



# MORE THAN AN ADVENTURE

The value of sail training for the community



# Key values

- Personal development
  - *Brief overview of peer-reviewed literature*
- Education and science
  - *Woolhara Sailing Club, Sydney Harbour*
- Social Inclusion
  - *STS Young Endeavour*
  - *Alternative justice and community corrections*

A group of Syrian and Irish teenagers are on a sailing course. They are on a 70-foot schooner, learning how to sail. The image shows several young people on the deck of the boat, some wearing life jackets and hoods. One young woman is at the helm, steering the boat. The background shows the open sea and another boat in the distance.

Spirit of Oysterhaven

# Syrian and Irish teenagers pull together on sailing course

Young refugees and Irish teens have spent a week together at sea, learning to sail a 70-foot schooner.

[UNHCR Short Film](#)

A group of Syrian asylum-seekers and Irish teenagers learn how to sail.

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# Theme 1 – Individual Development

- "Expedition phenomenon" – Pike and Beames 2007
- **GHANA EXPEDITION - Raleigh**
  - *Character*
  - *Courage*
  - *Composure*
  - *Control and Compromise*
  - *Integrity*
- Note: stigma of difference and over-supervision
  - *Interestingly, participants were less likely to embrace risk if too closely guided*

# Findings from Raleigh

- Character is developed by courageous encounters with a perceived danger, whether or not that activity is totally successful
  - *Risk averse culture is pervasive*
  - *Sail training offers a balance between perceived danger (new surroundings, environment conditions, open ocean) and chance-taking without real risks*
  - *Forced young people to be mindful of their character, projecting a view of potential adulthood (thinking of CVs, employers, responsibilities, care for others, being reliable and useful)*
  - *The trial has the potential to have a pivotal moment in development or change, but only if the exposure to the danger or uncomfortable experience was sufficiently “real” enough to overcome caution*

# Theme 1 – Individual Development

- Sail Training and self-concept: Michele Capurso and Simone Borsci 2013, Journal of Educational Research
  - *1 April to 31 September 2011 in the Mediterranean Sea aboard the Tender to Nave Italia Foundation vessel*
  - *Participants are treated as crew rather than guests or customers*
  - *Three important stages to the experience*
    - Onshore education program: meteorology, introduction to sailing, sea life etc.
    - Sailing experience: testing skills learned onshore
    - Home: narrate the experience to members of the public through workshops, media, articles etc.
- Three measurements
  - *Activities*
  - *Relations*
  - *Roles and responsibility*

## 1. Activities

Because of the micro-environment of a tall ship, there is an immediate connection between an activity and the result. For example:

- Sailcraft - when the group of teenagers are asked to haul aft the main-sheet, everyone feels an immediate change in attitude of the ship.
- Duties – when a watch group is down below preparing a meal, they will see their crewmates enjoying their efforts shortly afterward

The immediacy of the connection between the activity and the outcome provides **meaning and immediate, positive regard from others**

The report authors suggest the tall ship environment is highly useful in both external and internal expression of psychological development.

HOWEVER – this expression fades quickly after the sailing portion of the voyage, unless there continues to be a resonating link after the program is finished.

## 2. Relationships

Attention and collaboration is constantly required on a tall ship. The ship cannot sail with one member of crew doing all the work.

The reliance upon each other forges an incredibly strong bond to the ships crew. The necessary support and encouragement from the other crew forms an important catalyst for social development.

Self-concept becomes tempered by the needs of the group = interpersonal development

Note: correlation between hierarchical systems of organization and weaker relationship development



### 3. Roles and responsibility

Each young member of the crew is expected to perform the activities in collaboration with their peers. Through mediation by the staff, the youth crew is encouraged to *extend* their capabilities beyond their starting point. The staff then deliberately recognise and exhibit those who extend their capabilities to be recognised by the other youth crew.

The new roles open to the youth crew are often termed in language such as “leadership” but more appropriately perhaps as “responsibility”.

**Note:** This phenomenon is **TEMPORARY**– the new responsibilities and roles are defined by the context of the ship. The participants revert back to their usual roles in society when they go home. The gains essentially fade away.

The benefits are only reaped if the sail training program extends beyond the microcosm of the tall ship itself.

## Findings

- The most effective educational sail training programs have the following characteristics:
  - *Longer in duration: not confined to singular experience*
  - *Well-designed preparatory AND follow-up activities*
  - *Use of learning activities relevant to local school curriculums, to encourage integration of development beyond the sail training experience*
  - *Continuity should be a key pillar of any educational project*
  - *Learning is primarily facilitated, not self-directed*
  - *Clear connection between goals and activities*
  
- Less effective sail programs will not include a follow-up strategy.
  - *Too often the experience ends when the voyage ends*
  - *STI members should invest in strategic planning beyond the voyage duration if educational outcomes are a priority*
  - *Lessons and gains must be extended to the everyday life of the youth crew*

# Education

Ken McCulloch asks five critical questions of the value of sail training:

1. What benefits and effects do participants anticipate from their experience and what influences those expectations?
2. To what extent do participants experience these benefits and effects as being achieved?
3. To what extent do participants experience **unanticipated** benefits and effects?
4. What, if any, specific identifiable changes in participants' views of themselves are evident between the beginning of a voyage and two to three months after the voyage?
5. **What are the key differences between sail training programmes? Do differences such as type of vessel used, voyage characteristics, ideology and programme characteristics lead to differing purposes and outcomes? If so what are the significant differences?**

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# Key differences/similarities and effects

- Trainees' views of the experience are similar whether they go to sea in a full-rigged tall-ship or a smaller vessel, and it didn't matter if the rig is modern or traditional or whether the staff are all volunteers or all professional seafarers. It appears that it is going to sea that counts for far more than possible differences of approach and style.
- Staffing – appropriate and adequate staffing appears to be a considerable variable in the success of development outcomes
  - *Most staff in most sail training practice seem to approach and conduct their work to similar standards whether paid or unpaid*
- Youth development vs 'Maritime heritage' programs
  - *Structured, purposeful educational activities result in much stronger development change in relationships, responsibility, teamwork, problem solving, confidence and autonomy.*
  - *Primarily "experiential" programs had comparably less impact and any gains were not long-term*



Exemplary illustration –  
Woollahra Sailing Club Australia



Science  
Education  
Community justice

# Justice and Community Corrections

- ACT Magistrates Court
- Outward Bound program for indigenous offenders
- Galambany Circle Sentencing Court
- Recidivism drops dramatically when young offenders are exposed to an environment where they can develop a sense of self, character, demonstrate courage, control, compromise, and responsibility in a controlled environment
- Removes punitive characteristic and emphasizes rehabilitation
- The research suggests these are fundamental features of Sail Training programs. There is significant opportunity for sail training operators to contribute to the community through programs for young offenders and victims of crime
- Opportunity for success: Sail Training can be the vehicle for initial change and development, and the community corrections office can follow up with the bulk of rehabilitation, using the lessons from sail training as a reference post throughout the program