



Introduction to Working with Young People

Reaping the benefits

19 year old Kawsar has been involved with The Factory since his mid-teens.

Kawsar

It gives us the opportunity to do things that we don't get to do usually when we're younger, we didn't have much money or anything and we never used to organise things and whenever we used to do anything, we'd just be dossing around the streets or playing football. But when they came along, they were giving us ideas, 'oh, do you want to do this?' Go out for a day, go ice skating, go Laserquest and do all sorts. And that, to us, was like, 'well, you know what I mean, we don't usually get to do this, so, come on, let's go.' So, it gives you opportunities and, on top, they do all these workshops. And they make you learn things. They give you advice on things when you ain't got a clue what to do, they're there for you. So, someone to go to when you need anything, basically.

Andrew

But Nottingham Uni's alright? You should sign the back of them.

Kawsar

Yeah, I forgot about that.

Andrew

Sign the back.

His experience with The Factory may have helped him gain his place at University.

Kawsar

It's made me develop my communication skills, help me become a more confident kind of person, see wiseness, you know, see what's actually good for me, and not to bother with all the dossing around and all that, it's helped me come to university, because I thought about it, and they've give me advice on it, so, all in all, I think it's helped me become a better person, kind of thing. Because I was a bit of a – when I was younger, I wasn't all-understanding.

Andrew

I might pass myself off as you. You do get a lot of freebies, as students.

Kawsar

You don't look like me, man. You're not as good looking.

Andrew

I'm not good-looking.

He thinks youth workers need particular skills to make a project like The Factory work well.

Kawsar

Oh, they need patience, for a start. They need to be chilled out, relaxed, you know, take things easy, not take anything offensively. Because a lot of the kids, they like to mess around, they like to, you know, take the mickey now and again, you know, they like to pick on you, and all sorts. So, they've got to take it, basically. They need to be more confident, yeah, very confident, and relaxed, basically, and they shouldn't show that, 'oh yeah, I'm like someone bigger than you,' or anything, they should just be on our level, yeah, be able to come down on our level and talk to us, basically.

He has an excellent relationship with Andrew, the project leader.

Andrew's different from a lot of older people, because he knows how we are, and he understands, like, culture-wise, and all sorts, and he's not there telling us, 'oh, do this, do that.' And he's always giving us opportunities and giving us advice. And when you take it, it makes you realise, 'oh, this guy's giving good advice,' and this and that, and you get to like him, he's a good guy.

Kawsar's involvement in the project has taken him to places he'd never thought of visiting.

I went to Wales, I went to the Black Mountain, the Brecon Beacons, in Wales, and we did loads of activities, we did gorge walking, abseiling, climbing, raft-building, all sorts. And it was all very good, because you learned, too, you know. Because, we all went as friends but basically there was a few people in the group that we didn't know, so, it was good for us, giving us those team-building skills and, you know, we got to talk to each other and how to work things out, because a lot of the activities we had to do, we had to work in a group, and, you know, learn and talk to each other without the other group hearing and, you know, we had to do a lot of discussions and things like that. So, it was good to, you know, to learn more off each other.

Some of The Factory's major achievements arose from their input to Vox Pop, a youth forum with the local council.

When we first went into the Vox Pop, we were just told it's some meeting and it's going to be real big, but we just thought it was going to be something that, yeah, they always say – the politicians always say one thing but never listen to us. But, when we went, it was quite a huge impact, we were there saying, our teachers in our school don't do anything when people are racist and, you know, we ain't got a youth group, and we don't get any of this and we haven't got a youth group, and all sorts. And, basically, when they heard things like that, it was more serious, basically. And the County Council leader, he was straight on the case straight away, and the college we used to go to, there was a bit of a problem there, he sorted that out.

They also won funding for a dedicated youth centre close to the site of the factory where the project first started.

What they decided to do is, the Moira Centre, a place where they usually hire out, so we can chill out and have meetings there, this and that. They've decided to build an extension on the side and they're giving us £100,000 to do so. So, basically, with more targeted towards us, so it'll be open when the Moira Centre's closed, so we'll be able to go there and chill out, and it will be more targeted towards our youth group, so, yeah, it's all good.