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Executive Director
Outward Bound – South Africa
PO Box 813
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Tuesday, September 18, 2017

Re: Research collaboration between NWU Department of Psychology, and Outward Bound - South Africa.

Dear Mr Snyders

It gives me great pleasure to report that our first three Master's students have completed their research, and have successfully graduated as Clinical Psychologists. This would not have been possible had it not been for the valuable collaboration with your organization, and the schools involved. I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude, and to provide a very brief summary of the main outcomes of each of the three studies conducted.

Study # 1: Adventure based experiential learning and adolescents' self-reported levels of resilience and positive mental health – Miss MBP Boyers

Results indicated that the 104 adolescents involved showed a general decrease in all forms of symptomatology, and a general increase in their levels of mental health (and especially social well-being) after participating in an OBSA course. There was also a strong association between the resilience and mental health of the 104 individuals who participated in the programme.

Study# 2: Adventure based experiential learning and adolescents' self-reported levels of self-regulation and positive mental health – Miss C Barnard

The results of this study showed significant increases in participants' levels of self-regulation and positive mental health after participating in an OBSA adventure programme. Significant decreases was also seen in adolescents' levels of anxiety and sleeplessness, and social dysfunction. A strong association was found to exist between self-regulation and mental health of the 105 adolescents that participated in the study.

Study # 3: A group of South African adolescents' subjective experience of participation in an eco-adventure programme: A strengths perspective – Miss C Labuschagne

Participants were found to have developed a number of character strengths whilst participating in the OBSA programme. These included *gratitude, perspective, self-regulation,*

leadership, bravery, perseverance, love, kindness, spirituality, appreciation of beauty, social intelligence and teamwork.

These are indeed very positive results, which will soon be submitted to scientific journals for publication. It needs to be stressed that our research included adolescents from various cultural backgrounds, and that the benefits of participating in these programmes transcended, and therefore applied to all gender, racial, ethnic and language groups. What was however most exciting to observe, was that the benefits of participating were still present, and even more strongly so, three months after the conclusion of the intervention. Although this will need to be confirmed through follow-up studies, this strongly suggests the longevity of the benefits of such and intervention. In summary, the combined results from these first three studies strongly suggests EAP's (Eco-Adventure Programmes) such as the ones offered by your organization to be a successful and cost-effective intervention for the prevention of pathology, and the facilitation of adolescent well-being and resilience in the challenging South African context.

I would like to conclude by expressing not only my gratitude for the opportunity to collaborate with Outward Bound – South Africa, but also my excitement for our future collaboration toward building on these early results, and making a tangible difference in the lives of young South Africans.

Yours sincerely,



Prof JC Potgieter
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