is clear immediately that many individuals value the general impact of the programme upon their life, and see it as key part of their academic and professional development.

"I came back a completely different person with a totally different outlook on the world. The Erasmus programme fundamentally changed me and my life – my outlook, prospects and future. Everything I did subsequently can be traced back to it. From a "never go south of the river" Geordie, I became an international businesswoman, living and working abroad."

— Alison Pearce (Source: British Council)³²

Despite this wide appreciation of the value of Erasmus, there is a relative lack of recent evaluation evidence covering the impact of Erasmus specifically upon UK higher education students' skills and competencies.³³ Similarly, the link between Erasmus, (or international student mobility in general) and UK graduate employment is scarce.³⁴ However, the impact of Erasmus upon individuals' skills has been explored at a programme level, providing a strong indication of the impact of participation upon students in Europe as a whole.

Despite the lack of UK evaluation data, there is some evidence to suggest that UK students involved in Erasmus perform more strongly in their degrees. Research undertaken by HEFCE in 2009 suggests that participation in Erasmus, as well as other types of international experience is correlated with better attainment in higher education, when compared to individuals without these experiences. The research found that a greater proportion of students who studied abroad, or did a placement were awarded a first class degree, than those who did not, with 75% of Erasmus students

³¹ European Commission, A Statistical Overview of the Erasmus Programme in 2011/2012, (November 2013), p. 11.

³² For information, see: British Council, *Erasmus 1987-2012*, (2012).

³³ European Union Committee, *The Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe*, (online source, accessible at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/lducom/275/27507.htm), s.63.

³⁴ HEFCE, *International student mobility literature review*, (2010), p.3



receiving a first or upper-second class degree, in comparison to 60% on other types of three or four year course.³⁵

Much of the research available, however, shifts focus away from academic performance, towards more general skills and competencies, particularly concerning employability skills or other attributes and qualities. The most recent study covering this is the act Study (EIS), published by the European Commission. The EIS is the single largest study of its kind conducted, involving mixed method research with 56,733 students (both with and without international experiences), 18,618 alumni, 4,986 HE staff across 964 education institutions and 652 employers across the 34 participating countries.³⁶ The EIS found that the employability skills and competencies of students benefit significantly from participation in Erasmus, or a period of international mobility. To measure how mobility affected the skills of students, the EIS used six bespoke ‘memo’ factors determined to be related closely to employability skills. These include:

- **Tolerance of Ambiguity** (*acceptance of other people’s culture, attitudes and adaptability*)
- **Curiosity** (*openness to new experiences*)
- **Confidence** (*trust in own competence*)
- **Serenity** (*awareness of own strengths and weaknesses*)
- **Decisiveness** (*ability to make decisions*)
- **Vigour** (*ability to solve problems*)

The EIS found that internationally mobile students and Erasmus participants scored more highly for each of these qualities than non-mobile students. In particular, the EIS found that after their stay abroad, the average Erasmus student showed higher ‘Memo’ values than 70% of all students, and that the top ten per cent of Erasmus students had higher scores than 95% of all students.

Another piece of research, to which the EIS has been benchmarked against, is the Value of Erasmus Mobility (VALERA) study, undertaken in 2006. VALERA found that both former students and employers rated the impact of the programme upon individual skills and competencies positively. The research found that former Erasmus students assessed their own competencies very positively, and rated themselves as having far better knowledge of other countries, foreign language proficiency and intercultural understanding than those who had not undertaken an Erasmus placement.³⁷ While these views are self-reflective in nature, it suggests that individuals who complete Erasmus are more confident when self assessing their own skills. Crucially, the research found that employers rate young graduates with international experience as far superior to those without, especially as far as ‘international competencies’ are concerned. In particular, the employer survey noted:

³⁵ HEFCE, *Attainment in Higher Education: Erasmus and placement students*, (2009), p.25

³⁶ European Commission, *The Erasmus Impact Study*, (2014), P.33.

³⁷ Bracht, O., Engel, C., Janson, K., Teichler, U., *The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility*, (2006), p. 64.

- Improved foreign language proficiency (88% versus 48%)
- Improved knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc (76% versus 28%)
- Ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds (76% versus 40%)
- Professional knowledge of other countries, e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge (59% versus 16%)³⁸

The VALERA researchers also noted that employers rated individuals with international experience considerably more highly for a range of general employability skills and competencies, including adaptability, assertiveness, written communication skills, and problem solving abilities amongst others.

While the existing research mentioned above focused upon the extent to which Erasmus has imparted benefits to individuals' specific skills and qualities, it is likely that there is a broader mechanism by which the Erasmus programme benefits individuals, than say, simply through improving one's language skills or knowledge of another country or culture. A key aspect perhaps overlooked is the ability for the Erasmus Programme to force an overarching development in the individual's confidence, resilience and maturity. Through being immersed in an unfamiliar academic setting, negotiating a new culture and overcoming day-to-day challenges, the student gains valuable non-professional work experience. This is commonly reflected in feedback and reports provided from students to the British Council.

I think self-assurance, self-confidence is a key thing. There's a huge challenge in going abroad on your own, and having to negotiate things finding a place to live...Simply dealing with the business of registering at a university...having to do that in a different country, different language, different culture....one does have a sense of that from the students that we talk to, and the essays they write for the competition and so on. Many of them say, 'Yes, looking back, I feel it was a real achievement.'

— British Council

There is evidence building to support the idea that international mobility, and particularly Erasmus, provides considerable professional benefits in later life, and improves individual's job prospects. HEFCE's 2009 analysis of Erasmus students suggests that participation in the Programme or any other form of international mobility brings benefits in respect of higher wages. The study found that that employed Erasmus graduates were in receipt of significantly higher salaries than non-Erasmus students, with almost 29% earning over £20,000.³⁹

³⁸ Bracht, O., Engel, C., Janson, K., Teichler, U., *The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility*, p. 96.

³⁹ HEFCE, *Attainment in Higher Education: Erasmus and placement students*, (2009), p. 30.



The Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) provides strong evidence to suggest that participation in Erasmus benefits graduate employability and job mobility, enabling individuals to fare much better on the job market. One of the primary findings of the EIS was that students participating in ERASMUS are in a better position to find their first job, and to enhance their career development. The EIS suggests that mobility affects employment rate, with students who were formerly mobile being half as likely to experience long term unemployment compared with those not going abroad, and being 23% less likely to be unemployed five years after graduation.⁴⁰ The survey results found that one of the top motivations amongst students to train or study abroad was to increase employability, with 85% of students indicating that this was the case.

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT ERASMUS STUDENTS

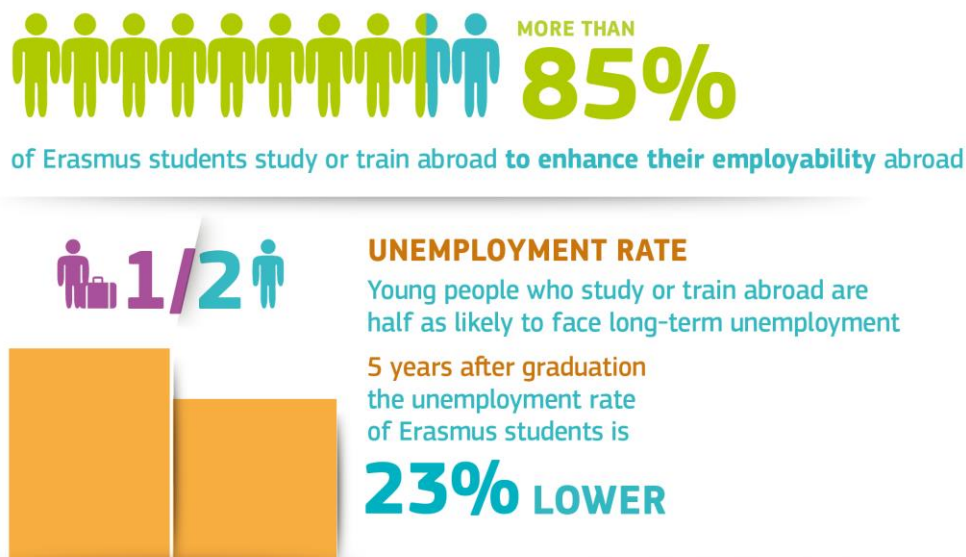


Figure 7: Impact of Erasmus upon Employment (Source: European Commission)⁴¹

The study also found that employers value the professional skills of graduates with international experience. Two-thirds of employers surveyed felt that graduates with an international background are given greater professional responsibility more frequently, and of the Erasmus alumni surveyed, more than three-quarters (77%) held positions with leadership components ten years following graduation, specifically at lower or middle management levels.⁴² The study shows that almost all

⁴⁰ European Commission, *The Erasmus Impact Study*, (2014), P. 18.

⁴¹ European Commission press release: Erasmus Impact Study confirms EU student exchange scheme boosts employability and job mobility, available online at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1025_en.htm?locale=en

⁴² European Commission, *The Erasmus Impact Study*, (2014), P. 18.

employers surveyed (92%) are looking for personality traits boosted by the Erasmus programme, including tolerance, confidence, problem-solving skills, curiosity, and decisiveness. Tests conducted by the EIS researchers showed that Erasmus students scored more highly for these personality traits both before their international experience, and that these increased further afterwards. While not the single most important factor, almost two-thirds of employers surveyed (64%) felt that international experience was important for recruitment, demonstrating that many employers see this alone as a desirable attribute.⁴³

The EIS also suggests that student mobility acts as a predictor of job mobility in the future. Graduates with an international background were more likely to envisage living abroad and work in an international context, with 40% of mobile alumni having changed countries at least once since graduation. Strikingly, former Erasmus students are more than twice as likely to change their employer as non-mobile alumni, and non-mobile students were highly likely to never change their job. This dovetails with the findings of HEFCE's 2009 analysis, which suggests that Erasmus students were substantially more likely to be employed abroad.⁴⁴

While noting that it is by no means certain that temporary study abroad leads to a high flying career,⁴⁵ the VALERA study again supports the idea that international experiences benefit employment prospects for graduates. However, the majority of former Erasmus students engaged through the research indicated that their experience was helpful for them to obtain their first job, particularly because the period of study abroad acts as a distinguishing factor on their CV. 60% of individuals surveyed felt that foreign language proficiency assisted them to enter the job market, and 53% felt that their period of study abroad was an important criterion in their job recruitment process. Furthermore, former Erasmus students reported high overall satisfaction with their current job and employment situation, and many reported a distinct international focus within their work tasks and employment situation.⁴⁶ Evidence from employers collected through the VALERA study again confirms the potential value and of participation in Erasmus. In particular, employers cite foreign language proficiency (70%), work experience abroad (34%) and study periods abroad (30%) as key recruitment criteria. While employers may ultimately base the decision to recruit an individual on overall academic ability, professional experience or the personality of the candidate the study suggests that international experience and foreign language proficiency are important assets for many former Erasmus students in their job search.⁴⁷

⁴³ European Commission, *The Erasmus Impact Study*, (2014), P. 95

⁴⁴ HEFCE, *Attainment in Higher Education: Erasmus and placement students*, (2009), p. 29.

⁴⁵ Teichler, U., Janson, K., 'The Professional Value of Temporary Study in Another European Country: Employment and Work of Former Erasmus Students', *Journal of International Education*, 11(3/4), p. 490.

⁴⁶ Engel, C., 'The impact of Erasmus mobility on the professional career: Empirical results of international studies on temporary student and teaching staff mobility', *Belgian Journal of Geography*, 4, (2010), accessible at: <http://belgeo.revues.org/6399>, s.24.

⁴⁷ Teichler, U., Janson, K., 'The Professional Value of Temporary Study in Another European Country: Employment and Work of Former Erasmus Students', p. 488.



CASE STUDY 6: LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS

This case study provides insight into the British Council's Language Assistants Programme, a long-standing initiative to allow students and graduates to gain experience teaching languages abroad.

Key facts about the Programme

Programme name	Language Assistants
Organisations involved	British Council
Duration	1905- onwards
Funding	£700,000 per annum
Approximate throughput / headcount	2,500 UK English Language Assistants sent abroad 1,700 Foreign Language Assistants

Background

Established in 1905, Language Assistants is a popular international exchange programme, enabling young people to teach languages abroad in one of 14 countries, spanning 5 continents. Each year through the programme some 2,400 UK students are placed in schools overseas to teach English as a foreign language (known as English Language Assistants), and around 1,700 overseas students are matched with UK schools annually to provide teaching and support for foreign languages in the UK (known as Foreign Language Assistants). The Programme has its roots in early engagement between England, France and Prussia to exchange young graduates and school leavers to facilitate language teaching in host schools abroad. Since this time, the Programme has grown significantly in scale, with students from the UK now being placed in France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Mexico, Ecuador, China and Canada.

The programme is open to university students and graduates, and is particularly popular with individuals looking to spend the third or fourth year of their modern languages degree course abroad. In most cases, applicants already have a reasonable understanding of the language for the country they are visiting, although fluency is not mandatory and for some countries (such as China), being able to speak the language is not assumed. Gaining a place on the programme is a competitive process, involving around 4,000 applications from UK students each year.

Funding for Language Assistants comes from a range of sources. In the UK, funding of around £700,000 is provided by the Department for Education, and its devolved counterparts for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Additional sponsorship is provided by Local Education Authorities, cultural organisations and from large employers, such as HSBC. Programme funding is channelled through schools or local education ministries in the recipient country, since participating schools are required to pay Language Assistant salaries from their core budgets. Students are normally required to fund their travel to the host country and to pay for any visa or work permit costs, but many benefit from institutional bursaries or scholarships to subsidise this, and as they are working on the placement, they are paid a salary for this. Since the post is

effectively a gap year from their studies in higher education, students are not required to pay any university fees while abroad.

The central purpose of the programme is to support the learning of languages and culture, and instil an international dimension into the curriculum of schools in the UK, and in 14 overseas countries. The British Council plays a key role in engaging with similar organisations and education ministries overseas, to arrange opportunities for Language Assistants from the UK, while working alongside UK universities to raise interest and source English Language Assistants for overseas institutions. The British Council has also, since 2007, paid an Erasmus+ HE grant to each Language Assistant, as part of the Erasmus programme. They are therefore treated in the same way as other Erasmus+ work experience students. How the programme develops individuals' skills and attributes

Although the age of Language Assistants varies, the majority of participants are aged 21 and 22, and participation normally takes place within an individual's degree course. The participant journey begins with a staged application process in September, in which candidates may decide which country they would like to visit, and seek references from university tutors. The application process is mostly through paper/online methods, but interviews are sometimes held, particularly for higher risk countries or where the post may be isolated or in a particularly rural area. Candidates are supported to gain entry to the country, for example by assisting them with visa applications. The placement begins in October of the following year.

Once the Language Assistant is in post, almost all communication takes place between the individual and the host school. As a contracted employee of the school, the Language Assistant's timetabled hours and employment details are managed locally.

The individual experience of each Language Assistant differs considerably, depending on the host school's requirements. The majority of Language Assistants have the opportunity to observe classes before starting their placement, helping to smooth the transition into their role. The role itself and the number of contact hours teaching per week varies. As an indication, data collected for English Language Assistants and Foreign Language Assistants suggests that approximately half of all Language Assistants teach for 12 hours per week (55%, n=674), with a significant proportion exceeding this up to 18 hours a week (26%, n=323). Although most Language Assistants work in one school throughout their entire placement, some work across two or three institutions, as arranged by the local education authority or ministry.

Teaching activities for Language Assistants are generally focused on working with small groups of students within a classroom setting, or providing support to a class teacher in front of a full class of pupils. Data collected by British Council also suggests that around half of English Language Assistants surveyed also take entire classes alone (52%, n=600). Almost all English Language Assistants gain mentoring support from a teacher or supervisor during their placement. Data collected from schools in the UK engaged with the Programme suggests that Language Assistants are used across all of compulsory and post-compulsory education, spanning from Primary school

through to Year 13 at Sixth Form. Therefore, while some Language Assistants may teach and support younger children, often the individual may be supporting pupils aged only a few years younger than they are to obtain A-levels or equivalents and pursue a similar course to themselves.

Besides teaching, Language Assistants are encouraged to explore their host country and engage with other organisations as much as possible, as positive ambassadors and representatives of their country of origin. Many students are assessed on their year abroad and are given accredited assignments and reports to complete by their University; as such, their time abroad is an integral part of their degree studies. Some participants instead complete non-teaching related activities as part of a professional development portfolio.

Programme benefits and impact

Language Assistants enables some 2,400 UK students and around 1,700 overseas students the opportunity to go abroad, improve their language skills and cultural understanding. However, the wider impact upon schools and the education sector in the UK and abroad is argued to be much larger, with the programme bringing benefits to around 300,000 pupils and 16,000 teachers every year, and some 620,000 pupils, and 19,000 teachers in schools overseas, through the language teaching capacity that the programme brings.

There are not currently any overarching evaluation reports covering the performance or impact of the Language Assistants Programme. However, the British Council monitors programme performance, by collecting yearly feedback from Language Assistants who have completed their placement, and undertaking surveys with schools that hosted Foreign Language Assistants coming into the UK.

Feedback gathered from both English Language Assistants and Foreign Language Assistants suggests they were highly positive about their experience. All Language Assistants surveyed were asked “To what extent have your expectations of the year been met”, with almost half (47%, n=569) indicating that the experience had exceeded their expectations, and over a third (37%, n=452) stating that their expectations were met.

Language Assistants develop a wide range of skills and qualities while on their placement. Analysis of feedback data from English Language Assistants suggests that participants overwhelmingly feel that the programme significantly improved their teaching skills, cultural awareness, confidence, independence and transferable skills (including time management, problem solving and creativity). Key findings from feedback surveys conducted for the 2012/13 academic year indicate that the programme enables individuals to develop a range of skills, as indicated in Figure 8 below.

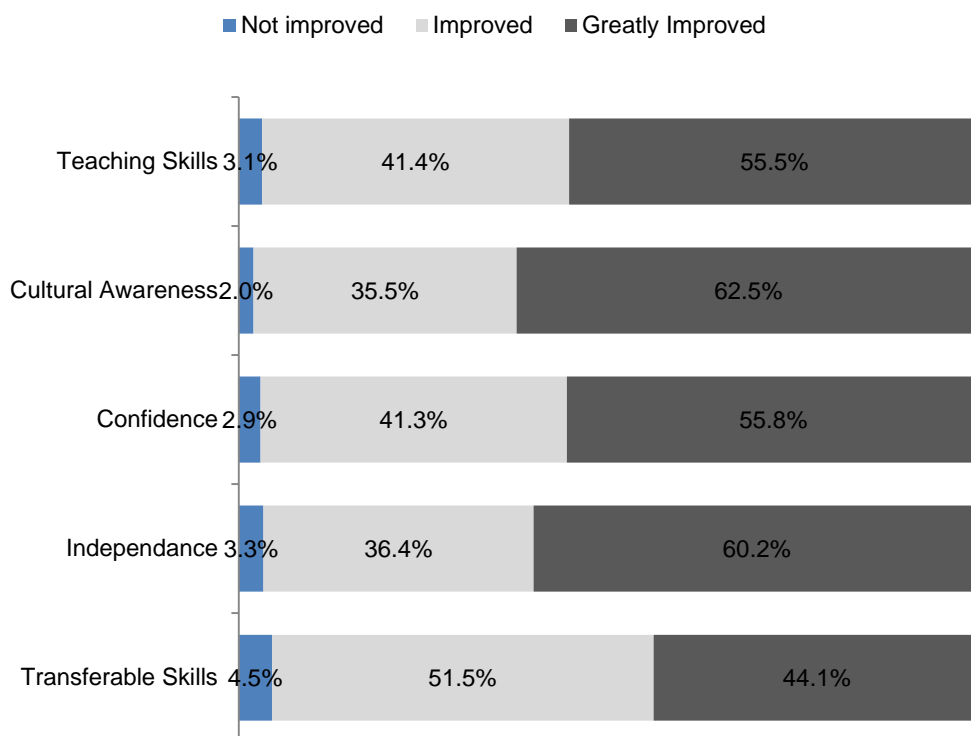


Figure 8: How do you feel the following skills have improved as a result of your assistantship? (Source: British Council ELA feedback 2012/13)

Perhaps the key impact upon Language Assistants’ skills is enhanced cultural awareness. Looking more broadly at all programme participants, including Foreign Language Assistants, analysis of British Council feedback data indicates that almost all Language Assistants surveyed agree with the statement “Participating in the Programme has increased my knowledge and understanding of other countries and cultures” (97%, n=1171).

Alongside these skills and qualities, the impact of the programme upon an individual’s language skills should be noted. While Language Assistants already possess strong command of an appropriate foreign language at the outset of the programme, teaching abroad, while fully immersed in another culture enables the individual to dramatically improve their fluency.

Most of the Language Assistants that we send, even the ones doing French, German, Italian and Spanish, they’ve just done two years at university. Their language skills are reasonable...after they’ve done the year abroad, they’re practically fluent.

— British Council

Participating in the Language Assistants Programme and developing these skills is argued to often bring a range of longer term impacts relating to an individual’s life and career. Primarily, completing the Programme is felt to enhance individuals’ job prospects, through the improved skills noted above, and through having completed a significant work experience placement prior to completing their studies in HE. Feedback from English Language Assistants confirms that more

than nine out of ten respondents feel that this is the case, with 95% (n=998) indicating that the experience enhanced their career prospects overall. Around half of English Language Assistants surveyed felt that the experience had encouraged them to go into teaching as a career following their studies (48%, n=507). Beyond teaching, many Language Assistants use the opportunity to explore their options and develop their experiences in a more generic way. The Programme therefore holds value both for prospective teachers and for individuals looking to gain general work experience and learning overseas.

A lot of people that choose to undertake a Language Assistantship instead, for example, of doing Erasmus, are interested in going into teaching for the future... I think, equally, a lot of people that do it are not sure what they want to do, this is just an opportunity to explore something new... I think it really just sparks an enthusiasm for something new, and you may find that it is teaching that you want to go into, but otherwise it's just a great experience for you to grow your skills and find out what you're really good at, what you're interested in.

— Former Language Assistant and member of Language Assistant Programme team

Completing the programme also appears to broaden individuals' professional horizons, since 86% (n=913) of English Language Assistants surveyed indicated that they would be more likely to look for work overseas after their placement. Currently there is a lack of available data to determine what proportion of Language Assistants progress on to working overseas, but anecdotally, it is clear that many work in an international dimension following participation in the Programme.

Aside from impact on the individual, schools participating in the programme also note a number of impacts resulting from taking on a Language Assistant. Although evidence is sparse, available data suggests that schools find employing a Language Assistant highly beneficial. Feedback collected from UK schools participating in the programme is very positive, with 88% (n=811) rating the Language Assistant as better than average, and half (50%, n=463) rating the Language Assistant as "excellent". Recent feedback collected by British Council suggests that schools value the degree of intercultural learning and understanding brought by having a Foreign Language Assistant in the classroom. 94% (n=865) of UK schools agreed with the statement "Participating in the programme has increased knowledge of other countries and cultures in my school / college", with 574 schools (62%) indicating that they strongly agree. One school encapsulated this view, emphasising that having a 'real' native speaker of a language in the classroom is highly valuable for pupils in the classroom.

The pupils benefit by being able to practise their Spanish in a different environment from their normal classroom, with a young native speaker who really brings it alive for them. Any unfair stereotypes they may hold are challenged, and if they have not travelled to a Spanish-speaking country and are not taught by a Spaniard, they are meeting a Spanish national for the first time. For both pupils and teachers, the assistant is a fantastic resource - they can provide relevant, up-to-date information about the language and the culture. This year [our Language Assistant] has been an important member of our school community. It has been so successful that she has requested a second year with us and our headteacher was more than happy to re-employ her.

— UK school participating in the programme

While there is much qualitative feedback that echoes similar views to this, there is a relative lack of quantitative evidence or evaluation of the impact Language Assistants in schools. The UK currently sends many more English Language Assistants abroad than it does take on Foreign Language Assistants, which may in part be due to tightening budgets at a school or local authority level. Additionally, a greater strategic steer from government, particularly in England and Wales, may be needed to expand the programme and deliver a greater impact to schools.

There's huge pressure on our schools to accept people, but a lack of funding on their part, so fewer places. Hence, at the moment, fewer people are coming in, but more people going out. Scotland, and Northern Ireland have a strategy for languages; England and Wales do not. In Scotland and in Northern Ireland we have seen a plateauing off of the decline in languages that we've discovered elsewhere, and in Scotland there is real improvement in the take-up of languages and the provision of languages and the need for Language Assistants.

— British Council

Whatever the limiting factors on accepting more Foreign Language Assistants, a stronger policy emphasis from government, and support to better understand and communicate the benefits and impact of the Programme at a UK-wide level would enable the positive impacts of the programme to be recognised, and championed to a greater extent. The knock-on effect of up-scaling Language Assistants in schools in the UK could ultimately contribute to better language teaching in the classroom, and better language skills and intercultural understanding and knowledge in individuals, holding important implications for the UK's workforce skills, economic development, and participation in international markets.

05. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In this section we reflect on the findings from across the research and consider the key conclusions of the research.

This project has sought to review existing evidence and conduct original research to provide further insights into the benefits of international experiences. We have conducted two literature reviews: one exploring UK competitiveness and skills needs, and a second investigating the evidence on the provision, scale and benefits of different types of international experiences. We have also conducted quantitative and qualitative primary research with a sample of people with and without international experiences and developed six case studies of different international programmes. In this section we bring together the findings across these strands of research in order to identify the key messages and possible areas for future research or action.

Both employability and intercultural skills are important in supporting the UK's economic success

The first literature review on UK competitiveness and skills emphasises that despite many comparative economic strengths, our productivity continues to lag behind that of our competitors; under-investment in skills, innovation and infrastructure has been blamed for this. Intermediate-level vocational and technical skills, as well as higher-level skills, are crucial to long-term economic success. However, the literature also emphasises the importance of a suite of employability skills, encompassing self-management, teamwork, and communication. Employers are increasingly recognising the value of *intercultural competence* – that is, the ability to constructively work with people of other cultures and nationalities – as part of the core group of employability skills, particularly for higher level roles. The importance of language skills is also emphasised in the literature as a means of enabling a greater level of international trade, including the strategically-important activity of exporting abroad.

International experiences are a valuable way to develop employability and intercultural skills

The existing literature and our primary research and case studies demonstrate that international experiences – whether they are on a structured programme or self-directed – are an effective way to develop intercultural competence and foreign language skills in particular; they also support the development of a wider range of employability skills. The evidence suggests that communication and language skills, problem-solving, confidence and teamworking skills are all enhanced through international experience. For employers, candidates with international experience offer a more rounded set of abilities, and demonstrate wider and deeper experience. Foreign language skills are increasingly valued amongst international companies, as are communication and interpersonal skills more generally.

One of the clearest and most relevant impacts of international experiences is on developing “intercultural sensitivity”, and improving knowledge and understanding of other cultures. This is widely recognised in the literature, and was also emphasised through the survey in particular. The

key factor in the development of these skills is direct experience of other cultures – using new languages, meeting people of other cultures or nationalities, and learning new customs. Such experiences provide the opportunity to develop communication skills, cultural awareness, behavioural flexibility, and social responsibility. Models of intercultural competence are particularly useful for understanding an individual’s openness towards other cultures. Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity offers a model for how intercultural skills are developed, and provides a means of measuring intercultural competency. This model describes the stages of development from ‘ethnocentric’ attitudes (denial, defence and minimisation of cultural difference) to ‘ethno-relative’ attitudes (understanding, accepting and adapting to other cultures). The central idea of this model is that intercultural competency is not developed by international travel per se, but through the experience of *cultural difference*. Hence, the greater the cultural difference experienced during an international activity, the greater the opportunity for intercultural development.

Improved ability to innovate could be a key benefit of international experiences

Importantly, our survey findings suggest that international experiences can impact on people’s ability to innovate in the workplace, which is further supported by evidence that international experiences improve skills that are often needed for innovation, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication and openness to new ideas and cultures. As the first literature review finds, innovation is critical to the economy and to improving productivity, and, although it can be supported in many ways, international experiences appear to be a potentially valuable way of developing skills that can contribute to innovation. We might theorise that this is especially true if an international experience relates to the subject or technical matter of a given type of innovation, as individuals can bring knowledge and ideas from abroad. It would be valuable to conduct further research to understand the relationship between international experiences and innovation and what mechanisms are at work here.

International experiences can impact on a person’s career, but further research is needed here

Our survey did not find evidence that international experiences have a positive impact on salaries, in terms of a wage premium, or greater levels of career satisfaction. This reflects the evidence in the existing literature. The recent Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) could find no strong correlation between types of Erasmus mobility and salaries; all groups of Erasmus alumni considered their current salary to be around average compared with other professionals. Similarly, a majority of employers in the EIS reported that their internationally experienced graduates did not receive a higher salary than those without international experience. However, large minorities of people with specific international experiences who responded to our survey, reported that those experiences had enabled them to maximise their earnings – for instance 40% of those with a university-level experience abroad agreed with this statement. Furthermore, findings from a HEFCE study suggests that Erasmus alumni employees earn significantly more than their counterparts. However, this analysis did not control for demographic factors, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status and wealth. These factors are important because it is understood that internationally mobile graduates are not representative of the UK population as a whole; they tend to be less ethnically diverse, of higher social status, and wealthier than the national average.

The second literature review highlights academic research which notes the value of international experience in boosting the value of a degree and/or as an additional credential which helps to differentiate the individual from other potential candidates and thereby aid their employment prospects. This view was also shared by those who we interviewed for this study. The evidence from large-scale evaluations shows that experience abroad not only enriches students' academic and professional lives, but also contributes to openness, adaptability, language learning, intercultural skills, self-reliance and self-awareness. All of these skills are closely related to employability.

International experience is also recognised as a way to maintain or improve an individual's social status. A period abroad can act as a form of "cultural capital" and give the individual a competitive advantage in future life. This potentially raises concerns about equality of access to international experiences, particularly those that are publicly funded. Our survey finds that international experiences are positively correlated with having a degree, being male, being proficient in a foreign language and coming from a family that has also had such experiences. Other research supports these findings, showing that internationally-mobile students tend to be from more privileged backgrounds than their non-mobile peers. Ensuring that people from all backgrounds have the potential to benefit from international experiences could be a key action for organisations such as the British Council.

All of the above points highlight the positive impacts that international experience can have on individuals and employability, and by extension on their employers and the wider economy. However, we must not lose sight of other social and personal benefits of international experiences. Personal development, friendship groups, "having an adventure" and enjoyment were common themes that came through in the survey, case studies, literature review and interviews. While these are arguably less compelling reasons for external support for international experiences, they are certainly key selling points at the individual level.

A range of types of experience can bring a common set of benefits – and length of experience matters

The survey, case studies and second literature review all identify the wide range of activities that can fall under the banner of "international experiences". These include higher education or other placements, work experience abroad, travel, volunteering, as well as school level exchange and other experiences. Despite the variety of experiences and approaches, many have much in common. All seek to develop an individual's skills and intercultural competence through exposure to both other cultures and to challenging and formative experiences. Our literature review also finds evidence that a range of different international experiences can bring a common set of benefits, although the duration of experience matters. Shorter experiences were found to have a less significant impact on intercultural competence, but were judged as being useful and impactful nonetheless. Our interviews suggest that sustained and sometimes repeated exposure to other countries and cultures impacts individuals' skills and knowledge in a meaningful way. Of course, the impact of each experience is subjective and depends on the context. Moreover, the literature review also finds that competencies have more opportunity to be developed through international

experiences in which there is a greater degree of cultural difference between the individual and the host culture.

There is a lack of evidence, data collection and publication on international experiences

One key conclusion that must be drawn from this research is that there is a lack of existing evidence on both the scale and benefits of international experience. The gaps in the evidence are due to a lack of data collection at national and international levels, the paucity of research in this area, and a lack of published or accessible statistics on the take-up and impact of existing programmes (despite some notable evaluation and tracking activities for certain schemes). The challenge of identifying individuals with international experience for our survey implies this group is a minority of the general population, but more research would be needed to confirm this. We argue better co-operation and co-ordination of data collection is needed in order to improve the evidence base on the scale and impact of international experiences.

Overall summary

Overall, it is clear from the research that international experiences offer enriching, exciting opportunities for participants and deliver a range of benefits for individuals as well as the host nations. There is a strong argument to encourage more international experiences in order to build better intercultural competence, key employability skills, and potentially to support greater potential for innovation. The level of impact clearly depends on the quality of the experience, its length and the individual concerned. All these messages paint a positive picture for those seeking to promote international links, and could be used in communicating their value to others.

Opportunities for further research and action

This research examined the impacts of international experience and we have covered a broad range of international opportunities. This broad scope is useful for indicating the diversity of possible experiences, and also for showing that there are common benefits across different experiences. We also highlight specific examples of experiences in more detail in the case studies and literature review.

International experience is a huge area, yet one which has generally been under-researched to date. As such, there are a number of questions that remain unanswered or relationships that remain under-explored. Some suggestions for issues that need further investigation are given below, grouped into five research areas.

1) What are the relationships between international experiences and employability, salaries, career progression, entrepreneurship, and innovation?

— *Further research on the relationship between salary, career progression, career choice and international experiences, in particular understanding the causal relationship and how these differ by the type and duration of experiences.*

— *Further research on the relevance of international experiences in supporting innovative activity by individuals. We have focused our interest in this study on technological innovation, but there is also the possibility of taking part in non-technological innovation. For example, individuals may have a significant impact on an organisation or business structure, improving productivity and efficiency. It would also be valuable to further understand the mechanisms through which international experiences might affect innovation, and how this varies by type of experience.*

2) Why do people choose to participate, or not, in international experiences? What is the role of individual characteristics in this, such as gender and qualification level?

— *More information could be collected and analysed regarding the reasons why individuals take part in international opportunities. For instance, is participation voluntary (e.g. individual interest to study abroad) or involuntary (e.g. employer requests individual to work at an office abroad), and what difference does this make to any impacts?*

— *Our survey concentrated more heavily on those with international experience; however there is a need to understand the reasons why a greater number of people do not take part in international opportunities. In particular it would be valuable to understand whether there are particular barriers to experiences that could be overcome, or whether there are gaps in knowledge about certain types of programmes. This could inform action to address specific information gaps, where these exist.*

— *Our research has found that males are more likely to take part and be aware of international opportunities. Future research could look to establish the significance of this difference and to understand the reasons for the gender gaps in knowledge and participation.*

3) What more can be investigated on the role of social status in influencing whether someone undertakes international experience?

— *Findings from the literature review and case studies raised concerns that international experiences are often undertaken by those in higher socioeconomic groups. However, our survey findings do not suggest there is a strong relationship between socioeconomic status and international experience, with neither parental education nor parental qualification having a significant impact. There is scope to conduct more detailed research into the relationship between socioeconomic status and international experience.*

4) How do the destinations and types of experience affect the impacts of international experiences?

— *Our survey was not able to differentiate between the impacts of experiences in different countries or regions. Wider literature suggests that the greater the cultural difference between the home nation and the host countries, the greater the impact on intercultural sensitivity. It would be valuable to design research to explore this relationship further.*

— *The survey found that international experiences in general have a positive impact, and noted differences across broad categories of experience. Further research would be useful to gain a greater insight into which specific types of experience are more impactful than others. This could inform action to support the most effective types of international experience.*

5) What actions can governments and organisations who support international experiences take to further support the activity and better understanding of it?

- *We suggest more needs to be done at the national and international levels to collect and share comparable data on international experiences, especially where these are part of defined programmes. The availability of comparable data is currently very limited.*
- *Given the importance of vocational and technical education to the UK economy, greater attention could be paid to understanding the relevance and current scale of international experiences in the vocational and technical education sphere, as opposed to higher education. Vocational courses currently make up only a small minority of Erasmus outward mobility, and there is little data on other forms of mobility at this level.*
- *There is a case for promoting wider access and participation in international experiences, especially those that are supported through funding streams, either from Europe, UK government or bursary schemes. Governments and agencies should consider how to support people from a broad range of backgrounds and social groups so that they can also benefit from international experiences.*
- *The case for the value of international experiences should continue to be made to individuals, government and employers. There may be limited awareness of the contribution international experiences can make to an individual's employability, but also their creativity and innovation.*



APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL NOTE ON METHODS

Telephone and online survey

A telephone and online survey was conducted to gather information about the types and impacts of international opportunities individuals had participated in. People without international experience were also surveyed in order to allow for some comparison between the two groups and to understand more about the level of awareness of international opportunities amongst respondents who do not possess this. Individuals were eligible to participate in the survey if they had been resident in the UK for the majority of their life and were currently between the ages of 25 and 65.

The broad definition of international experience adopted and interest in mid-career professionals meant that there was no single database on which to draw as a sampling frame. In order to maximise the size of the sample of individuals both with and without international experience in this context, our fieldwork partner utilised a number of different database samples:

- *A database consisting of individuals between the ages of 25 and 45, with the male to female ratio being approximately 1:1. This resulted in 42 completions.*
- *A database of individuals aged between 25 and 45 in social grades A, B or C1 (140 completions).*
- *A database of individuals aged between 25 and 65 in social grades A, B or C1 (300 completions).*

The second and third databases were roughly split by gender. Due to the challenge of securing a sample sufficient to permit robust statistical analysis, the eligibility criteria was broadened at each point and supplemented by an online survey which was disseminated to a sample that was broadly representative of the adult population of the UK in terms of age and gender. In total we achieved 1148 submissions resulting in a sample of 712 people with international experience and 436 without.

It is not possible to estimate the proportion of the population that have international experience due to two factors: i) the nature of the databases used; and ii) low levels of participation in the survey. Furthermore, our descriptive statistics in Appendix 2 suggests that our sub-sample of individuals without international experience is unrepresentative of the actual population in regards to the gender, ethnicity and social grade of the individual. Comparisons made between individuals with and without international experience should therefore be seen as indicative.

For analysis purposes, individuals with international experience were placed into three categories based on the duration of their experience: light, medium and deep. The definitions are:

- *Light: Under one month*
- *Medium: One month to three months*
- *Deep: Over three months*

The exception to this is travel, for which we have a higher threshold for inclusion, as follows:

- *Non-participation: Under one month*
- *Light: One month to three months*
- *Medium: Three months to six months*
- *Deep: Over six months.*

Given the different definition applied to travel, we categorised those with international travel experience separately to those with other types of experience. By cross tabulating travellers and those with other types of experience, we verified which group an individual should fall into. We took the deeper of the two types of experience as being the category a particular individual was allocated to. If the person was involved in several light or medium experiences, they were “upgraded” to a deeper group, if the total cumulative time for all experiences exceeded the definitions above.

Interviews

The interviews included questions to understand the individual’s international experience, and the impacts and benefits of the experience. All interviews were conducted by telephone.

The details of the individuals interviewed are summarised below:

	Number	Age	Type of experience	Duration	Profession type
High Profile Interviews	01	46-50	Attended International College	1 year+	Academic
	02	46-50	Working overseas	1 year+	Consultant
	03	51-55	Attended International College	1 year+	Senior business leader
	04	51-55	HE-level exchange programme	6 months – 1 year	Actor
	05	51-55	HE-level exchange programme	6 months – 1 year	Author
	06	25-30	Compulsory Education overseas	1 year+	Consultant
Survey follow-up interviews	07	36-40	School exchange programme	1 year+	Dancer
	08	61-65	He-level exchange programme	1 year+	Teacher
	09 (partial interview)	66-70	Working overseas	Several short experiences	Engineer
	10	31-35	Travelling overseas	1 year+	Market researcher
	11	61-65	He-level exchange programme	6 months – 1 year	Teacher



	12 (partial interview)	56-60	Working overseas	Several short experiences	Engineer
	13	31-35	Working overseas	1 year+	Teacher
	14	61-65	Working overseas	1 year+	Engineer
	15	41-45	Travelling Overseas	6 months – 1 year	NHS Professional

Table 15: Overview of depth interview respondents

Case studies

The case studies were purposively selected in partnership with the British Council to cover a range of schemes to ensure diversity in type of experience as follows:

- *Volunteering: Raleigh International*
- *International school links: Connecting Classrooms*
- *Internships: Global Vision International*
- *College level international education: United World Colleges*
- *Higher education mobility: Erasmus+: Erasmus*
- *Teaching languages abroad: Language Assistants*

APPENDIX 2: ADDITIONAL SURVEY TABLES

Descriptive statistics of the sample

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
Male	45	49	37
Female	55	51	63
Base (n)	1147	712	435

Table 16: The gender distribution of the sample

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
25-45	40	44	33
46-65	60	56	67
Base (n)	1148	712	436

Table 17: The age distribution of the sample

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
Degree qualification or above	53	63	37
Below degree qualification	47	37	63
Base (n)	1114	700	414

Table 18: The distribution of the sample by an individual's education

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
England	73	75	71
Scotland	8	8	9
Wales	10	8	12
Northern Ireland	9	9	8
I do not currently reside in the UK	0	1	0
Base (n)	1148	712	436

Table 19: The distribution of the sample by area of residency

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
A or B	49	53	41
C or D	51	47	59
Base (n)	844	523	321

Table 20: The distribution of the sample by individual social grade

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
Individual speaks foreign language	64	73	47
Individual doesn't speak foreign language	36	27	53
Base (n)	1148	712	436

Table 21: The distribution of the sample by foreign language proficiency of the individual

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
A or B	28	32	21
C or D	72	68	79
Base (n)	780	521	259

Table 22: The distribution of the sample by parental social grade

	Overall (%)	International experience (%)	No international experience (%)
Degree qualification or above	26	31	15
Below degree qualification	74	69	85
Base (n)	906	597	309

Table 23: The distribution of the sample by parental education

Cross tabulations exploring groups more likely to participate in international experience

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Has international experience	68*	57
Doesn't have international experience	32	43*
Base (n)	514	633

Table 24: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by gender

	25-45 (%)	46-65 (%)
Has international experience	69*	57
Doesn't have international experience	31	43*
Base (n)	457	691

Table 25: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by age

	Doesn't have international experience (%)	Has international experience (%)
Family has IE	43	57*
Family doesn't have IE	57*	43
Base (n)	426	693

Table 26: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by level of international experience in the family

	Individual speaks a language (%)	Individual doesn't speak a language (%)
Has international experience	72*	45
Doesn't have international experience	28	55*
Base (n)	730	418

Table 27: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by language proficiency of the individual

	Doesn't have international experience (%)	Has international experience (%)
Family member speaks a foreign language	35	43*
Family member doesn't speak a foreign language	65*	57
Base (n)	424	697

Table 28: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by language proficiency within the family

	Degree qualification or above (%)	Below degree qualification (%)
Has international experience	74*	50
Doesn't have international experience	26	50*
Base (n)	593	521

Table 29: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by an individual's education

	A or B (%)	C or D (%)
Has international experience	68*	56
Doesn't have international experience	32	44*
Base (n)	410	434

Table 30: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by social grade of the individual

	A or B (%)	C or D (%)
Has international experience	75*	64
Doesn't have international experience	25	36*
Base (n)	220	560

Table 31: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by social grade of the main wage earning parent

	Degree qualification or above (%)	Below degree qualification (%)
Has international experience	80*	61
Doesn't have international experience	20	39*
Base (n)	234	672

Table 32: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by parental education

	Parent and respondent have degree (%)	Either parent(s) or respondent has a degree (%)	Parent and individual don't have degree (%)
Has international experience	81*	73*	50
Doesn't have international experience	19	27	50*
Base (n)	183	380	327

Table 33: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by qualification sub-groups (three groups)

	Parent and respondent have degree (%)	Parent has a degree; respondent doesn't have a degree (%)	Parent doesn't have a degree; respondent has a degree (%)	Parent and individual don't have degree (%)
Has international experience	81*	77*	72*	50
Doesn't have international experience	19	23	28	50*
Base (n)	183	48	332	327

Table 34: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by qualification sub-groups (four groups)

	Parent and individual in A or B (%)	Either parent(s) or individual in A or B (%)	Parent and individual in C or D (%)
Has international experience	75*	71*	56
Doesn't have international experience	25	29	44*
Base (n)	114	262	206

Table 35: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by social grade sub-groups (three groups)

	Parent and individual in A or B (%)	Parent in A or B, individual in C or D (%)	Parent in C or D, individual in A or B (%)	Parent and individual in C or D (%)
Has international experience	75*	70	71*	56
Doesn't have international experience	25	30	29	44*
Base (n)	114	57	205	206

Table 36: Cross tabulation of whether or not an individual has international experience by social grade sub-groups (four groups)

	Probability of participating in international experience	Significant at 5% level (*)
Male	0.123	*
Age	-0.00305	
Family international experience	0.113	*
Individual speaks language	0.159	*
Family member speaks language	-0.0260	
Individual has degree	0.201	*
Individual in social grade A or B	-0.0413	
Parent in social grade A or B	-0.00111	
Parent has degree	0.0899	
Pseudo R-squared	0.0942	
n	465	

Table 37: Marginal effects from probit model investigating determinants of international experience



Cross tabulations examining factors associated with participating in various forms of international experience

	Male (%)	Female (%)
One type of international experience	43	56*
Multiple types of international experience	57*	44
Base (n)	354	361

Table 38: Cross tabulation of number of international experience by gender

	25-45 (%)	46-65 (%)
One type of international experience	42	55*
Multiple types of international experiences	58*	45
Base (n)	315	397

Table 39: Cross tabulation of number of types of international experience by age

	Degree qualification or above (%)	Below degree qualification (%)
One type of international experience	39	66*
Multiple types of international experiences	61*	34
Base (n)	438	262

Table 40: Cross tabulation of number of types of international experience by individual qualification

	Single experience (%)	Multiple experiences (%)
Social grades A or B	48	58*
Social grades C or D	52*	42
Base (n)	248	278

Table 41: Cross tabulation of number of experiences and individual social grade

	Single experience (%)	Multiple experiences (%)
Social grades A or B	48	58*
Social grades C or D	52*	42
Base (n)	248	278

Table 42: Cross tabulation of number of experiences and individual social grade

Cross tabulations examining factors related to participating in certain types of international experience

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Employment or work placement abroad	66*	38
School exchange programme	24	33*
International sports/politics/youth/science/arts competition	16*	6
Base (n)	351	361

Table 43: Cross tabulation of differences in participation in the three main types of experience by gender

	A or B (%)	C or D (%)
Employment or work placement abroad	60*	45
Continuous period of independent travel	47*	37
University summer school	7*	3
International sports/politics/youth/science/arts competition	17*	9
Base (n)	279	244

Table 44: Cross tabulation of differences in participation in selected types of experience by an individual's social grade

	Degree qualification or above (%)	Below degree qualification (%)
Employment or work placement abroad	56*	45
Continuous period of independent travel	46*	29
School exchange programme	32*	23
Base (n)	438	262

Table 45: Cross tabulation of differences in participation in three main types of experience by individual qualification

	Degree qualification or above (%)	Below degree qualification (%)
Continuous period of independent travel	48*	36
Studied part of my degree abroad	14*	6
Attended international school for secondary education	7*	2
Pre- and primary school education abroad	12*	5
Base (n)	188	409

Table 46: Cross tabulation of differences in participation in selected types of experience by parental qualification



APPENDIX 3: COMPARISONS BETWEEN THOSE WITH AND WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Several questions in the survey were asked of individuals both with and without international experience. In this appendix we summarise some comparisons between the responses of those with and without international experience. Caution must be taken when interpreting these as the samples of participants and non-participants in international experience may not be representative of the overall populations.

Innovation

A significantly greater proportion of those individuals with international experience have been involved in research and development activities, when compared to those without international experience.

	Non-participant in international programme (%)	Participant in international programme (%)
Involved	25	46*
Not involved	75*	54
Base (n)	346	538

Table 47: Cross tabulation of involvement in research and development activities by whether or not an individual has international experience

A significantly greater proportion of those individuals with international experience have been involved in the introduction of new or significantly improved goods and services, when compared to those without international experience.

	Non-participant in international programme (%)	Participant in international programme (%)
Involved	28	44*
Not involved	72*	56
Base (n)	339	536

Table 48: Cross tabulation of involvement in the introduction of new or significantly improved goods and services by whether or not an individual has international experience

A significantly greater proportion of those with deep experience have been involved in research and development activities, when compared to those with only light experience. There are no significant differences between light and medium / medium and deep.

	Light (%)	Medium (%)	Deep (%)
Involved	33	42	52*
Not involved	67*	58	48
Base (n)	105	116	317

Table 49: Cross tabulation of involvement in research and development activities by intensity of international experience

A significantly greater proportion of those with deep experience have been involved in the introduction of new or significantly improved goods and services, when compared to those with only light experience. There are no significant differences between deep / medium and medium / light.

	Light (%)	Medium (%)	Deep (%)
Involved	30	43	49*
Not involved	70*	57	51
Base (n)	106	114	316

Table 50: Cross tabulation of involvement in the introduction of new or significantly improved goods and services by intensity of international experience

A significantly greater proportion of individuals with international experience have been involved in the implementation of new or significantly improved designs or sales methods looking to increase the appeal of goods/services or to enter new markets.

	Non-participant in international programme (%)	Participant in international programme (%)
Involved	20	34*
Not involved	80*	66
Base (n)	328	514

Table 51: Cross tabulation of involvement in the implementation of new or significantly improved designs or sales methods looking to increase the appeal of goods/services or to enter new markets by whether or not an individual has international experience

A significantly greater proportion of individuals with medium experience have been involved in the implementation of new or significantly improved designs or sales methods to increase the appeal of goods/services or to enter new markets. There are no significant differences between deep / medium and medium / light.

	Light	Medium	Deep
Involved	25	43*	34
Not involved	75*	57	66
Base (n)	100	115	299

Table 52: Cross tabulation of involvement in the implementation of new or significantly improved designs or sales methods to increase the appeal of goods/services or to enter new markets by intensity of international experience

We also investigated whether there were any significant correlations between the above forms of innovation and type of experience (e.g. work, travel etc), but we did not find any significant differences.

Knowledge and understanding

A significantly greater proportion of individuals with international experience agreed/strongly agreed that they possess the below types of knowledge and understanding, when compared to those without international experience.

	Non-participant in international programme (%)	Participant in international programme (%)
I have good knowledge and awareness of international affairs	40	61*
I have good knowledge and awareness of international markets	11	27*
I have a good understanding of foreign countries and cultures	43	70*
I am confident in my ability to communicate with people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds	45	71*
I actively seek to explore and learn about other countries and cultures	40	68*
Base (n)	436	712

Table 53: Cross tabulation of agreement with statements regarding knowledge and understanding of different cultures and international issues by whether or not an individual has international experience

A significantly greater proportion of those with deep and medium experience agreed that they had good knowledge and awareness of international markets, when compared to those with only light experience.

A significantly greater proportion of those with deep experience agreed that they had confidence in their ability to communicate with people from different cultures, when compared to those with light and medium experience. There were no significant differences between medium / light experience.

A significantly greater proportion of those with deep experience agreed that they actively seek to explore and learn about other countries and cultures, when compared to those with light experience. There were no significant differences between light / medium and medium / deep.

	Light (%)	Medium (%)	Deep (%)
I have good knowledge and awareness of international affairs	51	63	64
I have good knowledge and awareness of international markets	18	32*	28*
I have a good understanding of foreign countries and cultures	65	68	72
I am confident in my ability to communicate with people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds	56	66	78*
I actively seek to explore and learn about other countries and cultures	58	65	72*
Base (n)	141	158	413

Table 54: Cross tabulation of agreement with statements regarding knowledge and understanding of different cultures and international issues by intensity of international experience

A significantly greater proportion of those individuals whose only international experience has been to work abroad agreed that they are confident in their ability to communicate with people from different backgrounds, when compared to those respondents for whom their only experience was school or travel abroad (the base for university-level experiences was too small for this breakdown, so this has been excluded).

	Work only (%)	Travel only (%)	School only (%)
I have good knowledge and awareness of international affairs	60	51	44
I have good knowledge and awareness of international markets	20	20	21
I have a good understanding of foreign countries and cultures	66	60	63
I am confident in my ability to communicate with people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds	75*	54	51
I actively seek to explore and learn about other countries and cultures	61	55	53
Base (n)	171	80	101

Table 55: Cross tabulation of agreement with statements regarding knowledge and understanding of different cultures and international issues by type of international experience

Skills and attributes

The below table indicates where there are significant differences in the skills and attributes possessed by those with and without international experience.

	Non-participant in international programme (%)	Participant in international programme (%)
I am confident/proficient in speaking a foreign language	8	26*
I am open to/willing to listen to ideas that other people suggest	87	92*
I am confident with adapting to new and unfamiliar situations	70	82*
I have a creative mindset	57	66*
I am comfortable with working on my own/I am self-reliant	89	90
I have strong problem solving skills	72	83*
I have strong analytical and critical thinking skills	60	73*
I have a resilient/determined character	74	78
I have excellent verbal communication skills	70	72
I work well with people from other countries and cultures	63	81*
I have excellent planning and organisational skills	71	74
I work well in a team	85	82
Base (n)	436	712

Table 56: Cross tabulation of agreement with statements regarding skills and attributes by whether or not an individual has international experience

There were no significant differences in agreement with the below statements on skills and attributes by type of experience (for this breakdown base was small for university-level experiences, so this has been excluded).

	Work only (%)	Travel only (%)	School only (%)
I am confident/proficient in speaking a foreign language	11	11	17
I am open to/willing to listen to ideas that other people suggest	94	93	90
I am confident with adapting to new and unfamiliar situations	81	74	75
I have a creative mindset	67	61	51
I am comfortable with working on my own/I am self-reliant	90	95	86
I have strong problem solving skills	85	84	75
I have strong analytical and critical thinking skills	72	81	67
I have a resilient/determined character	77	74	69
I have excellent verbal communication skills	69	69	64
I work well with people from other countries and cultures	84	71	71
I have excellent planning and organisational skills	74	71	80
I work well in a team	84	78	85
Base (n)	171	80	101

Table 57: Cross tabulation of agreement with statements regarding skills and attributes by type of international experience

A significantly greater proportion of individuals with deep international experience agreed that they were proficient in speaking a foreign language and confident in adapting to new and unfamiliar situations, when compared to those with only light experience. There were no significant differences between medium / light and deep / medium.

Additionally, a significantly greater proportion of individuals with deep international experience agreed that they worked well with people from other countries and cultures, compared to those with only light or medium experience. There were no significant differences between light / medium.

	Light (%)	Medium (%)	Deep (%)
I am confident/proficient in speaking a foreign language	14	23	31*
I am open to/willing to listen to ideas that other people suggest	94	93	92
I am confident with adapting to new and unfamiliar situations	77	77	85*
I have a creative mindset	64	66	66
I am comfortable with working on my own/I am self-reliant	91	88	91
I have strong problem solving skills	79	84	84
I have strong analytical and critical thinking skills	74	70	75
I have a resilient/determined character	74	75	80
I have excellent verbal communication skills	70	73	73
I work well with people from other countries and cultures	74	74	85*
I have excellent planning and organisational skills	77	70	75
I work well in a team	84	80	83
Base (n)	141	158	413

Table 58: Cross tabulation of agreement with statements regarding skills and attributes by intensity of international experience