

Inspire>Aspire

Global Citizens in the Making: Findings from a Process Evaluation

2015



John
Templeton
Foundation



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

Research on Evaluation and
Developmental Systems Science Lab



Project Background

The Program

The **Inspire>Aspire: Global Citizens in the Making** values poster program is a character education program for 10-18 year olds that was developed from Sir John Templeton's *Worldwide Laws of Life* which he first published in 1997. In 2014-15, it took advantage of the strategic opportunity of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Inspire>Aspire has been implemented in over 60 countries and has reached over 100,000 youth. Inspire>Aspire is focused on creating educational experiences that foster the virtues of generosity, reliability, future mindedness, joy, purpose, curiosity, and humility.

Inspire>Aspire uses a unique poster template and web-based resources. The program engages students in a process of self-discovery where they reflect on their personal values, strengths and areas of improvement. Pupils select an **inspirational figure** to help them explore what **kind of person they want to be** and their **vision for a better world**. Bronze, silver, and gold awards are presented at a culminating ceremony.

The Research Study

Inspire>Aspire was evaluated in two parts. First, REDSS Lab at Montclair State University collaborated with Character Scotland to determine the program's **theory of change**, the hypothesized processes through which the program affects youth. The collaboration yielded a pathway model that visually represents these processes of change. Second, REDSS Lab conducted a **process evaluation**, to assess various components of the program.

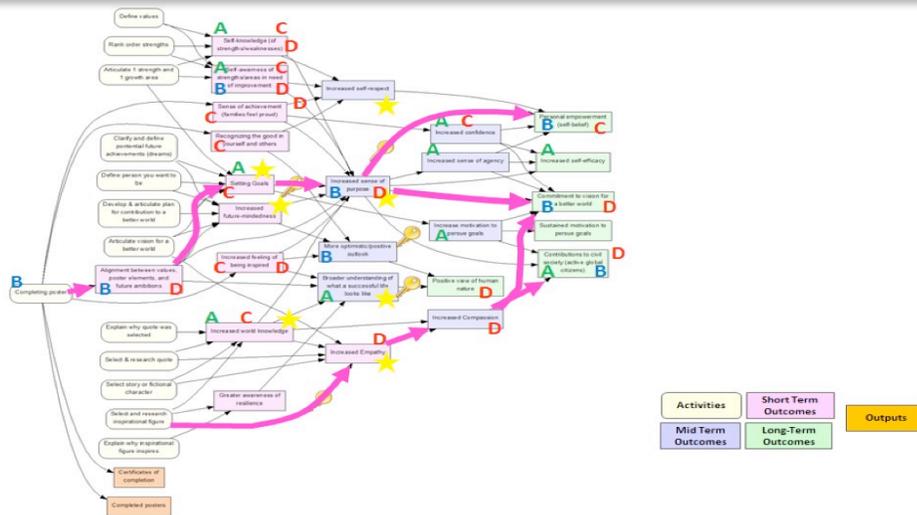


Figure 1. The theory of change for Inspire>Aspire. The yellow and pink pathways represent the core storyline of Inspire>Aspire.



Methods and Approach

A variety of data sources were used to evaluate Inspire>Aspire: teacher interviews, pupil interviews, pupil surveys, as well as posters completed by program participants.

Pupil interviews and surveys were completed before and after pupils participated in Inspire>Aspire. Survey measures examined positive youth development (PYD), goal setting, future aspirations, future orientation, and sense of purpose. Poster quality was assessed by a systematic scoring tool for posters based on degree of completion, development, and alignment of poster responses. Teacher implementation approaches were compared to pupil poster quality and outcomes.



Research Findings

Quantitative Findings:

Nearly all pupils (94%) who participated in Inspire>Aspire generally completed the entire poster. A strong association was observed between the values selected and pupil's future aspirations (alignment of these poster sections ranged from 41% - 84%). In addition, there was also a strong connection between pupils' visions for a better world and their plans to personally bring that vision to life (these sections were well matched in 76% of posters).

Pupil survey data revealed very little change in outcome scores between Time 1 and Time 2. Reasons for stability across the pre- and post-survey measures could be attributed to the small sample size, measurement error, and/or the relatively high survey scores at Time 1 (thus, there was little opportunity for growth).

Qualitative Findings:

The findings from the qualitative analysis of teacher and pupil interviews helped enhance the quantitative results and offered insight about emerging trends. Teaching style and experience implementing Inspire>Aspire varied widely across the teachers interviewed. Teachers with more experience with the program tended to focus more on supplemental activities during their instruction. Students whose teachers spent more class time on the poster spent more hours overall working on their posters than did students whose teachers did less classroom instruction related to the poster. Despite differences across teachers in implementation and delivery, students overall demonstrated understanding and development of values and virtues, such as connection and competence, although the actual word "values" was sometimes difficult for students to understand. In addition, goal setting, as well as the optimization of stated goals, were often articulated by pupils. Goal setting was strongly connected to various other concepts, such as future-mindedness and sense of purpose.

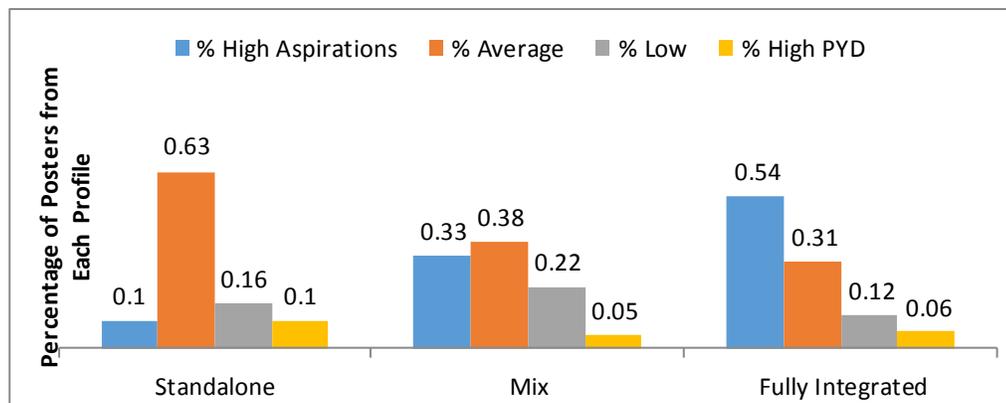


Figure 2. Those teachers who fully integrated Inspire>Aspire into their curriculum (far right bars) had pupils with the highest aspirations, as measured by the quality of their posters. Those teachers who did not integrate Inspire>Aspire into their curriculum (far left bars) were most likely to have students with “average” quality posters.



Lessons Learned

- ❖ The highest quality posters were produced by pupils whose teachers spent significant time on poster related activities in class but did not immediately have pupils work on the poster template. Preparing the students to work on the poster by using activities that lay the foundation for the poster elements is important.
- ❖ Posters are of higher quality when the poster is completed in school rather than at home.
- ❖ Teachers who fully integrated Inspire>Aspire into the broader curriculum tended to have pupils with higher-quality posters.
- ❖ Teachers suggested that Inspire>Aspire dovetailed nicely with their courses on religious and moral education.
- ❖ The resources offered to both teachers and students can be further enhanced to be more geared to the abilities of younger students, as well as to address the needs of teachers who are interested in additional implementation guidance.

About Character Scotland:

Character Scotland is an educational charity led by Chief Executive Ronnie Davidson. It was formed in 2009 by a group of academics, educationalists and entrepreneurs. Their aim is to support the cultivation of character and values in Scotland, with a particular focus on children and young people.



Character Scotland

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About REDSS Lab:

The Research on Evaluation and Developmental Systems Science (REDSS) Lab explores questions related to developmental science and program evaluation and planning from a systems science perspective.

Co-directors Dr. Jennifer Brown Urban and Dr. Miriam Linver, Associate Professors of Family and Child Studies at Montclair State University, engage in interdisciplinary projects and actively collaborate with researchers and practitioners across the US and in Scotland, including those at Cornell University, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, The Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and Character Scotland. REDSS Lab members come from a variety of disciplines including education, health and nutrition sciences, family and child studies, and psychology.



REDSS Lab

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