

## **Chapter 12:**

### **The Stoneleigh Project and its Influence on the Lives of the Young Participants After the Retreats**

#### **Introduction**

The last chapter concluded that many young people felt that they finished their retreats feeling liberated and empowered to act in a variety of ways in their private, social and public lives. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the transfer of learning from residential outdoor education settings to everyday life is thought to be problematic. This chapter begins by summarising the elements of the Stoneleigh Project that followed the retreats. It will then examine whether and in what way the retreats made a difference to what occurred on the Stoneleigh Project programme after the retreats and what were the consequences for the young people.

The Stoneleigh Group set out to provide a programme that supported young people in becoming agents of personal and social change. This chapter will examine how successful the programme was at transforming the distribution of power and resources to which the young people had access. For some of the partners in the Stoneleigh Group empowerment meant supporting young people in realising their personal potential. For the Stoneleigh Group it also meant supporting the young people in challenging the values and practices of society that were perceived as the causes of the inequitable distribution of power and resources in the first place. Whether the young people applied agency in this way and what factors encouraged this to take place will also be considered.

#### **The Stoneleigh Project Programme after the Retreats**

Comments in the annual reviews of the Stoneleigh Project indicated that the programme following the retreats was 'less well developed' than the Stoneleigh Group's plans intended and commented on several occasions that this needed to be addressed. This indicated that, whilst the retreat programme might be supporting the aims of the Stoneleigh

Group effectively, the activities of the supporting organisations was less consistent from the Group's point of view. The Stoneleigh Group relied on the mentors and other youth workers within each organisation to support the activities intended to be the focus of the programme at this stage. In practice the young people were supported in continuing the volunteer work they had already been doing. The nature of this work depended on the ethos of each youth work organisation and the opportunities they provided. This in turn had a strong influence on the pathway taken by many of the young participants within each organisation. Whilst the evidence suggests that the integrated curriculum of the retreat programme was student centred, it also indicates that the developmental influence of the voluntary organisations was more in keeping with a collection type curriculum. The participants were most likely to follow a pathway in keeping with the values of the voluntary organisation.

However, for the young people, there was a consistency across the voluntary organisations as they continued to explore their identities in the light of the concepts of the retreats. As a result the diversity of the trajectories that resulted from the Stoneleigh Project retained a coherent meaning for the participants based on this collective experience of the retreats. The young participants continued to report that they felt a sense of agency in their lives and described the outcomes in their personal, social and public worlds in favourable terms, frequently referring to the retreat experiences as pivotal in supporting them in the making of these choices.

Diagram 1 below is based on an analysis of the pathways taken by the 65 young participants involved in this research. The 12 participants presented as case studies in this thesis are mapped onto the diagram and represent the various pathways taken by the whole group. A summary of the pathways taken by these 12 young people, and that builds on Table 4 (Chapter 10, p. 280) is given in Table 5 below. The starting point for this analysis is the nature of the social networks available to the participants during the early phases of the Stoneleigh Project as reported by them. In many cases this remained the same as that indicated by the young participants before the programme. For a few, such as Gordon who moved from a strong network within his sub-culture and a chaotic one in the wider world to a fluid network, this changed considerably.

**Table 5: Summary of the Effect of the Stoneleigh Project on the Identity and Trajectory of the 12 Case Study Young People**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Social network category.</b>	<b>Social capital prior to Stoneleigh Project: family, education and social networks.</b>	<b>Perceived identity at start of Stoneleigh Project.</b>	<b>Perceived identity at end of Stoneleigh Project.</b>	<b>Trajectory during and after Stoneleigh Project: social mobility, transition type and transition path.</b>
Ben (M)	Fluid	Previously a young person and then a volunteer with a Stoneleigh Group partner.	Recently appointed as full time youth worker.	Youth worker.	Lateral mobility. Personal transformation. New identity more established by Stoneleigh Project. More confident.
Brad (M)	Chaotic	Intermittent family support. Truancing from school. Intermittent social networks including adult contact.	Gang member. Nature boy.	Gang member. Nature boy. More confidence in the latter.	Downward mobility. In transition. Skilful navigator within sub-culture but no sustained exit ramp. Complex road map of transition with no car and no navigation skills.
Clive (M)	Fluid	Family support. Good educational outcomes. Good social networks including adults.	Graduate.	Development trainer.	‘Lateral’ mobility. Personal transformation. Exploring map. Has unusual destination in mind and struggled to find route.
Gordon (M)	Strong within sub-culture. Chaotic outside.	No family links. Poor educational results. No social networks outside of sub-culture.	Gay. Lapdancer.	Student.	Upward mobility. Personal transformation. Stuck in dead end (though originally perceived as a clear and healthy route) then reversed out to find a new pathway and destination. (NB Also shifted from strong to fluid social networks.)
Justin (M)	Weak	Largely unknown.	Truant. Unemployed. Drug user.	Ex-drug user. Volunteer youth worker.	Personal transformation. Returning to previous destination to confirm on the right path. Exploring map with more confidence.

Mac (M)	Fluid	Largely unknown.	Volunteer youth leader.	Youth leader	Personal transformation. Consolidating arrival at destination.
Martin (M)	Weak	Not in touch with family. In sheltered housing. No qualifications or work. Suffers from depression.	Homeless and unemployed.	Unemployed.	Upward mobility. Personal transformation. Found permanent housing. Seeking psychiatric help. Holding on to new friendships.
Paul (M)	Weak	Largely unknown but no educational outcomes.	Truant. Unemployed.	Unknown	Personal transformation. No clear direction but eager to explore. Found the way to begin journey.
Rose (F)	Weak	Restrictive family support. Moderate educational outcomes. Good social networks including adults.	Unemployed. Volunteer youth leader.	Youth leader	'Lateral' mobility. Personal transformation. Clear destination but initially unable to get under way. Set out to explore map and found route and a clear destination.
Sarah (F)	Strong	Family support. Reasonable school results. Good social networks including adults.	Daughter, student, aspiring to join police service.	Trainee police officer. Volunteer youth leader.	Reproduced family pathway. Delayed rail journey.
Steve (M)	Weak	Weak family support. Good school results. Poor social networks.	Truant. Volunteer youth leader. Casual worker.	Volunteer youth leader. Casual worker.	Downward mobility. In transition. On car journey but lost way. Sees destinations but not able or motivated to head for them.
Trevor (M)	Fluid	No family links. No educational results. Good social networks including adults.	Truant. Unemployed.	Youth leader.	'Lateral' mobility. Social transformation. Clear 'bypass' route successfully navigated.

The second element that I have considered in Diagram 1 is the direction of the social mobility of the young participant. I suggest that there were 4 distinct pathways in this context. For the few participants that were recruited with strong social networks the participants reported maintaining and using these networks to achieve an upward mobility

from their marginalised situation to an established educational or work-based pathway. Sarah characterises this path as her description of her restored confidence led to an internalised commitment of the pathway to joining the police service that she initially reported as overly challenging and imposed upon her. This resonates with Evans and Heinz's (1995) 'strategic transition pathway' retaining the train journey approach to Furlong and Cartmel's (1997) journey metaphor. In my view structural factors in her personal and social worlds have retained her advantage in relation to class and professional status. The lack of confidence that she described as placing her at risk was readily overcome and she retained her original strong social networks. It is possible that she encountered and overcame structural constraints in relation to gender but this does not feature in her accounts of her transition.

Those young participants with weak or chaotic social networks followed 2 pathways. A few, characterised by Brad and Steve, described trajectories that can be understood as downwardly mobile moving further away from their aspirations. They can be described as exhibiting Evans and Heinz's (1995) 'wait-and-see transition' behaviours. This small group confirm Bynner's (2005) claims that structural factors remain a dominant influence on the trajectories of marginalised young people. In these cases a combination of historical, family, educational, peer group, geographical and employment factors were all at play.

However, a larger group, characterised by Paul, Rose, Justin and Martin, can be understood as following a lateral pathway. The Stoneleigh Project provided them with an alternative way forward from that which had been problematic. In these cases their weak social networks were the consequences of either family breakdown or social mobility or both and included drop-outs from higher education. As examples of Evans and Heinz's (1995) 'taking chances transition' they illustrate the costs of social mobility and the potential of youth work interventions such as this to support young people at points of personal transformation in their trajectories.

The fourth group, Clive, Trevor, Mc, Gordon and Ben, I suggest had fluid social networks, and also took the lateral mobility pathway. Perhaps best representing Evans and Heinz's

(1995) 'step-by-step transition behaviours'. This group developed effective new social networks and capitalised on them to achieve personal and, in the case of some of this group, social transformation.

The third element in Diagram 1 relates to the aspirations of the Stoneleigh Group to 'create agents of social change'. By and large the Stoneleigh Project did not achieve this outcome. The evidence suggests that the majority, all from the group that I have described as laterally mobile, did achieve a considerable element of personal transformation. Only a few of these, typified by Trevor, became involved in social transformation. I will discuss below how, as indicated above, I think that this was largely due to the collection style approach of the voluntary organisations supporting them. Only those concerned with radical social transformation were able to support young people in acting radically in this way.

In relation to agency and social change two smaller groups were also identified. The first, those I have termed upwardly mobile, and who described themselves as making effective transitions into adult life, can also be understood to have reproduced the social norms of their family following 'conventional' trajectories. It is interesting to note that, like Sarah who represents this group, all these adult roles were concerned with service to others.

The last group are those from weak or chaotic networks and who became downwardly mobile. In my view none of the narratives of this group can be interpreted as transformative or having led to transition to adulthood. Some remained in touch with the Stoneleigh Project, perhaps, like Steve, even becoming dependent on it or on the voluntary organisation hosting them. The remainder, like Brad, as far as can be determined, disappeared from the Stoneleigh Project and any contact with a voluntary organisation. In these cases it is less clear what trajectories they took but, in the case of Brad who I have chosen to represent this group, and for whom secondary data exists from youth workers still in touch with his family and peer group, engagement with support services or family was not maintained, he became homeless again and involvement in the activities of local gangs increased.



Whilst the Stoneleigh Group was only partially successful at achieving its aim of creating agents of social change I suggest that it was an effective programme at supporting young people in fluid networks and some young people in chaotic and weak networks in achieving personal transformation. I also suggest that this was achieved by supporting them in pathways involving lateral mobility. In the cases where participants came from strong social networks the Stoneleigh Project was understood as helping the participants on their pathways even if this did not achieve the goals of the Stoneleigh Group. Of some concern are those participants with weak or chaotic social networks who were not supported in an effective trajectory towards adulthood. A more detailed interpretation of some of the participants developed for this thesis as case studies follows.

Returning to the stories of the four young people described in Chapter 10 (Sarah, Steve, Brad and Gordon) illustrates how, despite diverse personal and social contexts, becoming agents of change in the transformation of their identities persisted as a goal for many of the young people. As with the conversations during the retreats, and as has been commented on in Chapters 5 and 8 concerning the role of informal education and youth work, the narratives they told of their transitions continued to involve the personal, social, and public worlds of the young people.

In Chapter 10, I described how Sarah had wanted to join the police service but thought she was losing confidence in herself. She was afraid this plan might fail. After her first retreat she returned to later programmes, first as a host community member and then as a mentor. She also attended the forums and the second conference as a presenter. Sarah did join the police service.

Sarah claimed the Stoneleigh Project sustained her work ethic as a service ethic at a moment when her self-confidence was failing and her own social networks did not support her. As a result I suggest that she was restored to her conventional trajectory into adulthood. Whilst Sarah's narrative of her experience of the Stoneleigh Project focussed on her public world it also referred to the influence of her social world, her unsupportive friendship group, and her family, on her identity at a critical moment. What it also revealed

in later interviews with her was that her father was in the police service and Sarah was also resolving personal issues of identity as she attempted to define herself in relation to her family. During the first retreat she attended she confided that she was afraid of letting her father down by failing to be admitted to the police service and thought that not applying was a safer path. The first retreat that Sarah attended helped her to restore her confidence in her knowledge of herself as distinct from her family's aspirations for her and so, she claimed, restored her sense of direction. She highlighted the way she was listened to and the way she was treated like an adult as significant impacts on her confidence in this restored sense of self. The later retreats that she attended as a host community member and then a mentor she claimed helped her to develop the knowledge and skills needed to feel capable of tackling the public role to which she aspired.

In the first retreat that Sarah attended her knowledge of her self as worthwhile in her own right was encouraged and respected. In the later retreats Sarah valued the knowledge she gained from performing in roles of responsibility. The youth workers could not have predetermined the content of this knowledge or the meaning attached to it by Sarah. In both situations Sarah had determined what was important to her. In addition, the co-operative inquiry of the evaluation process provided a means by which the value of the retreats, as Sarah understood them, were made explicit by her as her experience was unfolding. In Sarah's view, this active participation by the other participants in working with her on the meaning of the retreats added significantly to the effectiveness of the experiences. Sarah is a good example of the way in which the perception held by the young people of the opportunity and the ability to recount their experiences to significant others was important to them. The narratives told by the young people included their hopes for the future and this was a critical aspect of being able to act on these emerging possibilities as is illustrated by Sarah.

In Chapter 10, I described how Steve had dropped out of university. His involvement in the Stoneleigh Project involved two programmes as a young person and one as a host community member. He also undertook much of the computer-based work for the Stoneleigh Group preparing presentations for its conferences. He attended both of these as a presenter as well as all of the forums. At the conclusion of the research Steve remained a

volunteer with the youth organisation he had been with throughout his involvement with the Stoneleigh Project and was still moving between temporary jobs which he thought of as unfulfilling.

In an interview Steve made a link between his difficult family circumstances and what I suggest were his weak social networks and his perceived lack of confidence. Like Sarah he was successful in education. However, what he believed marginalised him was a combination of his loss of confidence and his feeling that he would not find work that meant something to him. He claimed that the retreats had given him the personal confidence to address certain issues in his family life and that this was, in his view, a step in the right direction. However, whilst he thought that the experiences of the retreat and the shift in his family relations had given him renewed confidence to pursue a youth work career and not return to university, he had yet to be successful at interview. Like Sarah, he claimed that, by returning on retreat, he was developing the skills needed to enter the career of his choice. This was a view shared by the facilitator of the retreats as well as Steve's mentor.

It was good to have Steve back this year and in a very different capacity and see his progress towards leading. Last year he attended as a young person and the Camas experience influenced his choice to leave University after completing his first year in architecture to follow a career in youth work. He had specific responsibilities for the group whilst travelling to Camas, the cash budget for fuel, food and tickets. I also noticed how much he volunteered to run sessions and was paying attention to group management. He said he learnt a lot about the practicalities of being a leader and did not find the residential so relaxing!!

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However, his mentor felt that, unlike Sarah, Steve was developing a dependency on the Stoneleigh Project, as, his mentor claimed, he had not been able to develop new social networks that supported his new sense of himself.

At the conclusion of the research Steve had only managed a partial transformation in his personal life. Outside of the Stoneleigh Project he had been unsuccessful at creating a social network. He can be described as changing his networks by distancing himself from his family so that they became more fluid but also weaker. I suggest that Steve's perception of himself had given him the knowledge to understand his situation but it had not given him the skills or the resources to make all of the changes he desired. It may also be a factor that, unlike Sarah who aspired to a conventional adult work role already established as a pathway to maturity in her family, Steve was attempting to make a break with the expectations and traditions of his family. He thought that alternative social networks to support his own sense of his identity were difficult to construct outside of the Stoneleigh Project until a new job was forthcoming. Whilst Steve, like Sarah, had developed a new self-knowledge he was unable to sustain this identity outside of the Stoneleigh Project.

It is useful to understand the task of the young people after the retreat programmes as a pedagogic task in which they are the educators seeking to inform their social networks about their new identities and aspirations. In this case Sarah was able to renegotiate her identity with her family and friends. Steve, on the other hand, whilst managing to negotiate a distance between himself and his family, was unable to develop the social networks or the communication skills to express himself to these networks. It is also possible these networks, both family and friends, did not have the recognition codes with which to 'hear' Steve and so respond to his attempts to transform himself. There is some support for this idea. Steve's girlfriend prior to the Stoneleigh Project was also a young person involved in the programme; Rose. She recounts how moving on from a relationship with Steve was part of her process of transforming her identity. In her view Steve was part of what had been restraining her from moving forward. This suggests that Steve may have been unable to express the difference he felt within himself to others. For Steve, and young people like him, the Stoneleigh Group or the voluntary organisation he was a member of, provided critical social networks that maintained his sense of himself but were unable to support him in developing networks for himself until, it was thought, he found an appropriate job. Work, for Steve, was a significant, perhaps an essential, mechanism for bringing about the social mobility he desired.

Chapter 10 introduced Brad as a homeless gang member with a love of the woods. On the retreat he rarely spoke and would not make eye contact yet he attended the second conference as a presenter before disappearing, it is believed, back into his homeless state.

Brad had rejected the public (educational) and personal (family) worlds that failed to provide him with support. Youth work has provided an intermittent substitute. His mentor claimed that, for Brad, natural history was a way to sustain a positive connection in his mind with his father at the same time as experiencing himself in a more positive way. Brad provides another example of the unpredictability of what knowledge will be of value in the Stoneleigh Project curriculum and for what that knowledge will be valued. It also illustrates how the retreat was nevertheless able to respond to Brad's needs and to support him in both his personal and social worlds. It was able to do this alongside people from widely different backgrounds and learning substantially different things from the Stoneleigh Project.

However, what I suggest is that the chaotic networks of his family and peer group continued to disrupt efforts to help him. The benefits that Brad saw in the Stoneleigh Project and the voluntary organisation offering him continued support lasted for over 6 months. After that his mentor lost touch with him, his father was reported to have evicted him again, and it was thought he was living homeless and had returned to using and selling drugs. It is not entirely clear but probable that Brad did not transform his personal circumstances. The networks holding him to a life he considered dysfunctional may have been too strong and the new ones too weak. Nevertheless his mentor, Ian, was not disheartened. In his view he believed it would take several attempts for Brad to escape from his situation. What mattered, he claimed, was that the knowledge of a person Brad wanted to be had been developed, rehearsed, and liked by Brad and that he knew that there were places to go where he could be like this. Brad still lacked the confidence and sufficient skills to maintain his new networks or express his new sense of himself to sustain a different trajectory on his own. Perhaps the step from one social network to the other was too big without some support to help him to reject that path. Ian was basing his optimistic view on his knowledge as a youth worker that, for young people in Brad's

situation, another crisis was very likely to re-introduce him to the professional services that could pick up the work with him again.

Gordon was the gay lap dancer introduced in Chapter 10. My notes recount a period of his involvement in the Stoneleigh Project after the retreat programme in which he had participated. I had been staying at Camas in part to observe a Stoneleigh Project retreat and in part to attend a Camas advisory committee meeting to report on some aspects of my evaluative work for them.

I, along with several members of the Camas community, was accompanying the members of the Camas advisory committee in the minibus to the ferry terminal on their way back home. It was raining steadily as it had been all day. Heather was driving. A few miles down the road we saw a strangely dressed figure looking very bedraggled. It was Gordon. He was dressed in his 'goth' clothes of leather boots and trousers hanging with chains and dotted with studs. The only other item of clothing he wore was a black string vest. His face was made up with black makeup and his hair badly dyed black. The dye and makeup were running down his face and neck. He was clearly very cold. His thumb was out to hitch. When he saw that it was the Camas minibus stopping he gave a huge smile and quickly accepted the ride even though it was going to the ferry before returning to Camas, a journey that would take a couple of hours.

He sat between me and a member of the Camas committee. First he explained that he was running away to Camas. Having landed on Mull he couldn't remember if Camas was to the left or right and how far. He had already spent several hours in the rain hitching in both directions, each time a little bit further hoping to see something he recognised or meet someone who knew where Camas was. He was keen to tell us how, unlike home, nearly every car had stopped and offered him a lift and how friendly everyone was chatting to him.

He then told us why he was running away. He explained that he was trapped in a personal and work situation because he needed a place to stay and money. His

partner was the owner of the club and, despite many promises, never gave him more responsibility or enough money. He was becoming suspicious of his partner's motives and felt exploited more and more. He said he was beginning to think that, although he liked dancing and the feeling he got because he was good at it, the more he felt comfortable about being gay the more he felt what he was doing was seedy. So this morning he had decided to run to Camas and planned to ask to stay for a while until he could sort out in his mind what he wanted to do.

At the ferry terminal the committee member who had been sitting beside Gordon and, along with me, asking gentle questions and encouraging him to talk, took me aside and commented that he had told Heather to send him home. He stated that this was a good example of the kind of young person that he did not want to see crossing the boundary between being a guest at Camas and becoming a host community member. Back at Camas Gordon washed all the dye and make up off by plunging into the sea and changed into borrowed jeans, T-shirt and sandals. He was unrecognisable.

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Heather did invite him to join the community. He stayed for the remaining three months of the season. A year later he applied and was accepted to read history at a London university. Gordon was the only young person from the Stoneleigh Project to ask to join the Camas host community after a retreat there.

For Gordon, who was described in Chapter 10 as struggling with his sexual identity and attempting to break free of a situation that he was increasingly coming to understand as abusive, the different social networks offered at the retreat provided a way to break out of his situation and re-orientate his life to one that supported a different identity. In this case Gordon was marginalised because of his sexuality and not because of his social or educational background. The crisis in his personal life was a sufficient trigger for him to use his skills to find a new social environment and to articulate his hopes for himself. In this case the social world he had run away to join was a potential problem as some members of that world were prepared to judge him inadequate or inappropriate as someone

who might join it. There was an attempt to uphold the social norms that would maintain the marginalised position of a gay man in society. This highlights how significant and unusual the power and equity relations at Camas and on the other Stoneleigh Project retreats were in creating new possibilities for some marginalised young people. Once Gordon had re-orientated himself, he applied for and gained a place to read history at a London university. It is interesting to note that, given the violent nature of his personal history, his special interest was in the history of violence.

The trajectories after the retreats were particular to each individual. For some, such as Sarah, the Stoneleigh Project volunteer work with the partner organisation was fulfilling and demanding. Others, such as Gordon, moved on to new situations relatively quickly and described these new roles as most significant for them. A few, such as Steve, despite finding the situation incongruent with their aspirations, remained where they were and described themselves as still feeling powerless to influence their circumstances. In Steve's case, his mentor reported that he felt that his trajectory, whilst still weak held more potential for a constructive outcome at some future point as a result of his experience of the Stoneleigh Project.

According to the mentors these various pathways were not determined by the efforts or the approach of a particular mentor or organisation. Rather, the mentors claimed, they appeared to reflect a sense of direction on the part of the young person. Sometimes, as in the case of Steve, the lack of apparent change in relation to work masked bigger changes that were occurring within the personal or social life of the young person. Sometimes, as in the case of Brad, they reflected influences on the direction of a young person that appeared stronger than the youth organisation could challenge. The follow-up programme was thus understood to be more haphazard than the Stoneleigh Group had hoped.

That the pathways taken by the young people were thought of as steered more by decisions taken by them than by opportunities provided by the youth organisations they belonged to were perceived by the Stoneleigh Group as a weakness in their programme. However, this was not the perception of most of the young people. Many of them reported this as a strength of the programme. They perceived the act of taking responsibility for finding a

direction in life as an important outcome of the Stoneleigh Project. Many of them claimed that, at their ages, moving on from a youth organisation was an important next step and a positive outcome.

This suggests that the philosophy of the Stoneleigh Group, whilst distinctive in the retreat programme, was less effective at influencing practice within each partner organisation. The interpretation of the evidence summarised in Diagram 1 and Table 5 contradicts the beliefs of the mentors and the Stoneleigh Group. As indicated above I would argue that, once the young people and their mentors were within the culture of their host organisation, the philosophy of that organisation re-asserted itself in relation to the follow-up opportunities. The exception to this was the follow-up weekends. These were well attended by young people and mentors. The young people regarded them as a critical space in which to continue to develop and express personal narratives and to recount any personal actions that had already occurred. This was a view endorsed by the mentors and facilitators.

The narratives given above have been chosen to illustrate the range of responses that young people had to the Stoneleigh Project retreats. In Brad's case the effect was like that of a respite from a troubled identity. In Steve's story some personal transformation took place but was difficult to sustain. In Sarah's accounts the young person was supported in reproducing her expectations for her trajectory to adulthood. In Gordon's situation that trajectory was substantially transformed. However, in every case the young people claimed to have benefited from the power to develop, express, and have confirmed knowledge about themselves, their personal and social worlds, and their visions for their futures. As Bernstein suggested, the young people experienced the integrated code of the retreat programme as giving them the power to construct and give meaning to their developing self-knowledge.

I would suggest the Stoneleigh Project provided a handrail for the pathway for all four groups of young people, though this may have been more effective in some groups more than others. I would argue that it restored or sparked off a sense of agency for them in the construction of their adult identities. I would claim that the approach of the retreats had the potential to support the young people in their trajectories to a significant degree. However,

whether this support led to the reproducing or the transformation of the social order was substantially influenced by the approach of the voluntary organisation supporting the young person during the follow up programme. It is this outcome, which I explore next, that will determine whether the Stoneleigh Group's claims to a radical approach and a radical outcome are justified.

### **Agents of Personal Change**

An additional narrative of the post-retreat phase from the research I conducted in the later stages of the Stoneleigh Project illustrates further the way in which young people felt they had more agency and how they expressed this to transform their trajectories to adulthood. In the first account the transition of Rose (see Table 5) involved her personal, social, and public life. Diagram 1 indicates how her pathway characterises those participants with weak social networks who became laterally mobile and who, I suggest, achieved a significant degree of personal transformation finding a pathway to adult life congruent with their values.

Since I have been back from Cae Mabon so much has changed in my life because I took control of my life. When I was at Cae Mabon I had already put my house up for sale and was considering doing something with my life but I had not decided what. Whilst on the residential I chatted with a lot of different people about what I enjoyed and what I wanted to do in life and it helped me realise that I wanted to live in the peak district. The talks that I had with people gave me the inspiration and courage to take control of my life and to change it because I was unhappy. As soon as I got home from the week I applied for a job at the Endeavour Sheffield office and here I am now working and living up here. It was really hard at first to move away and leave behind all my friends and family and the social circle that I had been living in. I knew I wanted to be here but I was unsure whether or not I was strong enough to see it through. Every time I felt lonely or upset I would think about Cae Mabon and the magical experience that I had and it helped me to be think more positively towards life again. I am very much enjoying my new life in the Peak District, my job is great fun and really challenging and have made lots of new friends by joining

different outdoor clubs. I believe that if had not been on the Stoneleigh residential I would never of found the courage within myself to move away.

Another aspect of my life that has changed is that I decided to go and meet my really grandparents so they could tell me all about my real father. I have known form the age of eighteen that my dad was not my biological father. At the time when I found out I was very hurt and upset and I didn't want anything to do with any of my family as I felt that they had betrayed me and that everything was a lie, I just didn't know how to trust them anymore. I managed to come to terms with it and start living my life again. I never really thought about my biological father until I was at Cae Mabon. It was the night of the solo and I chose to go up into the woods, I wasn't sure if I would stay out all night so I thought I would just see how I went. I as led on the floor in my sleeping bag looking up at the trees swaying in the wind and listening to the wind hollowing and the rain falling around me. When I started to think about my family and the relationships I have with them all and the dynamics in which we all work. When I started to think about my biological father, I suppose I had never really thought about it before, as I knew it would hurt and I would get upset. This time though I felt so relaxed and at peace with myself that it just felt natural to think about him. I started asking myself questions, like I wondered if I had any of his characteristics or looks and if I had any half brothers or sisters. I suddenly started to panic and decided to go back down to Cae Mabon for the rest of the evening. It took me a while to get the courage to think about the subject again but when I did I finally decided that I needed to know about him, so I knew who I really was and where I came from. I thought it would answer a lot of the unanswered questions that I had been asking myself all my life. So I talked to my mum about it and she helped me get in contact with my real grandparents. (As my biological father had died when I was younger). I have been to see them and I spent hours listening to them talk about my father and this whole other family that I have. I had so many questions to ask them but when it come down to it I just sat there shocked and unable to speak for most of the night. I have kept in touch with them through email and I will be going to see them again soon to ask all the questions that are buzzing around it my head.

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This narrative, together with those previously reported, highlight a number of themes related to the impact of outdoor and personal development programmes on the identities and trajectories of young people. These are reviewed below.

### ***The Significance of Overt Intention***

In Chapter 3 I discussed the claims made by a number of authors that the transfer of learning does occur and does contribute to the construction and re-construction of identity. These authors claimed it is supported by certain conditions prior to and within the outdoor experience. Both Sibthorp (2003) and Tucker (2003) claim that having a specific intention, in the case of the Stoneleigh Group, the questions ‘who am I, what do I believe in and where am I going?’, is a significant factor in constructing meaningful outcomes from an outdoor course. In my research every young person had the three questions posed by the Stoneleigh Project in the front of their minds whenever the retreats came up in conversation. They were typically used unsolicited in informal and formal interviews and in focus groups to frame the discussions during and after the retreats and especially on the follow-up weekends. They were also widely used in daily discussions and, on the later retreats, to provide a theme for each day. The participants claimed that these questions not only provided a focus for learning but also encouraged them to act on what they had learned.

### ***The Role of New Social Networks***

Neill and Dias (2001) comment on the value of both peers and adults in supporting learning that leads to the re-construction of identity and the resilience of that identity. I would argue that the narratives quoted in Chapter 10 provide examples that were typical of new or developing identities that the young people believed were supported by new relationships with peers and especially the adult mentors. A few summaries support this claim.

Sarah’s restored trajectory to a career in the police service I suggest could be described as being facilitated in large part by what Neill and Dias (2001) term resilience that she developed through the new social networks in the Stoneleigh Group and her emerging role

within those networks. Brad's emerging and fragile identity was supported for a while by the initial encounter with new and different people and then sustained by the relationship with his mentor. Gordon's trajectory from gay lap dancer to history student was supported initially by the retreat and then sustained by his time as a member of the Camas host community. Rose's career as a youth worker was supported by several key people with whom she built friendships on the first retreat. They supported her whilst she addressed unresolved issues with her family and then continued to support her growing identity as a youth worker until she obtained her first post.

As outlined in Chapter 3 Sibthorp (2003) agrees that social support is critical to the process of learning transfer and claims that the opportunities that a social group creates for feedback, discussion, and analysis amongst peers are especially significant. The popularity of the follow-up weekends indicates that the Stoneleigh Project participants also valued social opportunities. My observations would support Sibthorp's claims for the role of peer social interaction in support of learning transfer, especially the follow-up weekends; a view endorsed by the mentors and facilitators.

Sibthorp claims that if these peers are new and different people this enhances the chances of a different identity developing. Tucker (2003) also concurs with these authors adding that the presence of adults on the programme who come from and will return to the place where the young people come from is an important aid to the transfer of learning, a view supported by the many comments from young people about the role of the mentors during and after the retreats. Tucker also claims that trust, support, and encouragement are important aspects of the social life of an outdoor course. In her view friendliness, calmness, peacefulness, and a warm welcome are some of the elements that help to provide a context for these characteristics to emerge.

The Stoneleigh Project findings would support all the claims made by the above authors for the ways in which social support and social learning contribute to learning transfer. Within the contexts of agency and transformation the particular social processes involved, and the consequences of the transfer of learning to the lives of the young people, are worth further exploration.

### *Engaging with an Adult World*

Several young people referred to the experience of acting in a more adult way with other adults on and after the retreats as significant in helping them to address issues in their personal lives. Rose is one example as this quotation illustrates.

Being on the residential gave me time to explore some very important questions that I had been putting off asking myself for some time. I am normally too busy doing things to take time out and think about what is really important to me. Although it may be as someone said to me during the week, Maybe the being busy is a diversion so the real thoughts and questions don't get answered.

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The important questions Rose referred to were issues concerning her relationship with her parents. She reported that the Stoneleigh Project had helped her feel more independent by giving her a clear idea of who she was and what she wanted to do. Somehow she felt this, combined with the reflective space and the supportive community, allowed her to confront unresolved issues in her family relationships. She also referred to learning new relationship skills that supported her in confronting these issues. My field notes summarise her narrative of what happened.

I asked Rose if she was happy to say more about the important questions she had thought about. She described her relationship with her mother and stepfather with whom she still lived. She thought it was a good relationship although she felt it was time for her to leave though she was also reluctant to do so. Her solo, she said, had given her the space to think about why she did not want to go. When I asked her for any other news Rose told me that she had applied for a youth work job in a city to the north and had been successful. She was moving next month. Her parents were going to help find and set up a flat. She was excited and claimed that, without the retreat and the solo, none of this would have happened.

Rose claimed that the experiences she had on the retreats she attended as a young person provided her with a number of opportunities that affected her actions

afterwards. For Rose, finding the power to address personal issues with her family released her on a trajectory that led to her moving home and finding work as a youth worker. She attributed this to the Stoneleigh Project and especially the retreat. She claimed that the equitable social interactions at Camas gave her insight into ways in which she could relate to others in a more adult way. She thought it also gave her a chance to practice these relationship styles with others and receive positive feedback about this new identity. The retreat at Cae Mabon gave her the reflective space to restore her vision of herself as a youth worker. It also gave her the chance to review the circumstances in her personal life that she perceived as holding her back. The mentoring between retreats and her later roles as a host community member and mentor provided her with role models and support in her professional plans. Finally, when she obtained her first job, it was this social network that gave her the recognition for her achievement.

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Rose's narrative provides an unusually long example of a young person's relationship with the Stoneleigh Project. Rose claims to have been initially empowered by the adult nature of the relationships on the first retreat that she attended. This contributed to her adopting what she perceived as a pro-active and adult approach to her relationships with her parents, and her boyfriend. Further, she argues that her professional development was largely due to the opportunities and support provided by the Stoneleigh Project. I would argue that this was a vivid but typical experience of the retreat programme that is supported by considerable evidence from many young people and their mentors. In the case of the Stoneleigh Project the remote outdoor retreats were effectively integrated with the everyday worlds of the young people. For many if not most of these young people, they supported them in advancing the development of their adult identities in their personal, social, and public lives.

In my view, the narrative process Rose continued to use between and after the several retreats she attended, and already identified in Chapter 10 as a critical element in the retreat programme, was central to the effectiveness of the transfer of learning beyond the retreat experiences. I will explore the evidence for this further below.

### *The Narrative Process*

Once the retreats were over, many young people maintained a narrative account of their developing situations. If this could not be done with a mentor or another peer who had attended the retreat, then the facilitators or the evaluator were involved through telephone calls and e-mails. For example the unfolding narrative of Rose's story was continued with the evaluator through unsolicited e-mails. It also stopped after the narrative described a major step into a desired pathway, in Rose's case her new job as a youth worker.

I commented in Chapter 3 on the concern in the research and other literature of the outdoor education field that 'qualitative' feedback in narrative form is considered by some to be suspect. The view reported was that there is no direct evidence that the outcomes of an intervention can be attributed to the experience to which it is linked by the narrative. I believe this misses a significant point. If the belief is that the young people are constructing identities influenced by the experiences in their lives then these identities also need to be expressed within the social networks of those people. This expression often takes a narrative form, whether this is physical or verbal, and it needs tangible events to build on. It does not matter in this case whether the new self can be attributed to the experience that is claimed for it. What matters is that the young person thinks that it does and can use the event to construct their ongoing narrative. The examples above suggest that this may be especially significant when the narrative is describing a significant transformation and that this is being shared with a new social network.

The evidence also suggests that, by encouraging the expression of a narrative during and after the retreats, the transformation described in the narrative frequently transferred into action in the everyday worlds of the young people. Sarah re-established her confidence and joined the police service. Rose confronted her parents and found a new home and work she thought of as meaningful. Brad, for a while, became involved in the outdoors in a way that made him feel better about himself and re-engaged socially. Justin found the strength to continue his resistance to drug use and made a commitment to work as a volunteer to help other drug users enter a rehabilitation programme. Gordon took up his university place.

All these young people, and many more, used ongoing narratives in which they claimed their retreat experiences were significant in enabling them to take these steps. For them, these steps made them socially mobile and transformed their expectations of what was possible with their lives. For example Rose changed the values held by her old family and friendship networks with regard to her gender, living away from home and becoming a home owner, a professional job, remaining single and sexually active; a considerable set of transformations.

It is interesting to note that a number of adults in mentor or host community roles also used the retreats to express their emerging narratives and reported significant life changes following on from the retreats. For example Shaun, in his late 40s, resigned from his work as a youth worker, bought a motorbike and set off to tour the world; a dream he never thought he would realise. He attributed his decision to the realisation that his work would, over time, involve him in roles that were less like that required by the Stoneleigh Project and more like that encouraged by trends in modern youth work like those discussed in Chapter 5. He felt he had better things to do with his life. This evidence arrived in an e-mail and nothing has been heard from him since.

### **Personal or Social Change Agents**

The evidence above shows many circumstances when personal transformations reported by both the adults and the young people involved changing relationships with old networks and building on opportunities with new ones. In addition they reported making changes that they did not previously perceive as possible. From the point of view of the participants they felt able to remove an aspect of whatever was perceived as marginalising them and so denying them access to the adult world. They changed their self-concepts. They perceived the outcome of the Stoneleigh Project to have enhanced what Stoddart (2004) called social capital and transformed the world in which they felt able to act. As Bernstein put it, the programme 'altered their consciousness so that they were able to think the impossible' (Bernstein, 1996, p. 44).

In Bernstein's terms this would constitute the meeting of the educational rights of personal enhancement and social inclusion. I would argue that this was brought about because the

Stoneleigh Project, in partnership with the voluntary organisations, supported the young people through their personal development in gaining access to a more equitable share of power and resources with which to construct adult identities. I would suggest that the programme helped them to tackle for themselves the various issues of marginalisation. It was particularly successful at helping young people to address issues in their family and peer group networks and issues of self-confidence and identity that inhibited a sense of a meaningful and possible direction towards adulthood especially for those who were socially mobile. As a result I would claim that the young people were able to access and capitalise on new and enhanced social networks, volunteer, educational, and work opportunities. In my view the Stoneleigh Project provided support for a group in society for whom institutional support is not currently widely available. However, this support was most effective for those with or capable of developing fluid social networks and engaged in or considering trajectories of social mobility.

For some, transforming the situations of young people instead of reproducing the conditions of marginalisation that they might expect from their backgrounds would constitute a radical educational outcome. The Victorian social reformers discussed in Chapter 4 would certainly have recognised the efforts of the mentors and facilitators to transform the values of the young people as a radical undertaking. It may be for this reason that Phil, as referred to in Chapter 2, with his roots deep in this Christian youth work tradition, claimed that the programme was radical.

However, in relation to the Stoneleigh Project, there are some problems with this claim. Not all the young people were marginalised for the traditional structural reasons of poor social background or educational achievement. Many had achieved success in these terms and, in some cases, had already become socially mobile as a result. What many in this group claimed to be marginalising them was the lack of meaningful opportunities to engage with the world of education or work. This concern was picked up by Colin in his early thinking about the Stoneleigh Group. For the Stoneleigh Group then, a radical outcome would be one in which the public and social world was also transformed in a way that both reduced the conditions that led to the marginalisation of some young people and also created new forms of education and work that were understood by young people as

worthwhile. Achieving such a goal would fully meet Bernstein's third educational right of participation. Young people, through the educational process, would then have an opportunity to both reproduce and transform the social world they were entering. The relationship between such a citizen and the state, would, in Bernstein's terms, be equitable. The established social order would be open to reproduction or transformation by all of its citizens.

Therefore, this still leaves the Stoneleigh Project open to the challenge that they provided a liberal educational programme that, whilst seeming to tackle the effects of marginalisation, simply restored the young people to pathways that re-engaged them with the same world that was responsible for the causes of marginalisation in the first place. From this perspective their actions in that world would simply contribute to further marginalisation and so perpetuate the cycle that sustained the current distribution of power and resources in society. This would constitute another example of what Bernstein referred to as a liberal education that papers over the cracks. What remains to be considered, then, is the degree to which the participants were able to take part as citizens and whether the form of this participation met the radical aspirations of the Stoneleigh Group for creating agents of social change.

Clive, in his mid-20s, provides an example of a young person who used narrative to maintain his desired trajectory that involved introducing change in the world around him. In some instances the opportunity to e-mail his story to a Stoneleigh Group participant or recount it to one other person in collusion with him, as this extract describes, was all that sustained an approach to his work.

Clive attended two retreats, one as a young person and one as a host community member. He also attended the training event for mentors and host community members. He joined the Stoneleigh Group independently of a voluntary organisation in the year after his graduation at a time when he could not determine his path forward. He then found a job as an outdoor youth worker. This was a new role for him. However, he describes it as a role in which he was still too constrained to be the kind of youth worker he wanted to be or practice the ideas that he had acquired from the Stoneleigh Project. He attributed this to the

hostility of the employer to 'the 's' word' spirituality. He described how a co-working opportunity on a camping trip created an additional freer space in which he felt able to be different. As elsewhere I have maintained Clive's spelling and removed the names of people and organisations in this extract from an e-mail.

The 'S' word isn't really embraced here at (deleted name). (Deleted name) and myself have been working almost alternate weeks since we started discussing the course -(eon's ago it feels like) So i am embarrassed to say that its not of the ground yet. However like a pebble thrown in a pond I am creating exiting ripples of idears.

None the less, I am proud to say, (and i hope this is ok) I have been using the stuff i learnt at Cae Maborn (and through doing my disatation) In my courses - atleast. Last week was an excellent example.....

It was a 6 day course in the mountains with 14-17 year olds. The Qualified course directer and ML gave me the Full Freedom to 'Do the Process stuff'. I asked "anything?" and he (deleted name) said "yes".

After meeting the group and doing the intial settling in and working and living together stuff with them, I couldn't help but see the obvious process framework for such a mixed bunch of agendas. All i knew at this point was that i had to fit the process stuff into a 3 day expidition.

(have you guessed what i did yet?)

It was a perfect opportunity to sugest the three questions posed at Camas. Who, Where, How... It was posed that one question would be attempted a day, and it was understood that there would be considerable overlap.

The group lapped up the idea and quite bravley went for it.

as well as all the dynamics of the group development and the learning gained from the expedition itself (eg cooking navigating, looking after each other ect...) they got a lot out of it!

the expedition included the following activities as well as on going conversations that took the form of 'active listening on the first day, to moving towards coaching on the last.

1st days activity = (Who am i?) body maps using natural materials.

Aload the participants to open up and as one of them said ' talk about shit that they don't usually talk about', build on their already growing admiration for the surrounding natural environment, and open up their artistic side to their personalities as a balance to their hard man mountain climbing image.

The Logical levels (environment, behaviours, capabilities, beliefs, values, mission/ purpose and spirituality) was offered as a possible way to help answering the days question in a more systematic way.

2nd day = (where am i going) A hour solo. a kind of taster of a solo experience, whilst also holding the days question in mind. (conversly all sorts of stuff came out of this experience for them!) This was done at the high camp under great end by sprinkling tannin, enhanced by a fantastic sun set.

different reasons for solo time were discussed, and in their own time, they decided to bivvy out under the stars. (one saw their first ever shooting stars! and they all saw Mars)

3rd Day = (How am i going to get there) 'the cleansing pool, the hope monument and the two stones'

this was simultaneously the funniest and most deepest day of the programme!

they found two stones, one they liked and one they didn't like. we met the group at the next meeting point at a tarn (the group were being shadowed on this day to give them more responsibility)

At the tarn the reasons for choosing their particular stones were discussed and metaphors drawn out that represented the things that would help them get to their destination, (the stone they liked) And the things that would hinder them getting to their destination. (the stone they didn't like)

then, we all stood by the shore line and put our helpful stone back in our pocket as we would need that to get up Glaramara and achieve our destinations in life. Then, we raised our arms as we were going to throw our unhelpful stone in the water. we pretended that we did, then I asked them 'if you had thrown that stone in the water, would that mean all that unhelpful stuff would be forgotten?' A mixed response. I gave them an opportunity to try something else instead, but would take more work. we all bent down by the tarn edge and proceeded to clean our unhelpful stones in the tarn. each time the stone was taken out the water they were to try and see these unhelpful things about themselves and the actual stone in a different stone. they were challenged to see the stone in a different way.

after some time I gave them the choice, "if the stone is now completely useless to you then throw it in the tarn, if you want to hold onto it and expect it... ect... then put it in your pocket with the other one.

Later at the top of Glaramara, they built a hope monument with their stones on a flat piece of rock as a memorial of how they felt at that moment in time. then a sweet was given to every one, there was an almighty 'primal scream' then the sweet touched their stone 'to get their energy back' and put in their mouths.

the journey ended with a review at the bottom of the hill just before we returned to the youth hostel.

A night of nice food and comfy beds football and an emotional certificate ceremony, led to a warming fare well, with a back drop of beautiful misty mountains glazed with the brightest fullist rainbow i have ever seen.

I am a Happy Chappy today and i want to thankyou for letting me reasurch and takepart in the stoneleigh groups work.

My aim for the future is to work that way more often - given half the chance.  
big thanks again, hope you don't mind me almost completely ripping off the idears i learnt from you and the others.

[E-M-C02(7704)]

Clive was able to create for himself a space in which he could experiment with an identity that parted from what he perceived as the mainstream of UK outdoor practice. He used the Stoneleigh Project as a template for this new professional identity and received positive endorsement from a colleague and the group with whom he was working. However, in relation to the employer, Clive acted subversively as the only way to act with what he perceived to be congruence with his emerging identity. The narrative, performed in action with the colluding colleague and in writing with the Stoneleigh Group contact, were all that sustained this identity as Clive attempted to introduce change that was understood by the employer to be too radical.

Clive's account is interesting for the insight it provides on the resistance of the everyday world to change. Clive thought that this resistance was partly due to his approach being simply different. However, he also suspects it is because it redistributed power not only to the employee, but in this case, to the young people on the outdoor youth work programme concerned. Clive's case is doubly interesting in that he described a youth work organisation, though not one of the Stoneleigh Group partners, that was acting to restore the educational programme to one that, as Bernstein (1996) would have described it, maintained the established order rather than one that transformed it.

Clive went on to enrol for a post-graduate certificate in spiritual facilitation, a course he found out about from the academic leading the course whilst attending a Stoneleigh Group conference.

The evidence from the Stoneleigh Project supports Davidson's (2001) claim that it is the process of attributing meaning to an experience that is the significant aspect of outdoor experiential learning. I would argue that the frequent and diverse opportunities to construct and re-construct identity based on new knowledge of themselves and the world they were in was central to the success of the Stoneleigh Project. Reviewing old self-concepts and constructing new ones, in words and actions, was, I would claim, supported by the narrative process. This process involved experiential and social contexts. It was embodied in action on and after the retreats and it was sustained throughout by frequent dialogue with others who were involved in the programme. Perhaps most of all, these narratives were maintained because they enabled the visions developed by the young people, and other participants too, to be realised. From the point of view of the young people, developmentally it worked. The young people can reasonably claim to have developed these visions and acted on them for themselves. As such the claims made by the Stoneleigh Group to have supported young people in becoming agents of change in their personal lives is supported by this research.

Bernstein (1996) expressed concern about educational projects entering the personal lives of students. He thought that it was unhealthy within a democracy for a public institution of the state that is controlled by state ideology to have a foothold in the private lives of its citizens. The evidence of the Stoneleigh Project is that the private lives of the young people were widely involved in the retreat programmes. However, the evidence also shows that a strong boundary was maintained by some youth workers between the retreats and the rest of the Stoneleigh Project programme. Only the young people and their mentors were aware of this knowledge about the personal lives of the young people. Indeed, the mentors from these organisations were actively involved in maintaining this strong boundary of confidentiality. This is not unusual youth work practice and so would not have been experienced as unusual by the participants or their organisations.

However, some individuals and one organisation deliberately set out to integrate the emerging values of the personal world of the young people with the public world in which they were attempting to construct an identity and make a living. Bernstein made his claim for strong boundaries in the context of a strong, established ideology. A strong boundary between the personal worlds of citizens and the public world of the state allowed a diversity of ideologies to flourish without being perceived as a threat to the established order. Mills (1959), on the other hand, claimed that private troubles almost always need to be understood and resolved in the context of public issues and that public issues only become meaningful when they are related to private troubles. Mills' view resonates with the position of the Stoneleigh Group in their efforts to support young people with 'private troubles' to resolve these for themselves and also to address the 'public issues' they reflect by becoming agents of social change.

The Stoneleigh Group can be understood as thinking that the established order is or needs to be under threat in a world that can no longer be sustained justly by the current distribution of power and knowledge. It was the Group's view that the boundary between the emerging values of some marginalised young people and the public world needed to be weakened in order that the ideologies maintained in the private world could influence the public world rather than vice versa. Clive illustrates the challenge involved in attempting this. He bridges the gap between young people that became agents of personal change and those that attempted to be agents of social change.

### **The Young People of the Stoneleigh Project as Agents of Social Change.**

The evidence above illustrates that the lives of young people on the Stoneleigh Project were transformed at private, social, and public levels and often all three of these. These changes in their lives sometimes involved the young people addressing issues within their old social networks that were perceived by them as constraining. Some of those with weak or chaotic social network backgrounds and those with fluid social network backgrounds (see Diagram 1) were then able to capitalise on the new social networks provided by the Stoneleigh Project and the host voluntary organisations. The results of these transitions were new roles providing lateral mobility and so taking them forward on their trajectories towards new adult roles. These trajectories were previously perceived by the young people

as beyond their reach or of no meaning. It also supports the claim that the young people perceived that they were the agents of these transformations. They perceived themselves to have initiated and managed the opportunities within and beyond the reach of the Stoneleigh Project and managed their exit from the programme when they perceived its role to have been fulfilled. In many cases the young people attributed these developments in their lives to the Stoneleigh Project and to the retreat phase in particular.

The programme, for young people whose personal transformation meant progressing along conventional educational or employment pathways, as the majority of young participants did, can be understood as a means to social change. The Stoneleigh Project supported a degree of social mobility that they may not have achieved otherwise. This was achieved with an age group where few if any other alternative means of support were available. Young people developed different social networks, entered further and higher education, began professional career paths and moved physically and socially to new geographical areas.

These changes did redistribute power and resources to these young people. They felt in control of their pathways to adulthood; back in the driving seat. In one sense they had become active participants in society by maintaining established social values through their life choices. However, their socialisation, whilst novel to them, had been restored to traditional pathways of identity construction. Their choices, as Bernstein suggested, maintained overall the established distribution of power and control with all its potential for marginalisation. Whilst a highly satisfactory outcome for them this was not the radical outcome the Stoneleigh Group were hoping for.

A number did become engaged in the social issues that were perceived as causing marginalisation. Through their volunteering and professional roles at least 15 young people took on responsibility for projects addressing social issues such as drug use and truancy. At least nine, such as Rose and Clive, became professional youth workers by the time the research was concluded. A further 6 participants from the host community role also became involved in youth issues on a voluntary or professional basis though, as reported above, 1 youth worker and mentor did resign and leave the youth work field. Most of this

group of young people set out to tackle the problems caused by the current social order but they did not seek to address the causes of these problems. Clive was an exception.

However, one set of young people did set out to tackle the causes of the issues faced by young people in their community. They did this in both voluntary and professional roles by creating new forms of work for themselves and for others that held to a set of social and environmental values that were in contrast to the values of their community.

Trevor is an example that represents this group (see Diagram 1 and Table 5). On return from the retreat that he attended he set up, with, unlike Clive, the help of the voluntary organisation supporting him, a circus skills training programme for young people disaffected from school or unemployed and not in education post-16. The purpose of the project was to give young people skills they could feel proud of and to exhibit these skills in front of their community and to feel their pride in them. It was highly successful and is still running under Trevor's leadership as of autumn 2006. Trevor went on to take up a professional role with the voluntary organisation directing a project that employed young people to take an eco-friendly bus around the rural communities of the area to provide youth services that rural young people found hard to access. This project is also still running successfully.

Trevor set out to tackle the causes of marginalisation amongst particular target groups of young people. He engaged the community in solving the problem and was contributing to a larger project that, with the community's support and resources, was seeking to transform the work available to young people and the meaning of that work to them and to the community.

All the young people falling into the same set as Trevor were young people from one voluntary organisation. I would argue that whether the aspirations of the Stoneleigh Project to promote radical social change through the leadership of young people were met or not depended on the ideology of the voluntary organisation the young people were associated with. This claim can be supported further. The young people who took on youth work roles

did so within voluntary organisations that had a strong service ethic. Those that took on other employment did so with voluntary organisations that had a strong return to work ethic. In other words pathways defined by the attitudes to the meaning of work held by each Stoneleigh Group member organisation, and outlined in Chapter 9, were followed by the young people.

It is not clear whether young people simply followed the ideology of the organisation they associated with or whether they chose these organisations because they perceived them as congruent with their own values and aspirations. It is possible to say that the 3 young people who used the Stoneleigh Group network to move from one organisation to another did so in order to access opportunities that they perceived as being more in keeping with their aspirations.

Whilst the Stoneleigh Group can claim that they were able to support some young people who already sought to be agents of social change through their respective voluntary organisations they cannot claim to have created agents of social change. In this sense, whilst Eden Community Outdoors does provide a radical programme by the Stoneleigh Group's definition, the Stoneleigh Group did not.

Bernstein argued that the control of any educational site with a radical social or political agenda will be contested by those with an interest in maintaining the established order and so the established arrangements for the distribution of power and resources in society. Whilst the Stoneleigh Group was, in the end, not responsible for the radicalism of a few of the young people that participated in the programme, they claimed to be. The next chapter will consider how the Stoneleigh Project, as it began its advocacy work in the wider world of youth work, became a contested site because of this claim.

## **Conclusion**

The transfer of the learning from the retreat experience was supported by a number of pedagogic processes. Among these were the new social networks created by the relationships formed during the retreats and the number and variety of adult roles involved

in the retreat together with a focus on adult life such as work and the wider politics of social and environmental justice. Additionally the process of encouraging the development of personal narratives that reconstructed past experiences and current identities played a major part in supporting the transfer of new knowledge, values, and meanings developed by each young person after the retreats. The values that were encouraged by the retreat lifestyle often transformed the identities of the young people in ways that encouraged them to develop the new opportunities provided by the remainder of the Stoneleigh Project. The role of the host community members on the retreats and the mentors before, during and after the retreats were critical in providing this pedagogic opportunity.

In most cases the young people capitalised on their new self-concepts and social networks to initiate personal changes. These directions almost all involved breaking away from concepts and networks that defined them in order to take up new identities and follow new pathways of which the young person was previously unaware or thought to be impossible. Diagram 1 indicates the importance to the Stoneleigh Project of this lateral mobility in achieving these outcomes. The result for the young participants on this pathway was a personal transformation. For some young people these new identities and pathways involved them in supporting other young people who were marginalised through volunteer or professional roles in youth work. They set out to change the circumstances of others, to address the problems caused by the ills of our society but not the causes. For one group of young people involved with Eden Community Outdoors the retreats supported them in developing projects that tackled the causes of marginalisation by challenging the forms of education and work that were perceived by them to be the roots of the problems in their community. For them the outcome was also one of becoming agents of social transformation.

A smaller group of young participants benefited from the programme though their pathway embedded in a strong social network cannot, in my view, be described as transformative. It nonetheless supported transitions to adulthood understood by the young participants as successful. A second small group of young participants with weak or chaotic social network backgrounds, whilst reporting that the programme was beneficial to them personally, were not successful in achieving a transition to adulthood.

The Stoneleigh Project was, in my view, successful in supporting young participants with fluid and strong social network backgrounds in achieving what they considered to be successful outcomes (see Diagram 1). For those with or capable of developing fluid social networks, a significant element in the process of this success was, I suggest, the encouragement to engage with a pathway I describe as lateral mobility. The Stoneleigh Project was partially successful in supporting those from weak and chaotic social network backgrounds. However, others from these backgrounds remained in need of further support.

I have argued that, whether a young person's agency restored them to a traditional pathway to adulthood that was focussed on self realisation, or one based on addressing social issues, or whether they became agents of social change challenging the norms of adulthood, depended on the voluntary organisation that they belonged to and not on the Stoneleigh Group. As such the Stoneleigh Project can be thought of as radical in the sense that the pedagogy of the programme was novel and political. It can also be viewed as radical in the sense that it supported the social mobility of most of the young people participating giving them a more equitable access to the power and resources of society. However, in its own terms of supporting young people to become agents of social change it did not succeed. Eden Community Outdoors must take the credit for those young people who moved forward in this way. Nevertheless, the Stoneleigh Group did claim to have acted in this way. The consequences of this will be explored in the next chapter.