

# Growing Young Leaders

## A community-wide approach



# Year One

## The Story So Far

## The beginning

In 2008, the Department of Children, Schools and Families awarded Leap Pathfinder status as a leader in our field. We began rolling out a unique programme to treble our impact: building on tried and tested projects; working with young people in schools and communities; delivering from twin bases in London and Leeds; targeting areas that experience high levels of youth conflict, community tension and crime.



Here we look at the first year's achievements, the successes so far, and the early indicators of the long term impact the work will have on the young people involved, on the adults that work with them, and on the communities in which they live.



### **A unique community-wide approach to youth conflict**

Leap works with young people in schools, and in the communities those schools are at the heart of. This saturation approach enables us to achieve maximum impact, reaching every corner of a neighbourhood, creating a generation of young leaders. It leaves a genuine and sustainable legacy of prevention, transforming young lives.

*"The School has had a reduction in high level conflict since Leap's work.  
We don't know where the work begins and ends."  
Head*

### **Creating safer schools – developing peer mediation**

- Working with clusters of schools in tightly-targeted geographical areas
- Taking a 'whole year' approach, training every Year 9 student
- Working with both students and staff to transform a conflict culture
- Providing opportunities for young people to learn new skills and share ideas
- Working with young people affected on a daily basis by aggression and violence
- Providing progression routes for peer mediators and developing responsibility
- Establishing an embedded, student-run Peer Mediation service

*"The course has helped me how to control anger. I really enjoyed it. Come back again."  
Year 9 student*

### **Sustaining safer neighbourhoods – growing young leaders**

- Providing accredited opportunities for young people at risk to develop conflict skills and cascade them to their peers
- Helping young people create a safer life for themselves and their peer group
- Enabling young people to make a positive contribution to their communities
- Creating progression routes for peer leaders

*"If I had never met Leap, my life would be totally different. I'd be in a loop ending up  
at Square 1 repeatedly. It's really helped me progress and develop."  
Young Trainer, 18*

### **Building a legacy of prevention – training and supporting frontline practitioners**

- Working in partnership with professionals, agencies and service providers
- Sharing learning and providing training in tried and tested techniques
- Offering career pathways to young people, developing future frontline staff

*"It's great to work with people who genuinely live what they teach."  
Deputy Head*

### **Working within established policy frameworks**

- Aiming High for Young People
- Every Child Matters
- Preventing Social Exclusion
- Supporting young people's Volunteering opportunities
- Fostering Strong and Prosperous Communities
- Preventing violence and truancy with the creation of Safer Schools
- Tackling Gangs and Tackling Youth Violence Action Plans
- Community-based Multi Agency working

*"Leap are smart, committed, planned and determined."  
Head*

# The Story So Far

## Peer Mediation in secondary schools

- 2 regional clusters developed
- 6 schools worked with
- 1,140 students trained
- 43 teachers and support staff trained
- 14,675 student training hours delivered

In Yorkshire, we have worked with 3 schools in Keighley: Greenhead High, Oakbank School and Holy Family School. In London, we have worked with 3 schools in Waltham Forest: Lammas School, Leytonstone School and Tom Hood School.

## Introduction to Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation

- 46 Year 9 classes from 6 schools completed 2 day introductory course
- 1,140 students trained
- 11,400 student training hours delivered

Each school's entire Year 9 were taken off timetable to complete a 2 day, onsite, highly participatory 'Introduction to Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation' course, giving students an understanding of what causes conflict and how to begin to resolve it. They looked at how to develop personal responsibility and make positive choices in their lives. Form tutors took part in the training with their young people.

Schools have been warm and welcoming, with the staff involved commenting on the high quality of training received. Schools have offered excellent levels of support for the development of a sustainable Peer Mediation scheme within the school. Feedback has reflected really positive experiences, a holistic view of the project within the school, and requests for further developmental training for staff.



*"The year 9s have really changed since the training – I've noticed they behave quite differently and positively."*  
Head

*"I've learnt that conflict can start from something small and grow to something big because people aren't communicating."*

*"I've learnt that people should talk about their feelings more."*

*"I've learnt that I have lots of red flags and I can choose how I react to them."*

*"It was all wicked. A fun way to discuss an important issue. Awesome!"*

*"I'd love to do this again."*  
Year 9 Participants

*"Excellent response from pupils. Several pupils came out of their shell and developed greater confidence in themselves."*

*"I've heard quiet members of the form speak out in a group for the first time."*

*"My form has never seen me like this - I'm human and have reactions just like them."*

*"The atmosphere was superb, trainers were fab."*

*"The opportunity presented for reflection was great."*

*"It was a fantastic opportunity for the form to bond – there are not enough opportunities for this."*  
Year 9 teachers



### Specialist Peer Mediation training

- 127 peer mediators completed 5 day Peer Mediation course
- 127 peer mediators achieved OCN Level 1
- 3,275 student training hours delivered

Students who successfully completed the 2 day Introductory Course were given the opportunity to progress to a 5 day training in Peer Mediation. Delivered by Leap trainers who are passionate mediators themselves, the course gave an understanding of mediation skills and processes, developing a strong group of peer mediators to help create a safer school. The teachers learnt alongside the young people.

*"I'm really ready to be a mediator now!"*

*"I want to be a mediator so I can help other people to resolve their conflict."*

*"I've worked with new people during this training that I never liked before. Now we can work together and we've become friends."*

*"I am proud of myself for doing such a good job this week."*

*"I enjoyed working as a team and learning more skills."*

*"It was ACE!"*  
Year 9 participants

*"I really liked the way the team of trainers worked together and mirrored a way of working. I liked the methods and clear learning progression. Great course – I also learnt things I can use."*  
Behavioural support worker



### **Staff training in Conflict Management**

- **43 teachers and support staff take part in student workshops**
- **18 key staff participate in specialist training**

Safer schools can only be created by investing in staff. In addition to attending all courses with their students, we provided a full day of training to the key staff from each school to support the set-up and maintenance of the Peer Mediation services.

*"The way I interact with my colleagues has changed since starting work with you. This change will gradually trickle down to the young people."*

*"The young people and staff have a common language."*  
Deputy Heads

*"I have a clear action plan to go ahead."*  
Year 9 Teacher



### **Developing supportive clusters of schools**

- **26 members of staff attended cluster events**
- **20 young mediators attended cluster training days**

Schools have really enjoyed building external links with each other, and working in supportive clusters. Assistant Heads and staff representatives were facilitated to meet and look at community-based issues together, as well as share best-practice and consider other areas in which they could work in partnership. Staff from across a cluster have attended specialist training in Working with Challenging Behaviour. Heads are looking at joint bids for commissioning further work, and have committed to working in partnership to measure impact in the wider community. Young mediators have had a chance to work with their peers in other schools, sharing their learning, addressing issues of territorialism and breaking down community barriers.

*"It's been great to meet other teachers and share ideas and support."*  
Teacher

### Quarrel Shop programmes in the community

- 2 Quarrel Shop programmes delivered
- 13 young people achieved OCN Level 2
- 780 training hours delivered
- Conflict resolution workshops delivered to 200 young people in the community

To really transform a culture of conflict in schools, Leap believes you have to work with the communities they are at the heart of. Quarrel Shop is a tried and tested project which has been incredibly successful in developing young leaders. Over 60 hours, the intensive, out of school accredited training course uses discussions, games, exercises and role-play to teach mediation, what conflict is, and how to begin to resolve it. Participants then get practice opportunities to design and run workshops on conflict resolution for other young people, or facilitate mediation in a real situation, helping them to become responsible leaders in their communities.

The young adults selected for this programme face many challenges, coping with conflict in their lives, in their families, their work, education and neighbourhoods. By doing this course, they find a voice to express themselves, a goal to work towards, and a real opportunity to learn to become a conflict specialist. It gives a progression route through Leap, and acts as a stepping stone to further education, training, or directly to employment. Leap itself currently employs 2 previous Quarrel Shop graduates as full time workers, 9 as apprentices, and 12 as young trainers.

7 young people in Waltham Forest and 6 in Keighley have gone through the intensive 12 week course. A diverse group, they supported each other to overcome barriers to progression, demonstrated strong facilitation skills, and achieved a huge increase in confidence. The graduates went on to deliver conflict resolution workshops to another 200 young people in their own communities; in youth clubs, colleges and schools. They have met with key borough and local authority assistant directors, YOT and Connexions teams, and other community based organisations.

*"It's an experience that you won't forget. It can change the way you think and live."*

*"It has been the only positive thing in my life over these months, and has taught me to be more positive in my approach to life and things."*

*"It has given me the confidence that I can write good. I never thought I could write before but getting such good feedback on my portfolio has really boosted my confidence."*  
Quarrel Shop participants



## Young Trainers Project

- 10 young trainers began nine-month programme
- 210 training hours delivered so far

Leap fundamentally believes that young people are not the problem; they are part of the solution. Central to our community-wide approach is the desire to develop young leaders, offering supported career pathways to those who have participated in projects and found a vocation.

10 young people from Yorkshire and London have been recruited to the Young Trainers Project. All of them have previously graduated from either Leap's Quarrel Shop or Leadership programmes.

The young trainers have completed a team-building weekend and individual reviews, and are now undergoing a 9 month training programme. This will build on the experience they have already gained in conflict resolution skills and turn them into confident, skilful practitioners. They learn from working in teams of experienced Leap trainers, attending intensive training sessions, and cascading their skills to others by delivering training across our projects. They have already been involved in the delivery of Peer Mediation in schools, and Quarrel Shops.

At the end of the programme these young people will have the opportunity to work for Leap and other organisations as freelance trainers, with a specialism of youth and conflict. 12 young trainers have already qualified from previous projects, and are now delivering work for Leap. Putting their skills back into their communities.



*"I came to Leap through a Quarrel Shop, and it helped me as a person to reduce conflict within myself. It helped me understand my own conflict better – I was angry and taking it out on the wrong people, like my family.*

*After I joined Quarrel Shop, I was able to learn some skills that I could use to support myself and others. I became a member of Peerlink, Leap's national network for young mediators, and attended a few events. I then became a member of the regional steering group – we did things like workshops, gave presentations. I gained confidence, and utilised skills I learnt in Quarrel Shop.*

*I've gained confidence, developed as a person, and like seeing the development in other young people, even if it's a small one. I am now on the Young Trainers programme, and it's made a massive difference to me. It's helped me focus on my career and my future. My skills are developing – my confidence, public speaking, presentation skills. I know being a trainer will help me in my career – maybe even management!"*

Young Trainer, 18

### Investing in community partners

- 34 meetings with 37 community partner organisations
- 59 community practitioners trained

For a community-wide approach to conflict resolution to work and be sustainable, it needs the understanding and the support of a wide range of community partners.

We attend community cohesion meetings in Waltham Forest and Keighley, and are part of Keighley's community cohesion action plan. We have met with Heads of Youth Services, Police Forces, Education Authorities and Schools, and work closely with local community support officers, youth workers and voluntary organisations.

Leap believes in building communities by skilling the professionals who already work there. Specialist training days provide an understanding of the work of Leap, and an introduction to conflict resolution. They also give an opportunity for networking with others in the sector, and a chance to build collaborative working practices.

*"Please, please, please have more of these training days. Very informative for sharing good practice, practical tips to take away. Great fun, and a real learning experience."*

*"I have some really good ideas to take back to practice, but the day has made me reflect on myself too."*  
Training participants



# First steps, deep footprints

## Schools worked with in the first year tell us:

- The impact of a taskforce of 16 trainers working with an entire year group is massive – the whole school notices, and the work is deeply embedded
- The whole school has a different approach to dealing with conflict
- Form tutors gain a new insight, a chance to see students in a different light, and go on to forge better relationships with their tutor groups
- Students and teachers have a different way of working; reciprocal, respectful
- Students gain in confidence, communicating better, learning new skills
- Students who have never spoken before in class speak out; students who are often absent engage well and develop a new attitude to learning
- Staff and students have genuine motivation to develop peer mediation
- Working in clusters provides a welcome opportunity to share best practice



**...developing self-esteem, pulling back from crises**

"Without exception, all the trainers were inspiring and professional. We were able to leave discipline to them, but as teachers weren't usurped. The exercises are easy to grasp; concepts like 'red flags' are a really helpful way of explaining things to people. I've seen huge differences in the students that did the training, seeing them pulling back from potential crises. Realising that people trust them is incredibly good for their self esteem. They've learnt they have the ability to manage themselves."

Assistant Head Teacher

**...changing attitudes, getting serious**

*"The training's made me think a lot about my attitude, how I like being in an argument. Then the other day I was about to argue with my friend and this time I thought – what's the point? It's really changed my attitude, made me see I could be good at something. That I could be the one who changes stuff. Get serious about peer mediation, really make it happen. You feel special because we're going to get something done."*

Year 9 student

**...gaining new skills, a fresh way to work**

*"It was very positive – inspiring, interesting, and informative. Really thinking outside the box. I work with children with behaviour issues – in trouble, late, absent. It's a barrier to learning, and the trainers have given me another way to work. It's given me a lot more new skills – like mediating between 2 parties – and enhanced my existing ones. I'll be an advocate for the scheme, helping the young people to empower themselves. And I'd definitely delegate some of the work to young mediators – I'd trust them completely."*

Learning Support Unit Manager

**...growing in confidence, making a difference**

*"I've got more confidence and will stop and talk to people – my communication skills are better. Sometimes it's a bit long and slow and pupils don't want to be mediated, but I'm really excited, I'm going to get something done. I'm really enthusiastic now and I wasn't before. But now I can get involved and really do something."*

Year 9 student



(Inside back cover)

### **Tiffany's story**

Tiffany rarely attends school, and is experiencing some very difficult times at the moment. Her teacher is surprised – and delighted – that Tiffany completes the course. She engages and participates really well throughout the 2 days, and to everyone's amazement signs up to take part in the 5-day training to become a peer mediator. Her feedback brims with her new enthusiasm.

*"Well I like the course v. much because I have been going through a ruff patch and I had just cum back into school and I didn't know wt I was going to be doing so thank you."*

### **Nqobile's story**

Nqobile speaks very little English and mainly communicates through her friend. Working in a small group, one day she makes a suggestion for a word-storm that the group are doing. One of her classmates says *"Wow. That's the first time I've ever heard her speak"*. A tiny step, a mighty leap. A deep footprint. Nqobile takes her new-found confidence back with her into the classroom. Aiming higher. Reaching further.

### **Your story**

To find out how we can be part of your story, contact:

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*"Leap worked with us 15 years ago and I'm so glad they are back.  
We have fostered their way of working with young people."  
Assistant Head*



## Leap Confronting Conflict

Leap is one of the UK's leading experts in youth and conflict.

For twenty-two years, Leap has run lively, engaging, challenging group work programmes and training, exploring the causes and effects of conflict, and teaching techniques for managing it creatively.

Leap works directly with young people – in schools, in communities, on urban estates, with young people involved in gangs. Many programmes are accredited by the Open College Network.

Leap works with frontline professionals engaged with young people.

Leap runs training courses for adults, accredited by Leeds Metropolitan University through the Leap Academy.

Leap offers specially tailored training and consultancy to teams and organisations.

Leap publishes high-quality, innovative, easy to use manuals and resources.

Leap believes that conflict is inevitable in the lives of young people. But it doesn't have to be destructive. It can be the force to create change.

For us young people are not the problem. They are the solution.

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