

Equipping Young People for Life



Introduction to the Award

As the **world’s leading achievement program for young people**, The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award equips young people for life regardless of their background, culture, physical ability, skills and interests. Our ambition is that **every young person** aged 14 to 24 worldwide should have the opportunity to participate in the Award and discover just how much they are capable of.

“Bringing the Award to many more young people, whatever their backgrounds, is arguably now more important than ever. Academic qualifications are important, but what goes on in the classroom should only form half the story for a young person’s development. To be equipped properly for life, young people need to develop the qualities of **perseverance, grit, curiosity, optimism and self-control**. We understand these traits as ‘character’ and the development of character is the business of The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award.”

John May, Secretary General, The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Foundation



Our research tells us that young people who participate in the Award become more **confident and resilient**, and **develop their communication, problem-solving and leadership skills**. This, in turn, impacts positively on their communities, who see improvements in areas including employability, health and well-being, and educational attainment.

Since its launch 60 years ago by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT, the Award has inspired millions of young people around the world to transform their lives. It now has a presence in over 140 countries and territories worldwide, and more than 1.1 million young people are doing the Award right now. The Chairman of the Award is The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex KG GCVO.

The Award Program

While the Award follows the same structure wherever it takes place around the world, young people make their own activity choices, making every participant’s experience unique.



BRONZE
For those over 14 years. 6 months minimum participation.



SILVER
For those over 15 years. 12 months minimum participation.



GOLD
For those over 16 years. 18 months minimum participation.

Each level of the Award has four sections:

Service	Physical Recreation	Skills	Adventurous Journey	Residential Project
Participants volunteer in their communities, make a positive contribution to society and demonstrate social responsibility.	Encourages young people to improve their fitness and performance, and enjoy healthy lifestyles for good mental and physical well-being.	Enables participants to develop their talents, broaden their abilities, increase their self-confidence and improve their employability.	Young people discover a spirit of adventure and gain a deeper understanding of the enviroment and the great outdoors.	Participants broaden their experience by staying in a unfamiliar environment with other young people, taking part in a worthwhile project and building new relationships.

And at Gold level only:

“I have seen timid girls improve their self-esteem, because they were given a chance by the Award to make decisions for themselves. Students who were truants and had difficulties settling down, totally transformed to be responsible young people who now know how to lead from the front, knowing they have a role to play in their community”

Irene Kamanda, Teacher, Kisima Girls School, Kenya

Outcomes for Young People

The immediate value of participation for the individual

Confidence	●
Managing feelings	●
Resilience and determination	●
Relationships and leadership	●
Creativity and adaptability	●
Planning and problem solving	●
Civic competence	●
Intercultural competence	●
Personal and social well-being	●
Communication	●

maps to Award sections

Impact measures

The long-term value of the Award for individuals and society

Improved educational attainment	●
Improved employability and sustainable livelihoods	●
Improved health and well-being	●
Increased participation in civic life	●
Social inclusion	●
The environment	●
Gender equality and the empowerment of women	●
Reduction and prevention of violence, conflict resolution and peace-building	●
Reduced reoffending (recidivism) rates	●

maps to Award sections



The Global Need for the Award

In a world of rising unemployment amongst young people, unequal access to opportunities, and education systems that fail to equip them with skills for life, the Award offers young people the chance to challenge themselves, leave their comfort zones and gain invaluable skills for their future.

According to the UN, there were 1.2 billion young people aged 15 – 24 years globally in 2015, accounting for one out of every six people worldwide. The UN states that: “Young people can be a positive force for development when provided with the knowledge and opportunities they need to thrive. In particular, young people should acquire the education and skills needed to contribute in a productive economy ...Some countries are struggling to educate and employ their young people, while also anticipating substantial growth in the number of young people.”¹

¹ www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/young people/fact-sheets/young peoplepop.pdf



The Award in the USA

Now, more than ever, we need a framework to equip American young people for life. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award provides that framework. Our vision is to inspire and empower young Americans, from all backgrounds and communities, to challenge themselves and exceed expectations. With over 43 million young people in the USA between the ages of 14 – 24 years old, the potential reach and impact of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award program is extensive. The ambition of the Award in the USA is to reach 500,000 young people, one percent of the population of young people in the USA, by the year 2026.

In order to meet our goal and transform the lives of young people across the USA, we aim to form collaborative partnerships with established youth organizations. We will engage with dedicated and highly skilled volunteers and we will work with the strategic support of individual and corporate stakeholders.

An Award Story:

Lincoln Hall is a residential educational center for young men from marginalized or at-risk communities throughout the state of New York, aged 12 – 18 years, who have been referred through the Family Court system.



Noble Varughese, Associate Executive Director, explains the value of the Award to the Hall and its students: “The Award has been the single best addition to our residential program. It instills in our students a desire to help others, a belief in themselves and an understanding of the importance of setting goals and achieving them.

Most of our students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The young men are closed down emotionally, except for the anger that they harbor from past abuse and a history of failures. This is an opportunity for Award Leaders to tap into their real pain and help them to work through some of their buried issues. It is also such a unique opportunity to develop empathy in our young men.

Our experience with the Award has been more positive than we could ever have imagined. Our students are setting goals for themselves, achieving these goals and then wanting to push themselves even further. The concept of being recognized for doing positive things in the community is an incredibly strong incentive for them. And the more they grow as people, the more the community benefits.

These are young men who come to Lincoln Hall broken in spirit, angry and directionless. The Award awakens something in them that they cannot even believe.”



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