Partnership in Action:

Vocational Education for School Learners in India and the UK

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UK India Skills Forum

The UK India Skills Forum (UKISF) was first convened in April 2009 as a new platform, open to organisations from across the technical and vocational education sector from the UK and India, to raise awareness and exchange ideas for collaboration between the two countries on the delivery of skills, and specific business opportunities in the sector.

The creation of the UKISF was an initiative led by businesses represented on the education and skills work strand of the UK India Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO), which meets annually, reporting back to the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills for the UK and the Honourable Minister for Commerce and Industry for India.

The UKISF is co-chaired by Roy Newey, A4e for the UK, and RCM Reddy of IL&FS co-chairs. The UKIBC acts as the secretariat for the UKISF and first point of contact for UK skills providers wishing to join the Forum. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) acts as the main point of contact for Indian skills providers.

The UKISF works closely with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI). Basic membership of the Forum is free of charge. Opportunities shared among UKISF members are also made available through UKTI's free Business Opportunities alert service.

The UKISF also acts as a gateway to further information and services, some of which are on a chargeable basis. These include the UKIBC's Online Sector Service (covering all UKIBC priority **sectors) and UKTI's Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS).**

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Foreword

ROY NEWEY Co-Chair UK India Skills Forum

It has long been recognized in the UK that there is a need to offer a viable alternative to the academic route into the labour market. A high quality vocational education provision to schools aged children has positive benefits to Government, wider society and, of course, the individual learners who obtain the skills required to succeed in the world of work. Vocational education and training is not perceived as inferior to academic learning. Rather, vocational training is accepted as an equally valid and comparable path to achieving a fulfilling and highly regarded career.

Not all learners are able, for a variety of reasons, to reach their full potential through academic study alone. For others at risk from falling out of mainstream employment, education and training altogether - there are potentially serious consequences in terms of life chances, as well as the costs to society associated with long term unemployment. The UK has pioneered models which seek to engage with this "at risk" group, giving them the skills and confidence to make a positive contribution to their communities. Some of these innovative models are profiled in this report.

The UK skills and training sector has a number of interesting characteristics. Schools and colleges are assessed and verified to ensure that the teaching and facilities are of a sufficient standard to deliver particular qualifications. These qualifications are nationally and internationally recognized, and flexible enough to account for prior learning and lead to future development and higher level qualifications, through work, training or further study. Sector Skills Councils ensure that training is responsive to industry needs and the involvement of private employers in the sector is a notable recent trend.

There is widespread acknowledgement that providing high quality vocational education and training is the best way for India to leverage its young population, and build on the economic success which it has achieved. The target to train 500 million people by 2022 will consolidate the growth of the last decade and bodes well for future development. The UK skills and training sector is a constantly evolving market place where the needs of employers demand constant improvements. Significant progress in responding to the need for a properly trained 21st century workforce have been made in recent years but this improvement process continues everyday. The UK training sector looks forward to further collaboration with our Indian counterparts, to the mutual benefit of both countries.



The Global Challenge of Youth Unemployment



Young people who do not have adequate skills and basic primary education - who cannot read and write and lack the technical and vocational skills in demand in the labour market - find themselves unemployable, even when economies are growing. The human and development cost of large numbers of each new generation being excluded from the labour market is enormous.

Young people often face serious constraints in accessing the quality education and training they need to enhance their likelihood of finding decent work. On a global scale 44% of the world's total unemployed are young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) also estimates that there are currently 85 million unemployed youth, 300 million youth who live on less than $2 per day, and 20 million who have become discouraged from job search and have withdrawn from the labour market.

Exclusion from education and training is the root of child labour, low pay, poor quality jobs and the gateway to intergenerational poverty and social exclusion. Education and training remain cornerstones of a young person's preparation for the world of work. Yet many school leavers without a strong academic record behind them will struggle to find work and soon are in danger of becoming isolated from training and employment opportunities. This 'NEET' (Not in Education, Employment or Training) cohort are associated with long-term unemployment, damaging social issues, and costly intervention from the state. In this section we look at the cost of NEET to Britain, and how we try to tackle the issues which contribute to it.

Britain's Skills Challenges



Faced with competition from growing economies in India, China and Brazil, education policy makers in the UK have also had to assess whether Britain is developing enough young people with the right skills to succeed in the modern labour market.

As participation in higher education at universities has increased, concerns have arisen about the shrinking supply of young people able to enter vocational careers and trades.

With newspapers reporting stories of higher skilled migrants displacing UK workers, and Britain enduring high levels of youth unemployment, it is no surprise that there is a need to equip individuals with the right skills to ensure future growth and prosperity.

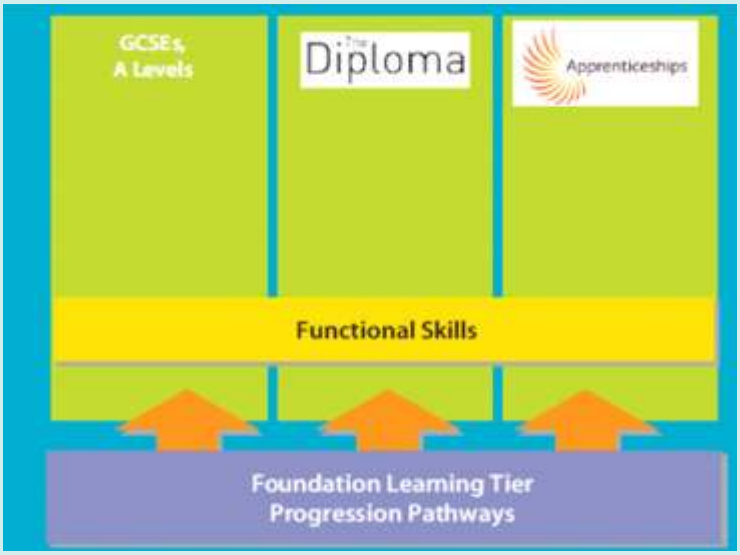
The UK has developed the infrastructure to deliver high quality vocational training and education. The opening sections of this review comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the British system as well as the consequences for the state and individuals when the traditional academic education route fails.

We conclude with a look at some of the solutions devised to offer vocational pathways to employment and training for those young people who require an alternative, credible route to further education.

Vocational Training in UK Schools

During the last decade, Britain's Labour administration undertook a wholesale review of the curriculum and qualification framework available to school children aged 14-19. The evaluation process concluded with the establishment of 3 'qualification pathways'.

14-19 key national suites and frameworks



Taken from 'Promoting achievement, valuing success; a strategy for 14-19 qualifications', Dept. For Children, Schools and Families, 2008.

Two of these pathways allowed for a greater degree of flexibility in shaping a child's progression through school. The introduction of The Diploma qualification, and embedding of apprenticeships, opened up clear vocational routes as alternatives to the established 'general route' of academic subject qualifications (GSCEs) followed by A-Level courses. Diplomas were designed to "tackle the historic divide between academic and vocational learning" , by being structured to allow students to follow vocational courses and take part in work-based learning.

Measures introduced in the 1990s to promote technical and vocational skills throughout British schools have resulted in three-quarters of secondary schools in England achieving 'specialist status'. Specialist Schools teach from the national curriculum but give particular attention to a single discipline, such as Business & Enterprise, Engineering, Languages, and Mathematics & Computing.

Specialist Schools are committed to working with industry and employers to enhance learning opportunities for young people. University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are the latest development to this approach, offering 14-19 year olds an alternative to academic routes of study through practical and technical courses. The Coalition Government plans 24 new UTCs by 2014.



Vocational Education in the UK - lessons learned



The emphasis on increasing vocational skills and providing alternative pathways of tuition for Britain's young people have seen a dramatic increase in the number of students gaining vocational qualifications. Furthermore, students still require sufficient core skills in Maths and English to allow progress in the labour market.

A lack of access to high quality education and training has a significant negative impact on the life chances of young people. Those without core skills face the prospect, not only of short-term disadvantage through exclusion from the labour market, but of a lifetime of reduced employment and welfare opportunities. The next section of this report explores the consequences for individuals and the state of low skill levels amongst school leavers.

The Cost of Exclusion: Youth Unemployment and the 'NEET' Cohort.

UK Dept. for Education data records that in 2009, 82% of England's 16 - 18 year olds were in full-time education or training. However, each year a proportion of Britain's young people fail to find work or take up further study; this 9% of Britain's 16-18 year olds are classified as 'NEET' - Not in Education, Employment or Training.

A University of York study published last year identified the precursors of a young person becoming NEET - a list of factors which reflect the symptoms of social disadvantage and disaffection with mainstream academic education:

- Having parents who are poor and unemployed;
- Living in a deprived neighbourhood near schools with poor overall average attainment;
- They are or have been in care;
- They become pregnant and a parent in their mid-teenage years;
- They have a disability, special educational need or learning disability;
- They are young carers;
- They are homeless;
- They have a mental illness;
- They misuse drugs or alcohol;
- They are involved in offending;
- Pre-16 educational disaffection (truancy and/ or school exclusion);
- Poor or no qualifications at age 16 plus;
- Dropping out of post-16 educational attainment.

Failing to deal with the NEET problem has a significant impact in social and economic cost. Young people who are NEET have poorer life chances than their peers and are more likely to be a long-term cost to the public purse. A 2010 report by the Audit Commission calculated that:

- A young person who was NEET in 2008 would (before reaching retirement age) cost an average of £56,000 in



public spending through welfare payments, costs to health and criminal justice services, and in a lost tax revenue.

- In addition, there would also be £104,000 in opportunity and welfare costs lost to the economy, individuals and their families.
- The entire 2008 cohort of NEET young people in the UK could cost over £13 billion to the public purse and £22 billion in opportunity costs before they reach retirement age.

Whatever the underlying cause, being NEET is associated with serious forms of disadvantage and poor welfare outcomes:



Figure 3: **Long-term effects of being NEET on young men**



Source: 1970 British Birth Cohort, 1999[i]

Taken from 'Against the Odds', the Audit Commission, 2010.

Those who have become NEET pose a great challenge for education policy-makers. They represent the cohort least motivated or able to participate in the labour market. Ensuring that young people in danger of falling into NEET status find the right vocational education pathways and personal support systems is a critical function of a coherent education policy. Vocational training has been seen to produce dramatic improvements in attainment amongst secondary school students who do not choose the academic route.

The UK Experience of Vocational Training in Schools -



lessons learned and transferable models for India.

Vocational Skills in India - challenges ahead.



Young people (aged 10-24) constituted almost 31% of the Indian population in 2001, some 315 million people. While today's youth are healthier and better educated than earlier generations, their social and economic vulnerability persists. Poverty among India's young people remains a real issue. The rate of enrolment in higher education amongst young people is 13%, compared to 83% in the US and 57% in the UK. Youth unemployment and the lack of employment in formal sectors remain key issues to be addressed.

Attainment of educational milestones also varies. In total, just two in five young men and one in three young women complete high school. Every year, 5.5 million students pass out; 60% of whom progress to Class XI, leaving 2.2 million out of the education stream. A further 21 million drop out by Class VIII. Potentially, over 20 million young people in India require an alternative vocational route to training and further education. Currently, formal training capacity can accommodate 2.3 million students, leaving a gap of 18.7 million young people who are without any provision for formal vocational training.

India needs to have a huge base of skilled manpower to match the ever growing demand for labour from growth sectors such as retail, construction, textiles and automotives. Availability of suitably qualified manpower will be a critical factor in delivering growth and prosperity across the nation.

An Alternative to Academic Education

Vocational training is a credible alternative educational provision to young people in danger of falling into NEET status or not suited to the academic route. Some young people respond positively to an environment that is different to academic learning, and benefit more from vocational styles of learning. Vocational and technical education coupled with soft skills such as teamworking and communication skills can change learners' attitudes and behaviours so they can gain recognised vocational qualifications and take a step toward achieving longer term goals in employment and training.

Trainers and teachers staff can expect to encounter young people who are disaffected by mainstream education, exhibiting low expectations or struggling with learning difficulties and behavioural problems. To support and enhance a learner's development, the training itself may also include the following elements to facilitate entry into the labour market.

- Raising aspirations;
- Work-related learning & enterprise;
- Teamwork skills;
- Study skills;
- Healthy lifestyles;
- Work experience placements;
- Anger & Stress Management;
- Avoidance of risky behaviour;
- Functional skills/ Skills for life.

Vocational training must be continuously reviewed to ensure that it is responsive to industry needs. Training can be offered in a variety of contemporary sectors and disciplines.

- Construction
- Retail
- Hair & Beauty
- Fashion
- Catering & Hospitality
- Mechanics
- Sport & Leisure
- Childcare

Vocational training can be located in 'real world' situations. Youngsters taking part work side by side with businesses and benefit from the knowledge and experience of the people around them.

This can include experienced trades people as tutors, assessors and verifiers. Arriving from industry, they are steeped in current commercial practice, committed to supporting our young people as they begin their journey, and provide a positive example to learners.

How Vocational Education Works for Learners

Vocational training works by approaching education from a different perspective to that seen in the academic route. By designing an infrastructure which supports the individual, addresses their obstacles to learning, and guides them in the development of new skills through practical ways of learning and reflecting the values of the workplace.

Students can expect to achieve an industry-recognised vocational qualification, as well as completing personal & social development courses covering financial budgeting, rights and responsibilities at work, equality in the workplace, enterprise, and healthy living. Students also work on the 'functional skills' of Maths and English which will help underpin further training.



How Vocational Training Works for Government and Communities.

Local government spends large sums of money in dealing with the social consequences of disengagement from academic education, such as welfare support, long-term unemployment, health issues, and supervision of offenders. Training in vocational disciplines shows that great savings can be made when far smaller levels of resource are invested on preventing disengagement.

Vocational training can also play a role in promoting local economic growth. Consultation with local partners can align students' skills with local demand. Vocational training delivers outcomes for government by providing those struggling to achieve academic qualifications with the skills required to deliver first rate public services. This can deliver savings in public expenditure in the short and long term.

Options for Vocational Skills Training in India



India's impressive rate of economic growth drives its demand for higher levels of vocational skills. The quantity of skilled employees required to meet this demand is daunting. The Financial Times recently reported the findings of a Manpower Group survey which recorded that the proportion of Indian companies unable to find skilled staff jumped from 16% to 67% during the course of 2010 alone.

A report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry outlined the scale of the challenge ahead. The current capacity for vocational skill training and higher technical education is 3.4 million people per year. By 2020, however, the growth of the Indian economy will mean that the level of demand for newly trained employees will be at 15 million people per year.

Delivering vocational skills training to school aged learners - matched to sectors experiencing skills shortages in local and regional economies - will equip young people with the ability to move from education to employment and sustain the buoyant sectors driving India's economic growth. For those already working in the informal sectors, vocational training will boost productivity, foster safer working places, and inspire the establishment of new enterprises.

The projected growth rate in Indian industrial and service sectors is expected to generate 60 million job opportunities between 2006-12 and 156 million during 2006-16. High quality vocational training provision presents an opportunity for business, government, trainers, and communities to interact to sustain growth in the wider economy and promote prosperity.

Moving Forward

School and college aged learners are not the only group who could benefit from the vocational, as opposed to academic route. Areas for growth include:

Expand to offer 'all age' support.

Expanding training provision can help more people in adult age groups who are looking for a vocational route back to the labour market. In addition, introducing vocational training early in a learner's acreer can ensure higher levels of attainment derived from the education system.



Develop new vocational streams

New courses and facilities can match labour demand in each particular locality. New strands may include green technologies, health and social care, and digital media.

Develop new partnerships

By engaging with local employers and other stakeholders, there is the opportunity to enter in to new types of arrangement with partner organisations to help build students' confidence and skills for life.

Conclusion

Vocational training helps learners to develop a set of work-focussed skills, increase their confidence, and prepare themselves for working life or enrolment in further education. In the UK vocational training offers a viable alternative to mainstream academic education. Implementation costs are dwarfed by potential savings in public expenditure resulting from steering a young person away from a lifetime of disadvantage and welfare support.

In India, vocational training can play a part in addressing the skills gap by delivering young people who are ready for the workplace or by encouraging more people to enrol in higher education. Vocational training represents an opportunity to invest today to meet the economic demands of tomorrow.

Annex 1:
Vocational Training Activities



Building and bricklaying



Catering



Food Preparation



Clothes Design



Retail Training



Hairdressing

CASE STUDY 1 – Edexcel

Delivering vocational success in schools

Key drivers such as economic and social opportunities or challenges are fuelling the interest in vocational education across the world. Yet it is still finding its feet in many countries, particularly in the schools sector. With over 65% of schools in the UK offering a vocational Edexcel BTEC qualification, it's a clear indication that vocational success in schools is certainly a reality for Edexcel, the UK's largest awarding organisation. So how has success been possible for BTECs in the UK and what can be learned from the journey so far.



The secret of success

Is there a key to success? Well, three significant features have undoubtedly emerged over the years that Edexcel has been offering vocational qualifications to schools in the UK. The first feature is giving schools and learners real options and choices when they decide on a vocational qualification. With 16 BTEC qualification sectors on offer from Construction and the Built Environment to Hospitality, Travel and Tourism and Sport there's something to ignite enthusiasm in every learner.

The second feature focuses on giving teachers the methodology and tools to personalise their teaching to their learners needs. The vocational learning style of BTECs is completely different from the more traditional routes. Allowing the teacher to create relevant and inspiring ways to teach the qualification, engage the learner and help them develop critical life skills. Learners' success is measured throughout their course based on practical exercises. Assessment is ongoing, allowing the student to analyse and improve their own performance through their course, just like in a real workplace. As a result, students are more engaged and motivated, as they can see their own progress through the course rather than having to wait until the end to sit their exam.

The third and final feature is designing a qualification that is relevant, has a variety of progression routes, and is valued by universities, employers and professional bodies. Every BTEC offers a natural progression along a vocational path as well as from and to academic qualifications. And progression routes to university and most importantly into the workplace. In fact, not only do some universities offer BTEC learners advanced entry into courses, many industry and professional bodies offer exemptions from their own accredited qualifications.

Making it work in reality

After working with government, sector skills councils and employers to develop the right programmes we can engage with schools directly on making it work. So how does it work in practice and what role does Edexcel play? The initial step involves consulting with the school to help them decide which type and level of qualification is right for the school and group of learners. Then the school goes through a rigorous quality assurance process. This is to make sure that the school has the

Critical to the process is the role of the Teacher, the Programme Manager and Quality Nominee. The teacher ensures that appropriate programmes are chosen and that learners are recruited with integrity. The Programme Manager oversees BTEC planning, delivery and assessment. The Quality Nominee monitors quality and standards and supports BTEC staff across the school. In addition, a Standards Verifier from Edexcel visits the school to carry out an independent quality check to confirm that the qualification is being assessed to national standards. And when the visit has been officially verified, Edexcel awards the learner a certificate. The whole process is underpinned by valuable training, teaching and learning support from Edexcel.

The real success stories

We all know that the real indicator of educational success is how it helps individuals achieve their ambitions. Hannah Brickley who studied a BTEC National Diploma in Media Production has a compelling story to tell.

"I was always interested in media and got a good grade B at GCSE. I knew that I wanted a qualification that would help me secure a career in media. Doing the BTEC meant I could also get into television and film production. No other qualification offered me this opportunity."

"The BTEC has opened up so many options for me within the Media world. The best thing about the BTEC is that my confidence has gone through the roof! I am confident enough to go out there and get my name known, whether it's through work experience, applying for university courses or even applying for jobs. I'm no longer uncertain about the future"

On completion of her BTEC National Diploma Hannah was offered a place onto an established Journalism degree programme at a top UK university. On completion of her 3 year course, Hannah wants to go into a broadcasting work in television and radio.

The first ever UK National BTEC Awards, providing the long-awaited platform for students like Hannah, teachers, schools and colleges to celebrate their outstanding achievements in vocational learning, took place in London last month. It's evident that the future is bright for BTEC and vocational education in schools in the UK.

Fast facts about BTEC

Over 1 million learners worldwide registered to take BTEC qualifications in 2009 - 2010

In 2008/9 over 100,000 BTEC students were successful in applying to higher education after studying a BTEC

Students who have a BTEC Level 2 qualification and 5 good GCSE's increase their lifetime earning potential by 5.9% compared to those who have just 5 or more GCSE's

CASE STUDY 2 – 7KS

7KS is a private education company which operates specialist independent schools in local communities mainly across the Northeast of England. The company is able to fully engage with the local community and also has a presence in the national arena. 7KS has an enviable national reputation earned over a number of years developing innovative and successful programmes to address the needs of young people who are in danger of falling out of mainstream education. This work has been recognized and supported by the UK Department of Education and and given excellent reviews by Office of School Standards (Ofsted) inspectors.



1. Why is it important to offer vocational training to school age children?

One of the main reasons that young people become excluded from mainstream education is a lack of personal and social skills. Young people often disengage because they cannot see the value of learning and do not consider it relevant to their particular circumstances. Training in soft skills and employability must be undertaken alongside training in the preferred technical or vocational discipline.

The 7ks approach seeks to empower young people. By developing functional and social skills they are able to build identity capital and knowledge. This will enable them to socialize and develop the networks required to achieve success. The functional and social skills are as important as the technical knowledge if the young person is to succeed - all three aspects are necessary. It is this mixture of skills which can contribute to positive achievements later on in their careers. Enterprise without soft skills is only half the picture. As self employment becomes more likely, individuals will require an enterprising spirit, and, of course, employers want enterprising employees who are able to think critically and adapt.

2. Who are the target end user of 7ks education services?

Young people who have been excluded from mainstream education. This could be for many reasons: dysfunctional families, drug and alcohol use, mental health issues or bullying. Potential students are are referred by schools and local authorities, for students who require a positive learning destination which is not a mainstream school. When they arrive they receive a personalized learning plan, which makes use of vocational training options. The main imperative is to identify the motivational interest in the young person: this can come from a number of different sources, animals, food, cars, entrepreneurialism - but will form the basis of their vocational learning. It is the underlying motivation that will stimulate learning and lead to satisfaction and enthusiasm for the subject.

3. Can you tell me more about the 7ks model for delivering technical and vocational education?

Stimulating the motivational ability of the young person is the basis of our training. We first try to identify the things that the

individual likes doing and can derive satisfaction from, over time the motivational factor becomes more apparent. We build the vocational training offer around the underlying motivational skills, and develop the personal and social skills required to succeed.The trainee can see the benefits and the value in working hard to progress. The training contextualizes their learning and makes it applicable to real life situations.

4. Have you implemented the model overseas? Do you consider it to be transferable to overseas markets?

We have worked in Eastern Europe, Uzbekistan, Kazhakstan and in Russian cities at the end of the Soviet era. Here it was important to reintroduce an element of critical thinking into the school curriculum. Our form of vocational training is best applied to certain groups who are at risk of substandard school achievement. It is not intended to be a replacement for mainstream education.

5. What lessons can be learned from the UK approach to introducing vocational training to school aged children and young people?

At its' best the UK approach is inclusive and celebrates diversity. It is tailored to the needs of individuals and offers learning within a real life context. It is more sustainable and more empowering.

6. Can you outline some of the favourable outcomes brought about by your vocational training offering?

By making the training relevent to real life situations, we give context to the learning. All individuals have the capacity to be forward thinking and enterprising, it just needs to be drawn out and harnessed in the correct way. Getting young people into long term and sustainable employment is the outcome which we are aiming for.

7. What more could policy makers do to entrench training of this kind as an educational route?

We worked on a programme in Kenya. There was a very low life expectancy, widespread poverty and families affected by the AIDS virus. We hosted an inward mission to the UK which demonstrated our focus on enterprise. We developed a fund and hosted a series of workshops to unpack the concept of enterprise. Initial workshops were about helping people to think differently.

Our programme, "Entrepreneurs in Action" saw us host entrepreneurship weeks in schools. These weeks were often sponsored by local businesses. For example, if a supermarket had opened in a local area. We would focus on the soft skills that employers value so highly: problem solving, negotiation, critical thinking, teamworking - which are crucial to successful individuals. The best way to develop these skills is "learning by doing". Setting a group of people a particular task, for example, a role play of setting up a motor mechanic business. For employers the benefits are twofold: they are able to enhance the quality of their labour pool and demonstrate the social conscience which highly skilled graduates value in their working culture.

CASE STUDY 3 – Dr B's

Emma's story

From the age of 13, Emma struggled at school. A chaotic home life and problems at school made it impossible for her to sit quietly behind a desk and learn like the other children. But after years of fighting and failing, Emma has started to turn her life around with the help of Barnardo's Dr B's Restaurant and Coffee shop in Harrogate.



This is Emma's story:

"My real problems started when I was 13. I started misbehaving in lessons with friends - swearing and being the class clown. I couldn't get interested in anything and then things got worse and I started fighting. I was suspended from school several times for fighting and there was violence at home. I was taken into care when I was 14. It was my fault too - I started to get violent at home and was arrested. At first I went into foster care, but they took me up to Hartlepool and I felt isolated and couldn't cope so after some time in a respite centre I went into a children's home.

"When I was 15 I was finally excluded from school for fighting. I was only allowed into school for two hours a day to revise for my GCSEs and that was one-to-one work. I wasn't allowed to go off and see my friends.

"I went to college in Harrogate after that to do health and social care. I wanted to help out other children who were like me. I stayed there for a year and managed to achieve Level 1 in the national certificate but couldn't get any work placements to do Level 2 because of my criminal convictions for fighting. I worked as a cleaner for a while but really didn't know what to do with myself. Then I met a young person from Dr B's one day at the children's home and he told me all about it. I thought it sounded great so I rang them up and they met me with a worker from social services.

"I started at Barnardo's Dr B's in January on a month's trial. I passed that and started work on my NVQ Level 1 for food preparation and cooking. I really enjoyed that - learning new skills, meeting other people. It was like a walk in the park after what I'd been through. I've just finished my Level 1 and have started an apprenticeship working at a local cafe for NVQ Level 2.

"I couldn't have done any of this without the staff here who are so supportive. They help you emotionally as well. You can talk about your personal problems as well as work, so you can deal with things so much better. It's so good that they support you no matter what and never judge you.

"I don't think I'd have been doing anything if it wasn't for Barnardo's. I'd have been in and out of different jobs I hated and in and out of trouble. It's not for me sitting behind a desk. It never worked at school. They understand how to help you learn and do your best here. I'm even helping the new trainees now - passing on information and helping with their training. It gives experience of management skills for when I get a job. You learn that work is about getting the best from people - being on their wavelength and not being bossy.

"From a girl who was arrested for fighting and thrown out of school, I'm now someone who is getting on. I worked and trained with the celebrity chef Atul Kochhar when he came here in February. It was great. And I'd love to meet and work with James Martin.

It's going really well for me. I still have difficult things to deal with at home and struggle with attendance some times, but I'm working on it. My ambition is to become a head chef and I can see myself getting there now."

Steve's story

The future wasn't looking rosy for sixteen-year-old Steve. He'd left school without any qualifications, and however hard he tried, he couldn't get a job. Rejection followed rejection. And with each rejection, the chronically shy teenager lost a bit more hope that he could achieve at anything. He became disillusioned and on the edge of disengaged, until at that point he was referred to Barnardo's Dr B's outreach service in Starbeck, Harrogate.

This is Steve's story:

"I'd tried for so many jobs, I knew I'd never get one. I had no confidence or hope at all. I went all over but one day Connexions sent me to Barnardo's. I went along to see what they did and I really liked it. I started straight away the next day. They worked on my Maths and English key skills with me, we trained on computers and worked on community projects like Starbeck in Bloom. They work with you to get your grades and skills up to get you a job.

"I did a couple of exams and passed health and safety. I did mock exams in English and Maths and did well on those. After that I built on improving my skills. I finally felt I was getting somewhere. Maggie at Barnardo's did reviews with me on my work and put targets down. I started to look at college courses and jobs.

"I was thinking of being a tattooist but I hate needles. I think it was the design and creative part I liked so I then thought about signwriting. Barnardo's sorted out a work placement for me - they match up you with a placement that they think would suit you. I couldn't believe I'd got that far and someone was willing to take me on. I had a lot more confidence but I still was very shy and nervous and found it hard to meet new people. I wouldn't even take off my cap anywhere.

"I came to Signs Express and spoke to Charles. He said I could start the next week but that I had to take off my cap. I liked him and it was a big thing for me but I did it. I was only supposed to come for 10 days but I've been here 7 weeks now. I really enjoy it so I come in more. Barnardo's built up my confidence so much that I could get out and work with different people. It was hard to start with but I'd never have done it without their help. They support me in my placement. I meet them regularly to make sure everything is on track and they help me getting interviews and practice doing them with me.

"I don't know what would have happened if it wasn't for Barnardo's. I couldn't get a job and I wasn't confident enough or had enough skills to get to college.

"I've just heard that I've got into college to do an arts course - which includes studying computer graphics. I like that - we do a bit here. I discovered through my placement that I really like sign writing and design. And that I'm good at it. I've had practical work experience and now have things for my portfolio that will really help me get on."

Charles Fitt (Steve's employer at Signs Express) said: "I always like to take on work experience students and give them a chance. Barnardo's asked me if I could take one of their students and I said yes. Steve was very quiet and reserved when he first came. He has changed out of all recognition. He talks and jokes with the lads. He's very quickly become part of the team and very quickly learned new skills. He's done work here from design to manufacture. I can see a good future for him. I would recommend him."

CASE STUDY 4 – A4E

1. Why is it important to offer vocational training to school age children?

Providing vocational training opportunities allows young people a chance to see how their interests and skills might match to the key expectations of employers and the requirements of 21st century jobs. It also offers a more practical alternative to traditional classroom-based education for those students who might be disengaged or disaffected. Vocational training saves time, effort and money within industry as young people will be better prepared, more enthusiastic and highly motivated, entering employment with a clear understanding of what qualities and competencies they need to demonstrate. Employers



can expect better candidates for interview, better retention levels and less staff turnover from a cohort of staff that have previously undertaken vocational training.

2. Who are the target end user of A4E vox services?

Vox Centres aim to provide practical hands-on experience to young people aged 14-19. Whilst the customer profile is invariably those deemed at risk of dropping out / being excluded from mainstream education we offer an inclusive service to young people of all backgrounds and ability levels.

Our centers also currently provide interventions for unemployed adults, delivering qualifications and courses to help move them closer to the labour market.

Within this we also recognise that our customers include schools, local authorities, partner organisations and parents / family members.

3. Can you tell me more about the A4E vox model for delivering technical and vocational education?

Young people / adult customers are referred to us from their host agency (school, job centre etc) and offered the chance to visit the centre. Having viewed the facilities and considered the range of courses available they will choose their programme of study and be inducted properly, completing paperwork, action plans etc.

Customers will then receive the majority of their training within their chosen sector area, building up a portfolio of evidence to gain a qualification in that discipline. Centres tend to provide training in construction, hair and beauty, hospitality and catering, motor vehicle and childcare with other sectors added on accordingly to local demand. For complementary studies, such as functional skills and personal development, they will be removed from their teaching group to work alongside the relevant member of staff.

Focus is placed on real-life scenarios where customers get a good insight into what kinds of things they would be doing in a p-lace of work.

In addition to the formal courses, centres also offer shorter tasters, enterprise challenges and employer-tailored activities to broaden the offer and provide flexible delivery in communities.

4. What are its main strengths?

The main strengths of Vox Centres are:

- delivery of multi-sector training under one roof - thus ensuring choice, flexibility and improved retention rates;
- recruitment of experienced 'time-served' trainers to provide credible role models within the sector areas;
- working as an ecosystem - catering students cook for staff and pupils, construction students maintain the premises etc;
- student 'ownership' - feeling of 'this is our centre' and part to play in key decisions around decor, design, activities etc;
- internal progression opportunities - chance to move into other sectors, sign up to post 16 delivery, apprenticeships etc;
- physical base from which to deliver the important services to communities - both us and partners.

5. Have you implemented the model overseas? Do you consider it to be transferable to overseas market?

We are working on a franchisable model for vox centres called "Vox in a Box." This will allow us to have the core requirements of a vox in a succinct order which will make it easier to roll out. This model can be easily replicated for the international market.

6. What lessons can be learned by the UK approach to introducing vocational training to school age children and young people?

The key lessons include:

- ensuring that the profile of vocational training is a positive one and not 'poor relation';
- the quality / qualifications and experience of staff is vital - one without the other might not lead to successful outcomes;
- linkages and exposure to employers and their vacancies is crucial so that there is some currency / incentive for young people;
- health & safety and safeguarding should be properly considered and implemented before centres begin to operate;
- centres should be comfortable, safe and inspiring places to work.

7. Can you outline some of the favorable outcomes brought about by vocational training offering?

- closer match between expectations of employers and skill levels of young people;
- increased aspirations and understanding of the benefits of working for a living;
- improved local workforce in order to bolster the economy;
- better qualification levels - both for the individual and the referring schools;
- improved retention levels within employers leading to greater confidence in working with training providers / a4e;
- creation of better citizens and improved general community cohesion.

8. What more could policy makers do to entrench training of this kind as an educational route?

- make vocational education attractive and recognized as a viable route for ALL young people not just the disaffected;
- incentivise employers to support training and progression routes;
- promote the positive case studies leading from vocational training across this and other sectors;
- develop their operational knowledge of the model and good practice by visiting and conducting detailed research / consultation.



The A4E Vox Centre Environment



Comfortable and professional spaces



The Vox Centre Internet Café ''CafeByte'