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## Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter.

Of course, we would like all our friends to spread the word about us, but we realise you can only do so if you yourselves really understand what our Programme is about. So this month we focus on the Momentum Programme through a series of FAQs.

We have been collecting stories from many of the young people who participated in our previous projects, about how their international experiences have changed their lives. Starting this month, we will feature one or more of their stories in each issue.

Don't forget to visit the Momentum website at [www.youthmomentum.org](http://www.youthmomentum.org) and encourage friends and fellow professionals to register with this exciting and growing international network.

### What's the Momentum Programme all about?

It all begins from a simple question: what's the best way to help a not-very-confident 16 year old person, who perhaps has limited opportunities in life, to develop into a motivated, self-confident young adult with good career prospects? Our answer is: give them the chance to get away from their normal environment and share some exciting, challenging, fun learning experiences with people from completely different backgrounds – and then follow this up by supporting

### PARTNERS & LINKS

Much of our time at present is spent sharing information and building relationships with different organisations in the UK and overseas. Here are some which we found interesting this month.

### WHAT'S UP INFORMATION

[www.whatsupinformation.com](http://www.whatsupinformation.com)

is a newly founded social enterprise filling the information gap for young people in London. We've seen their first info pack and we like it.

### AIESEC

[www.aiesec.co.uk](http://www.aiesec.co.uk)

is a well established student organisation with branches in well over 100 countries. AIESEC organises a wide range of international exchanges and work placements for students, through its own network and in partnership with other organisations. We think these activities provide ideal extra opportunity and experience for young people at level 5 – 6 of our Programme

and motivating them as they build on these experiences through community projects and other activities back home. That's what we are offering young people – but not just once: someone who joins our Programme will get to repeat this cycle of activities up to seven times. Each time, they'll move up to a higher level of the Programme, with tougher challenges, bigger responsibilities, and more fun. Anyone who gets to the seventh (final) level will end up with a CV to be proud of – and quite possibly, even a paid job with Momentum!

### What are the seven levels?

Each level has a different name and a different focus. To begin with, it's all about getting active, respecting diversity and working with other people. At the higher levels, there is more emphasis on individual leadership.

#### Level 1 (Friend):

is where people register their interest in the Programme and show that they are participating in some activities at school or in local groups.

#### Level 2 (Citizen):

is where the main Programme begins. There are two residential events, one in the UK and one overseas, focusing on team work, intercultural learning, and active citizenship.

#### Level 3 (Activist):

at this level participants begin to implement their own group projects in their home communities. There is one residential event, either in the UK or overseas, where participants learn about project and enterprise skills.

#### Level 4 (Executive):

participants put their combined learning into practice, develop and extend their projects, and start to involve more young people (e.g. Level 1 members). They also face the challenge of raising funds to cover their fee to attend the Level 4 residential event, which is an inspirational international summer school outside the UK.

## HEALTHY PLANET

[www.healthyplanet.org](http://www.healthyplanet.org)

we are mostly familiar with the idea of sponsoring or “adopting” an animal at the zoo. Healthy Planet allows you to do the same with endangered areas of the world, and passes on the adoption fees to the organisations working on the ground to conserve your chosen area. The website also allows school or classroom groups to get involved.

## OUR UNUSUAL WEBSITE OF THE MONTH IS:

[www.guerrillagardening.org](http://www.guerrillagardening.org)

a great idea for channelling subversive inclinations into a socially and environmentally worthwhile activity.

## MY INTERNATIONAL JOURNEY

In each issue, a participant from one of our previous projects tells the story of how international experience has changed their life, and why they recommend other young people to get into programmes like ours. More stories are on our website.

## Rachel's story

I went to an almost entirely white British school. In fact there were only two non-white students. A lot of the people in the town where I lived had little ambition or desire to learn about different cultures. There was, and still is, a lot of racial intolerance. I was always open minded about people of different cultures and races. However I had never left the UK until I went on my first

**Level 5 (Mentor) :**

is the start of the higher level Programme. Participants progress individually rather than in groups. Now they begin to take more serious responsibility within local groups and projects, act as mentors to other young people, and sometimes join our event teams. Relevant training is provided through a residential event either in the UK or abroad.

**Level 6 (Ambassador):**

work at this level focuses on communication skills, and is based around an extremely challenging residential programme in an unfamiliar overseas country. There will be numerous opportunities to work as volunteers within Momentum's teams.

**Level 7 (Leader):**

before a final celebration of completing the Programme, participants attend a final residential event, in which they undertake a demanding leadership challenge which tests all the skills they have learned during the Programme. At this level they are likely to be leading a project of their own, and to become members of our core team on a voluntary or sometimes paid basis.

**Who is it for? What will they get out of it?**

The Programme is intended for young people between the ages of 15 and 22. There are no restrictions on who can join, because equal opportunity is an important principle. However, there is one essential criterion: a young person must have begun to show some signs of motivation and commitment to themselves and others, e.g. by regularly attending a sports team, music group, youth club etc. If there's a "typical" person we have in mind, it would be someone who has begun to show some potential, but who maybe doesn't see this as clearly as other people do, who doesn't feel very confident, and who hasn't had any opportunity to mix with people from other countries.

Even after a short time on the Programme, a young person will see positive results. The further they progress through the seven levels, the greater these results will be. We know from experience that participants will expand their horizons and aspirations,

international exchange. I had been a very shy person and I was very nervous about meeting new people. I had decided that I would like to work alone or in a small team and would enjoy a quiet, structured job.

My first international experience came two weeks after my 16th birthday. I was offered the chance to take part in an exchange with a formerly Bedouin Arab community in Israel. My parents were very concerned about me, my lack of travel experience worried them and they did not want me to go. I persuaded them though, and I loved every minute of being there. I got on with my host so well, we talked for hours and became firm friends, we are still in contact now 10 years later. I was eager to do more and in subsequent years attended international camps, Youth Action Week and Blue Sky in Macedonia. My only regret is that I didn't get the opportunity to do more!

It is hard to specify exactly what I learned through these experiences. Of course I developed leadership, diplomacy, communication and problem solving skills. The thing I enjoyed most though was working with a group; I enjoyed building the relationships with my group members and was thrilled if they came to me with problems and concerns as I felt that they must trust me even though we had just met. I am still in contact with members of my former groups and I am very proud of this.

I believe that my international experiences brought me out of my shell and gave me a passion for working with young people. It has also given me an interesting C.V. – not many people can say that they have edited articles on

and grow into self-confident, dynamic individuals. They will gain communication, organisation, team working and leadership skills. And they will benefit from mutual respect for, and of, other people and cultures. Their home community will also benefit from the positive contribution they are making to society.

### **How do people join?**

Anyone who is 15 or over can register as a Level 1 (Friend) member of our network, by filling in the form on our homepage.

To join the main Programme at Level 2 (Citizen), young people must be part of a group selected by one of our partner organisations, such as a school or youth centre. This is essential because in levels 2 to 4 of the Programme, most activities are in these groups, to ensure there is peer support and positive peer pressure.

### **What if a young person has already got plenty of experience?**

Young people aged 18 or over who have already been involved in several international and local community projects can apply for direct entry to our level 5 (Mentor). They will need to satisfy the same criteria as those who move up from level 4. For further information please contact us at [info@youthmomentum.org](mailto:info@youthmomentum.org)

### **What's the point of Level 1?**

Although there are no organised activities at level 1, membership of this level is an important first step in the Programme. Making the effort to register is an expression of interest and motivation, so we are unlikely to accept anyone into level 2 (or level 5) who hasn't at least done this. We can't promise that everyone at level 1 will move on in the Programme, because that depends on funding; but we do guarantee them, as network members, access to news, information, contacts, and other opportunities which arise as Momentum grows and develops.

### **What's different about Momentum?**

Aren't other people already running programmes like this? Of course there are plenty of organisations offering different kinds of personal development,

a website for young people across Southeast Europe and the UK, or attended summer schools in Macedonia.

Young people who take part in these trips always have something to say, something to talk about, and they seem to know that their opinion counts. I believe that it sets you apart from the crowds as you have done something quite scary, but brilliant, worthwhile and different at the same time.

I am now working with young people who are excluded from school. I teach students who no one else will have in their classroom due to their behavioural problems. I decided to do this because as I said my favourite moments during Blue Sky especially was getting to know the young people, listening to them and trying to do my best to help them. I don't want these students to ever feel undervalued and useless, and I try (and sometimes succeed) to show them that life is what you make it and the more you put into something the more you get out of it. This is a lesson I gained from international experiences.

Take a deep breath, close your eyes and go for it!! You will never regret the experience and the more you put in the more you will get out. Everything worth having is worth working hard for and international activities are just the same. I would not be the person I am now without mine, It is my dream to take a group of students like mine on an international camp – I can't imagine the impact it would have on them!

### **Information**

Our website: [www.youthmomentum.org](http://www.youthmomentum.org)

leadership or enterprise training, outdoor adventure and residential programmes. A few, including some schools, run international exchanges of different kinds. Others organise local community projects and youth activities. But there is rarely any follow-up or linkage between these things: as far as we know, no other programme provides the combination of activities at home and away, the long term continuity, the emphasis on partnership, or the overall framework, which Momentum offers.

### How is it going to be paid for?

The Momentum Programme falls into two parts. There is a separate fee for each part. For the first part (levels 2-4) the fee is mostly paid by the partner organisations which select young people for the Programme. For the second part, fees will be raised from a variety of other sponsors. At every level, young people themselves are expected to make a contribution, which increases towards the higher levels and is partly raised through an enterprise scheme within the Programme.

### When will it all start?

We expect the pilot level 2 programme to begin in late 2009, with groups of young people from eight partner organisations. We are also planning a pilot level 5 programme at about the same time.

### More (colourful) information...

[Click here](#) to download a brochure about the Momentum Programme.

Momentum consultancy: [click here](#) to download a brochure about our services.

Contact us: [info@youthmomentum.org](mailto:info@youthmomentum.org)

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