

**SCOTTISH OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRES**



***WHY RESIDENTIAL  
OUTDOOR LEARNING?***

***DELIVERING SCOTLAND'S STRATEGIC  
OBJECTIVES AND NATIONAL OUTCOMES***



# Scottish Outdoor Education Centres

## Delivering Scotland's Strategic Objectives and National Outcomes

### Introduction

This paper is in 2 parts:

- Part 1 established SOEC's clear intention and explains how it delivers significantly the Scottish Government's strategic objectives and national outcomes, particularly Curriculum for Excellence.
  
- Part 2 outlines the evidence of success and the benefit of our work to children and young people, to teachers and others.

### PART 1

With approximately 1/3 of the residential resource in Scotland (1/3 are centres managed by local authorities, and the remaining 1/3 by other tertiary sector organisations,) SOEC is the largest provider of residential outdoor learning in Scotland. As such, SOEC accepts it has a significant responsibility to deliver the Scottish Government's objectives to create ***"a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth."***

SOEC does this in many ways but for the most part, through its programmes and specialist staff team, this is achieved by empowering and enabling young people to realise their potential and to contribute themselves to Scotland's future.

SOEC is a Scottish charity, a company limited by guarantee and a social enterprise. It contributes to these objectives through its charitable purposes:

- ***"for the social, physical and intellectual advancement of the community at large and of children and young people in particular"***
  
- ***for the purpose of promoting and furthering education and outdoor, sporting, leisure and recreational activity... [to]***
  
- ***construct, own, operate and manage residential centres and facilities in Scotland.***

SOEC contributes to all Strategic Objectives to make Scotland: Wealthier & Fairer; Smarter; Healthier; Safer & Stronger; and Greener. This is shown in the table overleaf. SOEC also contributes to all 15 National Outcomes and these are tabulated in Annex 1.

## The Scottish Government's 5 Strategic Objectives

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b><i>Outdoor Learning Relevance and Potential</i></b>
Wealthier &	SOEC contributes to this objective through delivering experiential learning programmes that enable young people to develop the knowledge, qualities, skills and experiences required in Scottish business and industry. The unique blend of experiential and outdoor learning in a residential setting enables SOEC to create programmes that are exciting, motivational and educational, developing skills relevant in a world of globalisation.
Fairer	SOEC is fully inclusive, working with a large number of young people who face social, physical or behavioural challenges in their lives, to develop life skills and other outcomes that will benefit them at home, at school or at work. Programmes also promote citizenship and positive social relations.
Smarter	SOEC delivers multiple outcomes simultaneously and in this way is able to deliver outcomes sought in Curriculum for Excellence. SOEC adopts an holistic and integrative approach which leads to positive outcomes in different policy areas that benefit simultaneously the economy, society and the environment.
Healthier	Connectedness with the outdoors is recognised as essential for mental health and well-being. SOEC enables young people to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation that the outdoors is accessible, and important to them for leisure, recreation and work.
Safer &	Through intelligent use of adventurous play and challenging activities, SOEC tackles directly concerns about a 'cotton wool' culture, enabling young people to develop safety consciousness and understanding of risk, its assessment and management.
Stronger	SOEC also enables young people to develop friendships based on trust and support. Programmes develop confidence, cooperative working and problem solving capability; qualities that enable effective team work under challenging situations and transferable to many different contexts.
Greener	Scotland's post industrial geography results in many young people feeling constrained in urban areas. Climate change will ensure green issues continue to move up the social agenda but young people will only contribute to "saving the planet" if they feel it is relevant to them. SOEC enables young people to connect to the environment. We make it more relevant by enabling young people to engage in and enjoy being in the environment without their activities destroying it.

## **Charitable Purposes, Vision and Mission**

SOEC believes that all young people should experience different types of outdoor learning regularly and frequently. SOEC also believes that residential experiences are a vital adjunct to the formal education system and widely considered to be a valued tradition in Scotland. Residential experiences are a major part of outdoor learning, hence SOEC is recognised as;

***a leader in provision of Outdoor Learning, Sustainable Development Education and the delivery of a Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland.***

SOEC's is primarily a provider of educational services and products. We deliver the priorities for education and the commitments to young people identified by the Scottish Government, particularly Curriculum for Excellence and other policy priorities such as Health and Sustainable Development Education.

SOECs vision is based on the view that the benefits SOEC offers and delivers are highly important and relevant to young people and others in the face of contemporary challenges. All decision-makers are aware of serious and fundamental challenges that young people will face in the near future. They might be defined as:

- Societal – sub-divided into Personal and Social, these range from adoption of healthy as opposed to sedentary lifestyles, enjoying 'highs' in life without recourse to chemical drugs, to young people making a positive contribution to the well-being of their communities. The importance of more healthy and active people and communities cannot be underestimated where factors conspire so that, for the first time in decades, life expectancy is in decline;
- Economic – changes to a global economy, and increased competition through globalisation are demanding greater recognition and positive approaches to enterprise and entrepreneurialism for the success of business and industry in the future;
- Environmental – we do not know the full extent of climate change but young people today may inherit an environment which is more hostile to the one we currently enjoy.

Although these challenges commence from diverse perspectives, SOEC recognises their similarities and potential for integration. In doing so, SOEC recognises that outcomes necessary for young people to be successful in a rapidly changing world, in terms of values, qualities, attributes and skills, are common to all 3 strands.

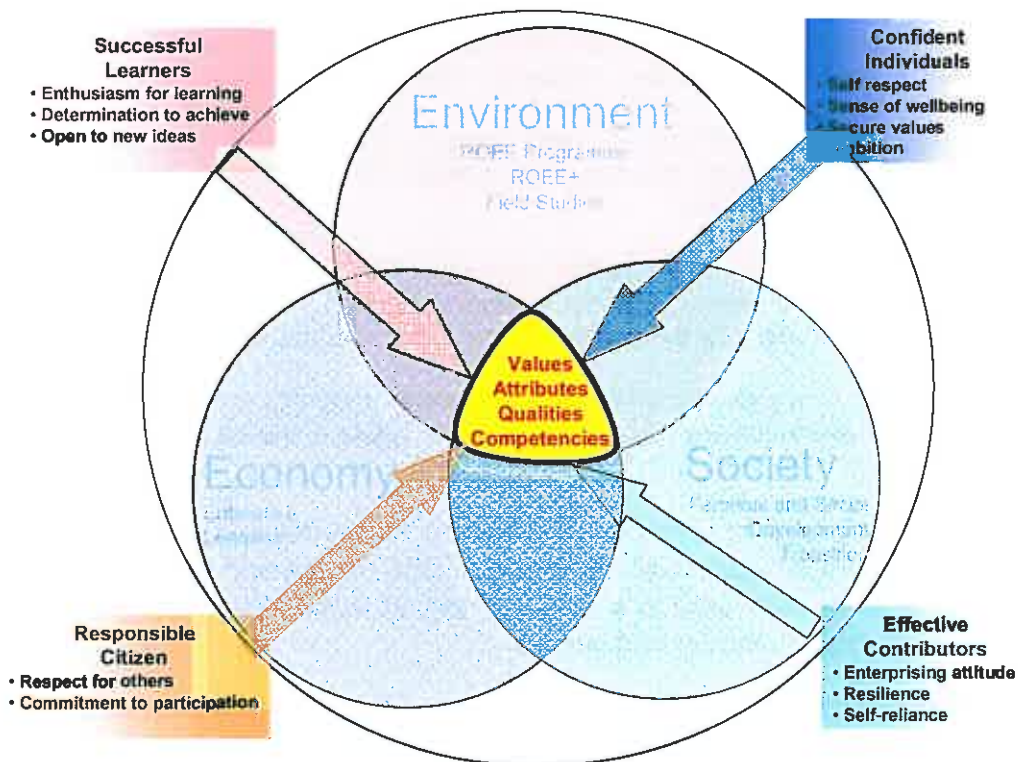
The perspective derived from this approach enables SOEC to see its work in a far broader and wide ranging context. It:

- enables SOEC to meet the aspirations of young people, providing exciting activities that are motivating and relevant to their interests. We do this in safe centres and grounds ensuring that young people are receptive to learning;

- provides SOEC with the basis for intelligent programmes that meet the needs of teachers and groups leaders. These programmes are themed and relate to, for example: eco-literacy, enterprise learning and personal and social development, to support their work in classrooms and communities;
- enables SOEC programmes to deliver the outcomes sought in Curriculum for Excellence and other cross-cutting themes such as citizenship, emotional intelligences, and sustainable development education.

All programmes develop the values, attributes, qualities and competencies found in the 4 capacities of a Curriculum for Excellence: confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors, and responsible citizens. They also support the Curriculum for Excellence adding depth, breadth and creativity to the curriculum as well as providing learning contexts beyond the classroom.

By seeking benefits through the integration of social, economic and environmental perspectives, the SOEC Programmes make an important addition to Scotland's contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-15). This holistic and integrative approach is described in the diagram below.



## **Mission**

SOEC is fulfilling its mission to deliver high quality educational services and to campaign to articulate clearly the benefits of residential experiences, outdoor activities and environmental education, to all young people and others. To reinforce this SOEC:

- ***provides the highest standards in personal and social development, environmental education, enterprise learning, outdoor learning, eco-literacy and education for sustainable development;***
- ***provides a context for exciting and safe activities, and through structured reflection and review, enables young people to transfer lessons of success and achievement to their everyday lives;***
- ***provides high quality away-from-home accommodation that is safe, comfortable and inspiring and therefore conducive to learning;***
- ***provides specific and innovative programmes for young people at risk or having been excluded and provides support for families under stress;***
- ***provides programmes for vulnerable children and undertakes preventative work;***
- ***supports teachers in the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence;***
- ***develops its Centres as exemplars of sustainable development; and***
- ***works in partnerships with others to achieve the above.***

SOEC works with around 20,000 young people every year. At an average of 5 days, that equates to 100,000 learning days. Many children are involved in our main experiential learning programmes: the eco-literacy programme (ROEE) and the Transition Programme, designed to help young people avoid the pitfalls in transition from Primary to Secondary schools. However, SOEC delivers many other types of programme meeting the needs of many different children and young people.



## **Benefits and Outcomes for Children, Young People and Others**

The start point for SOEC is what is good for children and young people. Contemporary threats to young people are well documented: sedentary lifestyles and obesity, drug misuse, dislocation from the environment, “cotton-wool” protectionism etc. Furthermore, those most adversely affected are also likely to be those children and young people who have least to fall back on. SOEC tackles these issues head-on, providing young people with experiential learning opportunities in order that they may learn about themselves, others, and the world about them.

SOEC works with young people to develop their:

- confidence,
  
- ability to make decisions in the face of complex and daunting challenges;
  
- motivation and hence be more successful learners;
  
- positive attitude toward problem solving;
  
- resilience, tenacity and determination; as well as their...
  
- adaptability;
  
- understanding of risk, risk assessment and risk management;
  
- creativity both initiating and being receptive to innovation;
  
- knowledge and appreciation of healthier and more active lifestyles;
  
- ability to reflect on their own potential and contribution to society;

- appreciation of others, their place, contribution and potential in the world; and hence relating to responsible citizenship;
  
- team work and strong communication skills; as well as...
  
- leadership qualities and ability to delegate; hence effective contributors.

Through guided **reflection and review** by specialist tutors, young people are better able to maximise the learning potential of programmes. Tutors facilitate the transfer of lessons learned in activities to children and young people; to their own lifestyles, home circumstances, future work contexts, and draw out life lessons on citizenship, emotional capacity building etc.

At another level, from these enjoyable and educational experiences in residential and outdoor settings, young people develop keen life-long interests in activities, healthy lifestyles and sports in the outdoors. They develop an appreciation of the outdoors that opens up new opportunities for leisure, recreation and work.

Through establishing **continuity and progression** through regular visits to the outdoors, SOEC conveys effectively and builds on key messages. In the context of the environment, for example, an early visit leads to an understanding of aspects of the country code. Subsequent visits lead to a fuller appreciation of activities in the outdoors, while further visits lead to an understanding of rights and responsibilities when active in the outdoors. In this way SOEC programmes are not seen as additional to, or a bolt on to the curriculum but integral to effective delivery of the curriculum.

It is important to recognise that programmes and visits to SOEC enable many learning opportunities and messages to be passed on simultaneously. Activities multi-dividend by conveying, as appropriate and when relevant, the priority messages of the Scottish Government with respect to healthy lifestyles, sustainable development, etc. as well as reinforcing specific aspects of the curriculum and values from the classroom. In this way, we replicate and amplify key messages transmitted by the Government through schools and make a significant contribution through third-party endorsement.



Therefore SOEC makes a significant contribution to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. It delivers the 4 capacities of confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors, and responsible citizens. SOEC successfully delivers in relation to cross curricula themes and well as specific subject matter. It also seeks best practice in outdoor learning through collaborative work with schools to design programmes and through involvement before and after as well as during the residential experience.

## **PART 2 - EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS**

SOEC has adopted fully the Scottish Government's strategic objectives and outcomes. By aligning all programmes and activities to deliver Curriculum for Excellence outcomes, SOEC exemplifies best practice in outdoor learning. Best practice also requires commitment to a partnerships and willingness to work in collaboration. SOEC is developing partnerships with teachers, youth workers, academics (such as the University of Dundee) and specialists (such as the Centre for Confidence and Well-being) in order to monitor, measure and improve the efficacy of its work and to deliver outcomes more effectively. Here are a few examples of SOEC's work:

### **A New Approach Delivering Across the Curriculum**

SOEC designs programmes with strong links to all subject areas. A modular approach enables all teachers to deliver subject specific and cross curricula as well as Curriculum for Excellence outcomes. Programmes are either off-the-shelf (having been acknowledge by teachers to be effective in meeting the needs of pupils such as the SOEC Transition Programme) or they are designed in collaboration with teachers and groups leaders to meet specific needs. This work is on-going with several schools but can be exemplified through the Inverclyde programme.

The Inverclyde programme was designed by SOEC in collaboration with Inverclyde teachers and advisers to deliver outcomes related to: confidence, rivers and health. SOEC is distinctive in its emphasis on both fun and effective learning. This was the first year this programme had been delivered but the feedback was impressive.

**Inverclyde Council** sought a new residential programme for over 700 pupils; the whole year group from the local authority area. In collaboration with teachers, it was determined that the programme should emphasise themes of confidence, health and rivers.

In a subsequent survey of participating teachers, feedback on learning outcomes was very good, particularly since this was the first year of the project. The survey sought assessment on a 6 point scale: unsatisfactory, weak, adequate, good, very good and excellent.

Learning outcomes were mostly rated as 'very good' and 'excellent' with confidence outcomes in particular rated by 44% of teachers as 'excellent' and a further 44% as 'very good'.

SOEC work on confidence is particularly strong. Working in partnership with the Centre for Confidence and Well-being, the evidence shows considerable efficacy of SOEC work particular with respect to optimism and positive mind set (see Annex 2.)

### **SOEC Transition Programme**

The Transition to S1 programme supports schools in delivering the Curriculum for Excellence by providing an intensive residential experience over 5 days with sessions specifically geared towards building confidence and wellbeing. SOEC is unique in being able to provide for over 200 young people at its Centres and the programme is specifically designed to support young people from the same primary school cluster as they move to secondary school.

The programme provides the young person with the opportunity to start understanding their new role in secondary school. They are encouraged to develop their self-awareness and take responsibility for managing themselves in different settings. The programme develops social skills and support strategies which will be invaluable when they move to the secondary school.

We continue to ensure that the principles and practices of the new curriculum are part of our work with young people, particularly, in the area Health and Wellbeing. This transition programme provides several Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcome that are appropriate for Level 2. Some of the Health and Wellbeing experience and outcomes we have identified that are particularly pertinent and focused on in this programme are presented below.

### **Experiences and Outcomes**

<p><b>Aspect of Learning/Development</b></p> <p><b>Self-aware</b>  <i>Opportunities to carry out different activities and roles in a variety of settings have enabled me to identify my achievements, skills and areas for development. This will help me to prepare for the next stage in my life and learning. <b>HWB 2-19a</b></i></p>
<p><b>Manage themselves</b></p> <p><b>Time Management</b>  <i>I am experiencing enjoyment and achievement on a daily basis by taking part in different kinds of energetic physical activities of my choosing, including sport and opportunities for outdoor learning, available at my place of learning and in the wider community. <b>HWB 2-25a</b></i></p>
<p><b>Communication</b>  <i>I am aware of the need to respect personal space and boundaries and can recognise and respond appropriately to verbal and non-verbal communication. <b>HWB 2-45b</b></i></p>
<p><b>Live as independently as they can</b>  <i>I am developing confidence when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning. I can communicate in a clear, expressive way and I am learning to select and organise resources independently. <b>LIT 2-10a</b></i></p>
<p><b>Openness to new thinking and ideas</b>  <i>I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss. <b>HWB 2-07a</b></i></p>



***"This is Curriculum for Excellence in action."*** Primary Head, Newbattle Cluster

***"This has been great. In 5 days, I have developed a rapport with these pupils that would have taken 3 months in school"***  
Secondary teacher with responsibility for transition

### **Young People with Specific Needs**

Other young people stay at SOEC and have specific needs that need to be met. Around 10% of all young people or 2,000 young people stay at our Centres who have physical, social or behavioural challenges in their lives. Since most come for around 3 nights/4 days, SOEC is providing services for these groups 8,000 learning days every year. A list of some of these groups is attached below.



**PLUS** groups regularly visit SOEC Centre's with disabled children and young people who attend outdoor learning programmes either as individual groups or as part of the wider school community. PLUS works with SOEC to overcome the obstacles that prevent disabled children and young people from having an ordinary social life while providing family carers with a natural break.

*"They get a lot out of the experience as SOEC caters for all the young people that we take to the centre."* **Ruth Laing, Acting Project Manager**

### **Life Changing Benefits**

Young people may arrive with the explicit intention of undertaking a specific programme but some have other underlying concerns. SOEC frequently see children and young people who have developed behaviour that are barriers to learning, relationships and health. Among one group of schools, 2 children had eating disorders. One ate only toast and the other only crackers. Both were under the dietician for not putting on weight. By their second day of their stay at SOEC, they were eating all food types in complete meals.

Another young person was the cause of concern as she had determined to be mute in school. During her stay, she started talking and was even singing in the shower. The teachers were

clearly delighted and joked that they “*couldn’t shut her up if they wanted to.*” Her willingness to talk is continuing in school today.

This evidence suggests that the emersion at a new location such as the residential Centre is important in enabling fresh-start approaches by children. These are just 3 examples of what is a regular occurrence at SOECs Centres.



### **Facilities and Tutors**

SOEC provides facilities that can be used by many different organisations and groups, and which they could not afford to own or manage themselves. Schools music groups and others welcome the range of rooms from smaller rooms for sectional rehearsals to the main halls for whole choral or orchestral events. This ensures that the facilities are popular and well used and constitute very good value for money.

However, facilities are only part of the story. A great deal depends on ability of the tutors working at SOEC who undergo substantial training through NGB qualifications etc. In a recent survey of teachers 92% of teachers rated SOEC Tutors as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'.

***“Tutors were very good and attentive to young people”***  
**Tranent SIP**

***“All the staff at the Centre were helpful and their willingness to meet the needs of our group – who can be demanding and challenging – was greatly appreciated”***  
**On Track, Liberton**

## Major Events

SOEC is a unique Scottish resource. The 3 largest Centres can accommodate over 200 young people in grounds that allow camping for many more. Centres host many major events for Scottish youth groups and other organisations. The Young Carers Festival is now an annual event at Broomlee Centre, supported by the Scottish Government, that brings 500+ young carers face to face with local service decisions-makers and MSPs.

### Scottish Young Carers Festival

The Festival allows young carers from across the country to come together to engage directly with MSPs and decision makers to highlight what they would like to see happen with regards to support and services for young carers in Scotland. The Broomlee centre is a perfect venue for the Festival as it allows the young people the freedom to roam and enjoy all the activities while the workers feel comfortable allowing them to do so. In the supportive environment that the Festival and Broomlee staff provides it allows the young people to complete these activities and come away feeling more confident. The Festival is funded by the Scottish Government and organised by The Princess Royal Trust Carers in partnership with other national carers and children organisations.



*'It's amazing, it gives us the chance to relax and not feel judged or stressed.'*

**Young Carer attending the Festival**

The second annual **YouthBank Scotland residential** took place at Dounans Outdoor Centre in Aberfoyle between 13th and 15th October 2009. Forty young grant makers from eight YouthBanks spanning from Dumfries and Galloway to Caithness gathered to take part in a range of indoor and outdoor team building activities, and other activities. The programme brings fun informal learning to young grantmakers equipping them with relevant transferable skills to take back to their YouthBanks as well as heart warming experiences and stories to share with their family and friends: what youth work does best.

## Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

SOEC welcomed the HM Inspectorate of Education Review in November 2003 as a valuable opportunity for objective scrutiny and evaluation. The Review covered around 15 key points including delivering Government objectives and meeting grant funding objectives; the efficacy of the programmes provided; feedback from customers; and the way SOEC is governed and managed. Each aspect is judged on a 4-point scale: very good, good, fair, and unsatisfactory.

The result was pleasing with all aspects of SOEC work scored as either very good or good. No areas of work were considered fair or unsatisfactory. This is a really valuable recognition of the SOEC approach.

Comments made by the HMIE review team during the course of the review include:

***“this is probably the most positive review to have been undertaken in some time”*** – referring here specifically to reviews in the voluntary sector.

***“the Business Plan is one of the best they have seen”*** – praising the widespread connections to Government initiatives and the business emphasis, with targets that are ***“ambitious but probably achievable.”***

When touring a Centre, they were ***“very pleased to hear staff talk about the activities in terms of outcomes”*** and the benefits that young people can derive from activities.

Although this review is now 6 years old, SOEC has continued to build on that Business Plan and we continue to work to realise their comment that ***“clearly the potential for SOEC is enormous.”***



## Inclusion at SOEC

SOEC also makes a major contribution to a large number of groups and organisations, many of whose children are experiencing serious physical, social or behavioural challenges in their lives. Of around 20,000 young people who stay at SOEC centres every year, approximately 10% are from organisations representing vulnerable young people. Groups stay for an average of 3 nights (4 days) therefore this equates to some 8,000 learning days for these young people.

Some of these groups and outcomes sought are listed below:

- Youth Link, a Glasgow High School, and the Aberlour Unit visit to develop their befriending scheme and build confidence;
- Yorkhill Hospital bring children with arthritis to develop confidence;
- A Glasgow secondary school bring asylum seeker youths to increase confidence;
- An Airdrie young people's support team stay to address issues relevant to young people's lives;
- An Edinburgh group brings epilepsy sufferers to have fun, meet new friends and enjoy new experiences;
- An Edinburgh bring young people from families affected by drug misuse;
- West Lothian Young Carers and the Phoenix Club bring young people looking after a parent or sibling for respite;
- Tourette Scotland bring young people to build confidence;
- Princess Royal Trust bring young carers from disadvantaged homes;
- Phoenix House bring young people going through drug and alcohol rehabilitation for team building;
- An Edinburgh youth group visit to give children purpose rather than "running the streets and causing trouble;"
- A Glasgow group bring young people who are leaving care to help overcome barriers to entering employment;
- A Drumchapel school brings erratic attenders to encourage them back to school;
- A Borders school bring young people having difficulties maintaining attendance;
- Several Fire Brigades bring disaffected young people;
- A Lothian Youth group bring young people who are socially isolated with social, emotional and behavioural problems;
- A Dundee group brings parents and siblings to promote positive adult/peer contact;

- An Alloa group bring teenagers with special needs;
- An Ayrshire group bring young people to get ready for work and build confidence;
- An Edinburgh school bring young people to build group identity and co-operation skills, confidence and enhance concentration work;
- Pollock Young Carers bring young people to have a break from responsibilities;
- A school from the north of England bring deaf, visual impaired & cerebral palsy pupils; and
- The Haemophilia Society bring young people to experience challenging activities without the fear of injury.

These are a few of the groups who stay and participate in SOEC programmes. They benefit enormously from having somewhere away from home that is affordable, secure and welcoming. Their views...

***“For many of our children this is their only experience of life outside of the city.”***

**Depute Headteacher, school in an area of multi-deprivation in Edinburgh.**

***“Everything about the Centre and the activities was excellent. The parents had a wonderful visit. Everyone requested to take part in activities again.”***

**Coalburn Parents Group**

***“Our school is in the heart of a designated ‘Social Inclusion Partnership’ (SIP) area. Therefore it is imperative that organisations such as your own [SOEC] are able to continue to offer good value for money facilities that the school can afford.....”***

**Study Support Coordinator, community high school**



## **Delivering So Much to So Many**

While delivering Curriculum for Excellence is the core of our work, it is perhaps remarkable that SOEC can deliver so much of the Governments' agenda to so many children and young people in so many different ways. This is achieved through SOEC seeing itself as a major delivery agent of the Governments' educational and social agenda.

SOEC also operates within the guidelines and frameworks set by the Scottish Government, with a view to delivering in terms of:

- the whole child – personal and social development, emotional capacity, confidence building, rights and responsibilities
- social inclusion – providing programmes for a range of groups and working with other agencies seeking to help those overcoming difficulties at school, at home or in their communities.
- providing programmes for disabled as well as disadvantaged young people and families e.g. providing respite for families, for young people at risk or having been excluded, and for ethnic groups;
- sustainable development – Centres will develop to provide learning opportunities in specific areas such as biodiversity, waste, energy efficiency and renewable energy, while programmes overall will promote education for sustainable development. We

are positive about challenges - in 2005, we received our first Eco-Centres Award and were short-listed for a Green Energy Award.

- healthy life options – we will upgrade our service provision to reinforce messages health promotion, and support efforts in key areas such as drug free lifestyles and healthy eating.



## Indirect and Ancillary Benefits

Beyond the direct and lasting benefits of those participating in educational programmes, SOEC provides many **indirect and ancillary benefits** to Scotland and local communities.

Indirect benefits extend to homes and society through programmes leading to more motivated young people able to connect positively within their communities. Parents think residential experiences are important, particularly those who live in cities who are concerned about letting their children out on the street. They value the opportunity for their children to stay at a safe place with people they trust, in order that they can take steps towards independence and maturity.



There are also benefits from SOEC successfully introducing thousands of young people to the countryside and avoiding the conflicts associated with the rural/urban fringe. Local communities derive ancillary benefits from access to facilities for local clubs and events. Such communities in rural locations would not ordinarily expect to have such facilities in close proximity.

SOEC provides access to facilities to community and youth groups, orchestras and sporting bodies who cannot afford their own facilities or for whom their own facilities would be underutilised. They are particularly when bringing together groups from across Scotland.

SOEC Centres are closely involved in their own communities. They support them in a range of different ways from providing holiday activity clubs for local children and young people, providing facilities for local drama groups and nurseries, to providing meals on wheels or chairs to schools for big events.

The 4 operational SOEC Centres also benefit their local communities. They can sustain up to 30 green jobs within rural areas and are often the largest employer in their areas. In addition, expenditure from young people and their leaders, combined with local expenditure from payroll and in purchases and supplies, results in benefits to the Scottish economy of £1.5M.

SOEC is projecting to work with 50,000 young people and could generate over £6M to the economy. Few organisations can locate and sustain themselves in these rural areas for decades. SOECs work will remain relevant to children and young people for years to come.

## How SOEC delivers the 15 National Outcomes

National Outcome	Outdoor Learning Relevance and Potential
1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe	Over 90% of Scotland is not urbanised and while most business occurs within CBDs and cities, the wider Scottish environment also contributes to business directly and indirectly. Wider Scotland is very attractive for business. Outdoor Learning is the pedagogical approach to the development of appreciation of its attractiveness and understanding of its potential to the Scottish economy.
2. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.	The wider Scottish outdoors has significant potential to develop more jobs and create new jobs. Scotland is attractive to international tourism which is increasingly active tourism. Shortfalls are appearing in existing land-based jobs (forestry, farming etc). The outdoors is the place for many sustainable/green jobs. Outdoor learning is the first step for the population to feel comfortable in the outdoors. It provides the experiences and skills for people to feel able to function in the outdoors. Outdoor learning can also emphasise creativity and innovation, the gateways to new employment opportunities.
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.	Outdoor learning supports learning in the classroom. It delivers outcomes sought in Curriculum for Excellence. It is therefore potentially a major contributor to this national outcome. Outdoor learning can also emphasise creativity and innovation, the gateways to new employment opportunities. The outdoors, our use of the outdoors, people's place in the outdoors, and the complexity and tensions arising from our activities in the outdoors, make the Scottish outdoors an exciting, visual, responsive and colourful laboratory for research.
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	Outdoor Learning is a powerful pedagogical approach that delivers the capacities and principles of Curriculum for Excellence. It is particularly powerful for the exploration of subjects, projects and themes in different contexts. SOEC is working with partners to deliver Curriculum for Excellence outcomes.
5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.	Outdoor learning is an effective pedagogical approach providing more choices and more chances for young people. It can counter some of the challenges that derived from poverty and failure in other aspects of life that hold back many children. It delivers the qualities, skills, knowledge and attributes that children and young people will need to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing world of climate change and globalisation. These qualities, skills, knowledge and attributes are composite elements of leadership. It is essential that all young people have opportunities to develop these elements early on and at regular intervals.
6. We live longer, healthier lives.	Outdoor learning is the gateway to lifelong enjoyment, pleasure and activity in the outdoors. It provides the foundation for lifelong participation in a wide range of sports, passive activities and pleasure that will improve health and extend health through our longer lifetimes.
7. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.	Outdoor learning provides valuable experiences for those facing physical, educational and behavioural challenges in their lives. It helps provide all children with lessons and skills for life, work and school, and other sustainable

	destinations. It is inherently socially inclusive.
8. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.	Outdoor learning is a powerful medium for working with children, young people and others across the full range of ages and abilities. The novel surroundings of the outdoors can offer a 'new start' for children and others at risk. It is frequently the case that those that struggle to perform in formal education, show new sides to personal and social relationship, learning and performance when in the outdoors.
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.	Outdoor learning, and activities in the outdoors provides opportunities for young people to achieve 'highs' without recourse to alcohol or other drugs. It provides steps toward tangible success and development, even "rights of passage" that motivate children and young people to avoid crime and disorder. Success in the outdoors often relies on team work, communications, peer support etc that readily cross-transfer to aspects of citizenship.
10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.	Outdoor learning enables young people and others overcome the many obstacles to use and enjoyment of the Scottish outdoors, obstacles which can affect urban and rural dwellers alike. Outdoor learning is a pre-requisite to the widespread understanding and uptake of Access in Scotland.
11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	Team work, communications, problem solving and peer support feature regularly in outdoor learning. These skills and other learning outcomes from outdoor activities can be readily transferred and provide valuable sequential learning opportunities for other contexts, at home, at work, in school, and within the communities.
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	Outdoor learning makes clear the direct connections between safeguarding and protecting the environment, and using it and enjoying it. Issues of sustainability and sustainable development should be inherent in many aspects of outdoor learning.
13. We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.	Outdoor learning focuses on the unique ecosystems, natural heritage, history and culture of Scotland. It helps young people consider complex issues, solutions, Options and their impacts on the land and the people.
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.	The local and global environment must be relevant to children and young people and their interests if they are to be motivated positively toward it e.g. by reducing their impact. Outdoor learning introduced and embeds relevance. This is particularly important if they are to adapt and make changes to their life styles and working practices.
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.	Outdoor learning is delivered by a mixed economy of providers: local authorities, voluntary/charitable organisations, youth and church groups. This mixed economy can have positive effects on quality and continuous improvement. It can facilitate adaptation and innovation in a rapidly changing world.

## Feedback from One Group of Young People

This feedback came from a few of a much larger group of young people. It is shown in this format to convey the extent to which young people themselves see the benefits and learning outcomes of an SOEC programme. It is roughly split into 3 groups: general comments; reference to specific likes; and learning outcomes identified by pupils.

*We're writing to thank you for a wonderful trip we had at SOEC. We all had a smashing time.*

*We thought the trip was amazing in fact better than amazing.*

*Thank you for all the fun at SOEC... you really experienced my life... I really loved it.*

*You made my experience even better than I thought it could be. The activities were the best I have ever done.*

*It was a brilliant exciting experience. I think it was actually the best experience of my life.*

*I'm starting to enjoy outdoor activities.*

Some of us loved the time we had jumping and lying in the mud! We also learned a lot about working in a team.

I enjoyed the Mohawk walk because it made me realise how much team work and communication it needed.

I liked the tree climb because we learned to encourage each other and do not give up.

My favourite activity was the tree climb because it made me more confident. I never knew I could climb so high.

The food was also excellent... we definitely didn't go hungry.

It was great fun and a great experience. What I learned was you can't do everything yourself.

I liked the tree climb because it was so exciting just to get to the top of the tree. I liked the night line because it was good team work and I think we did well.

I enjoyed the nightline because we got all dirty. I really enjoyed everything and was very sad to leave. I learned to work in teams and how to work in teams and how to get along with each other.

What I learned, as well as so much more, was that outdoor activities can be just as fun as indoor.

The thing I enjoyed was putting the blindfold on and being the leader for some of it.

The funniest thing was when a boy from St Patrick's sang 'I'm a Barbie girl' in front of everyone in both schools and everyone was laughing.

I learned how far I can push myself with my fear of heights and that I can climb better than I thought. I can climb as much as I want (until my fear of heights kicks in). I overcame my fear of heights. I think we all did very well and our team skills are better than before and if we went one more time we could get even better skills as a team.

I learned that I like to get dirty and work with ropes. I don't have fears but the people who were afraid of heights overcame them.

My favourite was the crate climb because I was awful at the start but then I got to the tenth one.

I learned I could do more than I thought I could. My favourite was the Flying Fox because I could feel the wind on my cheeks when I jumped off the platform.

I learned about S...; that he is really fun to work with.

My favourite activity was the river walk because I seen a little frog.

I thought to myself that I going to have one chance to do this do I am going to make it amazing and so I ran and jumped off I was so proud of myself.

I also learned that C..... was more adventurous than I thought he was.

The funniest part was when Miss M... out teacher, went on the Tree Climb!

I learned that I can climb better than I thought. I thought I would only get a quarter of the way up. I managed to climb half way up. I felt really good about myself.

Our group tried the flying-fox it was really scary but I had a go. I managed to jump off. I was really proud of myself. I never believed I could do it as I am scared of heights. I have learned that if I try I am better than I thought.

I learned that if I push myself to do something I can do it.

I learned that I can do things that I didn't know I could do. Like the flying fox I wasn't sure if I could do it up there I thought again and slid off it felt great I thought I was going to fall when I just flew forward; it felt great I thought my team work was great and A... helped me a lot to.

My team work developed well and I was very proud of myself and my team mates and I could help them on the orienteering. I found out about other people. I found out that R.... is a real dare devil.

My favourite was the Mowhalk Walk because we got to work on the ropes as a team. If you help each other by passing ropes to the person closest, and they pass again, the team can get round better and easier instead of trying to stretch out and grab the ropes by yourself. When one team went round, the other team would 'spot' for us and catch us if we had fallen. When 1 person from the team falls, we switch around so everyone gets a go at each thing.

I learned to trust people when we were doing the activities. At first our teamwork was really poor but then T.... taught us to work together and the job was easier. At the end our teamwork developed very good. I overcame my fears by saying to myself I can do this.

I learned that I can overcome my worst fears if I tried. My tutor, S... taught us to trust each other and communicate as a team.

I learnt that even the teachers enjoyed their stay at SOEC and enjoyed the activities too.

I learned that I was more adventurous than I thought I was and that I could overcome fears. My favourite activity was either the flying fox or the river walk because they are both very, very exciting.

I also learned that it was easier to make my bed.

I can do things if I put 100% into it and say I can do it in my head.

I really enjoyed the nightline. I was a bit scared but it ended to be my favourite activity.

I overcame my fear of heights by saying to myself "Come on, I can do this!"

It was hard to trust other people especially in the dark. I learned I had to listen and trust my group especially my tutor. I felt more confident after being and I am more willing to try new things.

My favourite activity was the river walk. I drew a picture of a mini-raft that my friends and I built. It's made out of two pieces of bark, a stick and a pine leaf tied together with a piece of string. I learned that when people know how to communicate with you better, they are a lot nicer to you, especially when you're nice to them.

I don't get into as many fights with S..... any more.

I liked turning salt water into steam then into normal water.

*Thank you for making my time at SOEC so extra special. All the activities were so much fun and doing them with you was so enjoyable. I had such a good time.*

*On some of the activities, I just shut my eyes then opened them in the air.*

*Thank you for the fun we all had. I'm not scared of heights anymore.*

*I will always remember the food.*

*It was great to stay with our friends. Even the teachers enjoyed it! It's not really every day you see a teacher climb a tall tree!*

*The thing I will always remember never to say "I can't".*

*It was great fun – I realise I was born to be wild.*

*Thank you for teaching us activities to do and not just to play with our ds, wii etc.*

*It really was a BIG ADVENTURE. P.S. I'm always on time now and I'm still singing.*

## HOW SOEC DELIVERS CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Government aspirations are to enable young people to become...

<b>CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS</b>	Confidence building and self esteem have been central to outdoor education since its inception. From character building to team building, the leading edge today is emotional intelligences.
With	
Self respect	SOEC programmes develop an appreciation that success comes through participation and perseverance in facing and overcoming personal challenges. This aids development of respect for themselves and others.
A sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being	Starting with safe centres and outdoor spaces, with staff they can trust, SOEC are able to introduce children and young people to new activities and challenges. With the right balance of success over failure, children and young people build confidence, derive a sense of control in new contexts, and develop appreciation of their potential. All have positive effects on their physical, mental and emotional well-being.
Secure values and beliefs	SOEC staff treat all children and young people with respect, provide opportunities for them to air their views openly, encourage active listening, and involve them in decision-making processes.
Ambition	SOEC programmes are designed with many outcomes and goals, and varying degrees of challenge whether cognitive, physical, individual or team. All SOEC programmes foster a healthy attitude toward ambition.
<b>And able to</b>	
Relate to others and manage themselves	SOEC provides opportunities for children and young people to develop positive relationships, and participate in organising and planning, in terms of their programme or daily life at the Centre. They are offered choices in their activity programmes, at meal times, and during social periods. From this they achieve a measure of independence relative to their ability.
Pursue a healthy and active lifestyle	SOEC programmes emphasise to young people and their friends that 'highs' can be achieved through their own efforts and endeavours. Exposure and familiarity reveals the wonders of the Scottish outdoors, providing alternatives to the dangers of deriving 'highs' from chemicals or anti-social behaviour.
Be self aware	SOEC Programmes provide opportunities for young people to become self aware and develop appreciation that their safety and well-being, and that of others, is linked to their personal awareness and behaviour.
Develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world	Children and young people are encouraged to openly communicate and discuss their views, opinions and beliefs. They are encouraged in this by SOEC tutors who are trained in review and facilitation techniques.
Live as independently as	Residential experience gives young people a first opportunity to be independent, away from home, without a member of their family and this fosters independence.

they can	Subsequently it is possible to build on this through various levels, up to expedition, where the young person has increasing personal responsibility.
Assess risk and take informed decisions	SOEC programmes bring young people into situations of perceived/managed risk. Experiential learning refines a young person's understanding of evaluation, risk assessment and judgement.
Achieve success in different areas of activity	SOEC programmes frequently occur in areas outwith the norm of the young person. They create opportunities for different emotional and physiological learning and the generic lessons can be cross-transferred to different contexts.

<b>SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS</b>	SOEC programmes support the work of teachers, and their work in the classroom in relation to Curriculum for Excellence outcomes, subject specific, thematic and cross-curricula outcomes. With a child centred and positive cooperative learning ethos we reinforce key messages delivered in schools.
<b>With</b>	
Enthusiasm and motivation for learning	Outdoor Activity Programmes have the innate advantage in that they are fun and therefore highly motivational. SOEC tutors are aware of the significance of outdoor education as having the potential to create life-affirming opportunities for all young people, and therefore continually refresh the fun aspect of outdoor learning.
Determination to reach high standards of achievement	Many SOEC programmes highlight personal challenge and reward in achievement. This can be graded for the full range of abilities from beginners upward. Through review of personal experience SOEC tutors facilitate the transfer of success in achievement to other contexts e.g. studies or work place.
Openness to new thinking and ideas	SOEC programmes engage children and young people in unique activities and unusual settings and this makes them receptive to new ideas. The nature of the activities creates a level playing field for children and young people of mixed abilities enabling children to participate on equal terms. For this reason programmes are effective in enabling children and young people to realise their full potential.
<b>And able to</b>	
Use literacy, communication and numeracy skills	Communication is a major element in all SOEC programmes. In anticipation of the broad range of career options and increasing emphasis on solving complex problems and multidisciplinary working, SOEC actively seeks to integrated numeracy and literacy into their outdoor learning programmes.
Use technology for learning	SOEC refurbishment plans include sustainable energy plans comprising energy efficiency measures and energy generation from renewable energy technologies. These have been designed to be accessible to young people in order that they may learn about the science and technology of energy and renewable energy, and gain understanding of their relevance in Scotland.
Think creatively and independently	Many SOEC programmes are designed to introduce young people to problem solving. This tests an individual, placing them into situations which require the use their imagination and creativity for success. This enables a young person to

	realise that their potential and contribution is far greater than they believe.
Learn independently and as part of a group	SOEC programmes are about facing individual and group challenges and also peer support and co-operative working. Programmes emphasise how 'more heads are better than one' and provide a voice for every individual within the group.
Make reasonable evaluations	SOEC programmes bring young people into situations of potential and perceived risk. Increasing experience of this refines a young person's understanding and assessment of risk and judgement.
Link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations	SOEC programmes can be designed to develop step-wise experiences to success. These can be reinforced by the transfer of skills to similar exercises, and through skilful review to wider experiences in school, the workplace, and in life.

<b>RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS</b>	SOEC programmes encourage empathy and appreciation of other people and the environment. With new friends, they begin to see the merits of people with different qualities and views. Similarly, by engaging young people in the outdoor environment, they develop more holistic views and appreciate more sustainable approaches.
With	
Respect for others	SOEC residential experience creates opportunities for young people to develop empathy with friends and peers. Fun activities can break down barriers. Shared experiences and new friendships develop respect for others.
Commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life	Young people are encouraged to participate in an activity to the level that they choose ('Challenge by Choice'). Tutors and their peers can assist in taking them further and share in recognition of achievement. This experience highlights the worth and value of participation which can be transferred to other walks of life.
<b>And able to</b>	
Develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it	Outdoor learning opportunities vary from generic environmental education to specialist subject matter e.g. geography, geology, botany etc. Outdoor education reinforces work in the classroom, showing it for real, in 3D and in colour. All pupils learn about basic global systems (hydrological cycle etc). They also learn about the distinctive features of the Scottish countryside. Having developed a deeper understanding of Scotland it is then possible to appreciate its uniqueness and splendour in the eyes of others.
Understand different beliefs and cultures	SOEC works with a wide range of community and ethnic groups, from Scotland, the UK, Europe and beyond. We aspire to bring together Scottish children and young people with from other parts of the world to work and play together, and to share experiences, in order that they may develop a better understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

Make informed choices and decisions	SOEC programmes and the residential experience provide opportunities for children and young people to make choices at various levels of complexity. They are encouraged to discuss the implications of their decisions, on others, on society and on the environment.
Evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues	Outdoor learning programmes offer the opportunity for children and young people to discuss contemporary issues and their impacts, cause and effects on Scotland and beyond. They can reflect on global issues (climate change) consider national level issues (e.g. pollution) and observe local impacts (e.g. indicator species such as lichens). We ROEE and ROEE+ for older children and are developing others with continuity and progression in order that children and young people can evaluate contemporary issues at different ages.
Develop informed, ethical views of complex issues	Education for sustainability brings young people into contact with complex issues and the search for solutions based on the integration of economy, environment and community. SOEC tutors lead structured discussions, allowing children and young people to express their feelings and views, and culminate in positive responses and options that empower children and young people in the face of complex issues.

<b>EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS</b>	The synergies between attributes required for the world of work, and those required for being effective in a world facing environmental change, are very close. Outdoor learning has a successful track record of preparing young people for both of these worlds.
<b>With</b>	
An enterprising attitude	SOEC programmes develop attributes such confidence and work with emotional intelligence; team working and peer support; effective communication; change, adaptation and opportunity (through competitive challenges); decision making, risk evaluation and management; problem solving and creativity and innovation, resilience – all attributes required by business and industry. Outdoor Education can instil these attributes in a safe and fun environment from which young people realise that challenging situations are within their scope.
Resilience	SOEC programmes can be designed with varying degrees of difficulty and frequently such that success is achieved through learning the lessons of previous failures. Experiential learning highlights that success is achieved through effort and perseverance.
Self-reliance	The residential experience creates opportunities for young person to learn to live comfortably away from home, away from the luxuries they are accustomed to. This can be developed and extended through SOEC programmes and beyond (e.g. expeditions), creating opportunities to learn how to live and survive under differing degrees of difficulty and challenge. With skilled tutors it is possible to give young people the illusion of challenge whilst retaining high standards of safety.

<b>And able to</b>	
Communicate in different ways and in different settings	Communication is a major focus of several Outdoor Education activities. It can be emphasised through sensory deprivation e.g. blindfolds. It can be the primary requirement of an activity thereby essential for success. Communication along team work, decision making, planning and organising etc.. is a composite element of leadership and outdoor education has a strong track record in developing these qualities and skills.
Work in partnership and in teams	SOEC Programmes place emphasis on teamwork. It is possible to emphasis different roles within teams, interdependence of team members, or that effective team work is essential for success etc. This is why industry continues to identify team work is an essential requirement in business in Scotland.
Take the initiative and lead	SOEC programmes give young people increasing levels of responsibility and opportunities to develop leadership and the skills necessary for leading
Apply critical thinking in new contexts	Building on the unique surroundings of the outdoors, and through use of motivational activities, SEOC tutors instil a positive approach to exploration. These experiences can be transferred to other areas of living and learning. The realism of 'living out of doors' activities, for example, develop critical appraisal.
Create and develop	SOEC adopts a positive approach to creativity and innovation. Programmes and tutors encourage children and young people to explore and develop their ideas.
Solve problems	Problem solving, through games or 'in the field' is a major component of all SOEC programmes.

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