

## Community Service

The philosophy of Outward Bound is "to produce young people able to effect what they seem to be right, despite hardships, despite dangers, despite inner skepticism, despite boredom, despite mockery from the world, despite emotion of the moment." This is what Kurt Hahn, the founder of Outward Bound International, believed and in order to spread this message he established the first Outward Bound School, the Gordonstoun School, in Wales in 1940. The establishment was based upon two pillars - Community Service and Solo. Solo was to prepare young men for war as Hahn realized that, due to their inexperience in war and poor survival skills, lots of young men were dying compared to older ones. Furthermore Community Service had the purpose of enrolling youth in tasks that would make them useful to their country in war time. And even to this day these two pillars are still practiced by the countless Outward Bound Schools across the globe.

The purposes of Community Service has changed over the years and are still ongoing. The aim has transformed from practicing service to your country to aid with the war effort to instead becoming a sense of building up families and giving back to the community where there is need. In addition many people don't realize the potential they possess to make a difference, therefore, via Community Service, Outward Bound exposes participants to the needs of the community and helps them realize that individuals can make a difference. This is the case for many participants on all types of Outward Bound courses but especially with participants from the Department Of Social Development (DOSD). DOSD sends socially disturbed kids from bad backgrounds to Outward Bound who undoubtedly provide a great challenge to Outward Bound Instructors. Taking this into consideration it can be considered a remarkable achievement to witness the joy and unrelenting pride on the students' faces when they know that they have done something that is beneficial to the community, but more importantly to themselves. This is emphasized in the ideals of Community Service - to contribute to a positive self-image by being of genuine service to others and to foster a sense of compassion, generosity and caring. Therefore the personal benefit is considered just as important as the communal benefit and this is what Outward Bound has realized and continues to teach.





It is not just the students that practice Community Service but the Outward Bound Staff as well. In order to teach students we ourselves must be able to carry out Community Service and understand the purpose and ideals behind it. For example Outward Bound SA Staff have been and continue to go to Wolwe River, outside Sedgfield, to cut down Black Wattles - an invasive species of plant native to Australia. More recently, the Knysna fires have got Sedgfield and Knysna Locals to aid with the relief effort for those affected by the flames. This involved packing, unpacking, stockpiling and organizing supplies ready to be distributed to the affected areas. The drive to Knysna and back exposed us to a different setting and gave us a clear and vivid picture of the magnitude of the fire and the devastation it had caused so realizing that we were helping people that needed it.

Furthermore whilst helping with the relief efforts we saw a plethora of parents bringing their children to help who had lost everything. This gave us a positive self-image and a sense of compassion - for example children were asked to dish out food to volunteers in Sedgfield. In doing so it was clear that they were enjoying it and were eager to help out more, plus parents were passing down the ideals of Community Service to the next generation. This relates back to the sense of Community Service. By building up families and giving back to the community. It is still evident that the process is changing and that is why Outward Bound still has to enforce a continuation of teaching and practicing what we preach.

To conclude, I have been inspired by what I have witnessed in the relief efforts with the Knysna fires - people with different ethnicities, organizations, genders and beliefs coming together to become one and give service to the ones in need. This hugely supports the case to continue teaching and practicing Community Service and that is why I feel proud and privileged to know that Community Service has been one of the foundations ever since Outward Bound first started and we continue to teach it to the thousands of students that come on course with us and continue to practice it ourselves.

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