

IMPACT Final Report

April 2008-March 2011



Lancashire,
Manchester &
N Merseyside



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Protecting Wildlife for the Future

IMPACT Final Report

IMPACT has been a three-year V project, engaging 16-25 year olds in quality environmental volunteering opportunities.



We set ourselves six main outcomes, and this report looks to document what we have done to achieve these over the three years of the project.

We've worked with 20 full-time 20-week placements, provided 321 young people with part-time opportunities and 787 young people with short-term opportunities - this is where young people have attended between one and five times.

- 15% of our young volunteers were from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities
- 29% had a disability
- 24% had either below level 2 or no qualifications
- 14% were NEET - not in employment, education or training
- 12% were from low income families
- 16% were either homeless, at risk of exclusion, offender/ex offender, in or leaving care, refugee or asylum seeker, lone parent or young carer.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved with IMPACT.

"The IMPACT project has helped me move on from my depression and achieve goals that I never dreamt of."
Alex

"Young people will take more healthier lifestyle choices through physical activity, personal and social development through volunteering"

Through engaging in a variety of challenging practical volunteering experiences, young people have been involved in conservation work that is excellent for both the body and mind. The practical and physically demanding nature of the work has taught volunteers a variety of life skills that can be subsequently transferred into the working world.

One of the most important aspects of volunteering has been working with a diverse group of individuals who are of different ages and backgrounds. The benefit of participating in such a group has given a greater ability to understand others as well as helping young people to develop personal skills such as team working and improving their confidence.

Volunteers have also learnt other practical skills, for instance, being able to use their own initiative and problem solving. From working with numerous groups it became clear that volunteers excelled when in groups that were mixed with many different skill-sets, helping with each other's development.

In Greater Manchester, young people have been physically active working on environmental improvement projects such as the Gateway To Urban Nature Project and coppicing/bushcraft activities on local open spaces. Food growing activities both at the Environmental Resource Centre and local allotments have helped raise awareness about growing and healthy eating. Environmental action, including looking into waste issues, has been a great way for people to build confidence, develop social skills and work as a team. Completing projects that result in a positive contribution for both people and wildlife has been a great motivator and confidence booster.



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"Volunteering has allowed me to spend more time outdoors and has given me the opportunity to become fitter. It has allowed me to develop 'people' skills and be more comfortable within a group"

Anon



IMPACT North Merseyside have worked with an open young offender institute to enable the young people to make better, healthier life style choices, by introducing them to new experiences. We have actively impacted upon the young people's personal and social development by enabling them to participate in groups of other volunteers where they were only judged on the way they behaved on those particular days.

They were able to see another path that may not lead to continued criminal activity. One young man told a member of staff that coming out and 'balsam bashing' has not only shown him there are jobs you can do to alleviate anger but that the 'chill out times near the pond' had enabled him to reflect upon times spent with his father fishing, and how that time had been so important to him as a child. He came to the decision that his children shouldn't miss out on similar experiences because of his behaviour.

- Employability of the volunteers has increased with the experience and the skills they gained. They have also achieved accredited John Muir Awards and some have been given guidance and support to apply for a placement with the Future Jobs Fund.
- They have a greater understanding and respect for biodiversity which will benefit their local areas and ultimately the wider environment.

"The opportunities offered whilst volunteering have equipped me with the necessary skills to make positive choices regarding my lifestyle. I have become healthier since joining due to the physical side of the volunteering experience."

Taryn Buckley



“Reduce anti-social behaviour by working with young people to create a safe outdoor environment that will benefit the community, as more people will be able to use their local green space”



Anti-social behaviour in the community can be a challenging problem to address. IMPACT volunteer groups have worked to change the perception of young people in local communities. By making previously undesirable sites more appealing for the general public, wildlife sites that the region has to offer can be enjoyed by everyone. Perennial work on the Seven Acres site to remove litter has been achieved so that members of the local community can enjoy this wildlife-rich site.



In Greater Manchester we have worked with young people on many urban green spaces blighted by crime and inappropriate behaviour, where local people have not felt safe and had a negative opinion of young people.



Young people have been keen to address these issues by getting involved in making improvements to open spaces, reducing antisocial behaviour, engendering ownership of the places and becoming recognised for their contribution to make places safer for people.

We have been working with young people from St Catherine’s Academy to improve a neglected space that can be used by the community by planting fruit trees and thinning out the wooded area where people have previously not felt safe.

Environmental projects are also a good way for bringing people together from a variety of backgrounds. Projects have been designed to take into account ways in which cultural and social differences can be respected.

One of the first projects that IMPACT undertook in the Merseyside area was to link up with British Waterways to carry out canal clean-ups along the Leeds Liverpool Canal. The canal runs through heavily-populated areas of Liverpool and has often been used for antisocial behaviour and as a dumping ground. The volunteers took part in litter picks, small tree removal and widening of tow paths. They worked on the Maghull, Bootle, Kirkby and Aintree stretches of the canal on several occasions.



IMPACT North Merseyside also worked in the Fazakerley area to reduce antisocial behaviour, creating a safer outdoor environment for the community by removing heavily wooded/scrubbed areas that have been misused by local youths, which meant that the community avoided it.

In Manchester, a group of volunteers have helped to restore an important habitat from degradation. The area had become a location for off-road motorcycling which was discouraging local community use. The restoration work has helped discourage motorcycle misuse, and has improved the heathland habitat and encouraged wider community use.

By carrying out work in their local green spaces the young people get a better understanding and respect for the environment and local areas. Through carrying out tasks such as litter-picking the young people were able to see the damage caused by this to their local area.

Many of the young people discovered a green space in their local area they hadn’t known was there before which could mean they will now use it, tell their friends about it and take some ownership of it with the work they had done there. This would hopefully mean that any anti-social behaviour taking place in these areas may be reduced.

“We’ve reduced the impact of anti-social behaviour in various green spaces by reconstructing damaged benches and reinforcing them to ensure they couldn’t be destroyed again”

Rosie Ryder



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“An increase in volunteering opportunities that are accessible to everyone, addressing barriers to participation and encouraging young people to work within teams with participants from a variety of ages and abilities”

IMPACT has offered a range of volunteering activities and placements that enable young people to gain valuable experience in both office and outdoor-based environments. Twenty-week full-time v Placements have been available for young people to get their vital first step on the career ladder and learn crucial skills that have helped them to secure permanent employment in the future, along with part-time and short-term opportunities.

Hard-to-reach groups such as young people who are either unemployed or socially isolated have been specifically targeted. With these particular young people, IMPACT has built up close relationships with the individuals so that barriers to participation can be discovered as early as possible. Through liaising with them in the initial stages of their placements solutions were found. Volunteers have been provided with equipment and the support that they require to participate, hence reducing the barriers that have been stopping them from engaging.

Examples include working with 12 education groups from young offenders, E2E, and specialist schools for young people with disabilities. We have offered all the groups the opportunity to engage in wildlife conservation and education through art activities, practical woodland management

work sessions, games, species identification and woodland walks through the reserves. All sessions are designed to the group's abilities.

The Mudpack is a group made up of volunteers from a variety of ages, abilities, backgrounds and personal interests. When asked, these are some of the reasons we have been given for volunteering:

- They would like to gain employment in an outdoor job
- Because the environment is a huge part of their life
- Because they work in an office all week
- To make friends and be a part of something
- To feel they are giving something back
- To relieve the boredom of being unemployed.

The Leave A Footprint group have team up with a mainly-adult volunteer group based at a nature reserve in Lancashire. This has allowed young people to socialise with individuals they would not normally mix with and benefit from their greater volunteering experience. This method of learning has been a very positive approach for all members of the practical sessions.

We have also worked with partners to provide opportunities for a range of young people, for example those with disabilities.



“I volunteered some time in the summer helping cut down trees and make pathways clear so people can walk through easier. It was a fun few days and I had a laugh with staff and friends. It felt kind of good to know I was helping the environment”

Becky Weaver



“An increase in volunteering opportunities that can respond to young people’s passions and respond to both global and local concerns and issues”



Volunteers have been consulted on a regular basis so that their individual concerns and passions about the local environment can be discovered and directly responded to. Through brain storming and evaluation sessions, the voices of the people who want to make a difference to the environment have been heard.

Activities were varied so they would encompass young people’s passions, global and local concerns and issues, and ranged from campaigning to jam-making, orienteering, invasive species clearance, restoring vandalised areas, creating ponds and many more practical conservation tasks, including creating gardens addressing the lack of provision for certain individuals.



The Mudpack Merseyside group took part in the BBC’s Tree O’clock event, which was a world record attempt at planting the most amount of trees in an hour across the whole of the UK on Saturday 5th December 2009 between 11am and 12pm. Fourteen volunteers from LWT and a local Friends group planted 400 trees in Millwood, Speke and would have planted many more had we not have run out of space and trees!

Many of our volunteers are concerned with climate change and the destruction of rain forests and like to actively help make a change in their local area.

The full time placements we have hosted have responded to young people’s passions on local issues. The placements have been encouraged to design and run their own projects with volunteers. For example, one of the placements spent four months running volunteering groups where young people created access to an under used area of woodland by felling non-native trees and making paths to lead the community through the woodland.



“Increasing access to more training opportunities that will lead to employment, education or further training qualifications”

V Placement volunteers have been encouraged to use their own initiative to identify their own direction for training. This helps them shape their own placement in such a way that can be beneficial for them in their future endeavours. Volunteers have had increasing access to courses and demonstrations that the Wildlife Trust offers that can improve their knowledge on a variety of environmentally related subjects. Volunteers have been able to gain important transferable qualifications in First Aid and Manual Handling, as well as nationally accredited John Muir and V 50 Awards.

There was also support and guidance for volunteers eligible to apply for a placement with the Future Job Fund through the Job Centre and vacancies that have come up within The Wildlife Trust.

All the volunteering opportunities delivered by LWT have helped to improve young people’s skills. Examples include:

- Training in how to use tools safely
- Training in habitat management techniques
- Training in ‘soft’ construction (access features)
- Support with communication skills and team work

Voluntary work is highly valued by the vast majority of employers. Volunteering demonstrates passion, enthusiasm and a willingness to work. Our opportunities have allowed young people to gain new skills and demonstrate to employers their determination to secure full-time employment.



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“An increase in young people involved in innovative projects within their community that result in a positive impact that is recognised and benefiting local people, reducing any stigma that young people may have in that community”



The innovative projects that young people have been involved in have undoubtedly changed the perception of young people in the community. Notable projects included the creation of a wildlife garden at Laburnum Lodge, a local residential home for people who suffer with dementia. The young people came up with their own ideas, fundraised for it, designed ‘user-friendly’ consultations to find out what the residents wanted, and researched plants that would

attract different types of wildlife. They then constructed and planted up raised beds, hanging baskets, arches, a rockery, herb window boxes and hand made some beautiful rustic benches. Celebration events at the end of projects have also been organised so that members of the local community can actually see what the young people have done. This has helped change the perception of young people in the local communities where work has been delivered.

Young people who are not in education, employment or training may have negative stigmas attached to them that they are lazy and unwilling to do anything for themselves. By volunteering their own time and achieving accredited awards this clearly removes these stigmas.

IMPACT volunteers in Bolton have been involved in intergenerational work with the Seven Acres Rangers and the Friends Of Seven Acres groups on local green spaces, where they have foraged for food and enhanced the outdoor environment through conservation projects, working alongside people who would never normally meet or socialise. These groups have had direct experience of seeing the hard work and benefits of involving young volunteers.



“I have been watching and recording wildlife in Seven Acres for 20 years or more. My life experiences have been enhanced by becoming a volunteer with the Trust. It pleases me greatly to find that there are young people volunteers wanting to look after our countryside, expertly guided by staff from the Trust.”

**John Anderton,
Chairman, Friends
Of Seven Acres**



Lancashire Wildlife Trust would like to thank the following organisations:

Abbots Lea School, Liverpool
AGMA
Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Ashfield School
Blackleach Country Park
Bolton at Home
Bolton Community College
Bolton Council
Bolton Shared Care
Bolton Rangers
Bolton University
British Waterways
Broadgreen High School
BTCV
Cardinal Heenan RC High School
Connexions
Cyprus Environmental Studies Centre
Cobalt Housing
CVS
Deyes High School
E2E
Fairbridge
Firwood School
Forestry Commission
The Friends of Millwood & Alder Wood
Glendale
Hope University
Hulme Community Garden Centre
Huyton Youth Group
Job Centre Plus
John Moores University
Kids Next Door
King David High School
Knowsley Housing Trust
Laburnum Lodge
Learning Disability Employment Teams
Liverpool City Council
Liverpool Hope University
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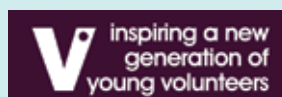
Manchester College
Middlewood Ecological Trust
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Myerscough College
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North Lancs Training Group
Oldham Council
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Probation Service
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Trafford Council
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University of Manchester
V involved Teams
Waterways Action Squad
Waterways Trust
YMCA
Youth Opportunities Fund
Youth Service



And a very special thank you for all of the hard work and dedication from this year's V placements:

Robert Corcoran - V Sound of Soprano Placement who has gained employment with The Trust as the FJF Environmental Project Assistant
Rachel Thorpe - V Ecological Surveyor and Nature Reserve Placement who has gained employment with The Trust as the FJF Environmental Project Assistant
Aimee Taylor - V Mossland Placement who has gained employment as The Trust's Penwortham Education FJF
Daniel Parks - V Bolton Environmental Action Team Placement who has gained employment with The Trust as Activize Your Lives FJF.
Sarah Cartlidge - V Ecological Surveyor and Nature Reserve Management Placement
David Hassall - V Local Nature Reserve Placement
Amy Birkett - V Fundraising and Events Placement

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Lancashire,
Manchester &
N Merseyside

Trust Headquarters
The Barn, Berkeley Drive
Bamber Bridge
Preston PR5 6BY

Tel: 01772 324129
Fax: 01772 628849
Email: info@lancswt.org.uk

For further information, please contact:

Daveen Wallis:
IMPACT Project Manager.
Tel: 01204 663754

Charlotte Yates:
Greater Manchester IMPACT
Youth Volunteer Co-ordinator.
Tel: 01204 663754

Ley Hodgson:
North Merseyside IMPACT
Youth Volunteer Co-ordinator.
Tel: 0151 9203769

The Lancashire Wildlife Trust is a Registered Charity (No.229325) and a Registered Company (No.731548) dedicated to the protection and promotion of wildlife in Lancashire, seven boroughs of Greater Manchester and four of Merseyside, all lying North of the River Mersey.