

YABC (Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change)

GLOBAL IMPACT STUDY (2008-2012)

General Conclusions

The purpose of this independent 5 year global impact study of YABC was fourfold (p.2-3):

- To evaluate to what extent YABC achieved its primary goal of attitudinal and behaviour change in its peer educators, and in helping them in turn become agents of behaviour change - or role models - in others.
- If it had achieved this goal, then to assess what forms this behaviour change took.
- To identify the mechanisms underlying YABC's relative success or failure as a behaviour change programme.
- To evaluate the other impacts which YABC had, in line with its initial vision and objectives.

The methodology used includes maximum variation sampling, mixed methods, triangulation, benchmarking with single-method probabilistic quantitative research, and negative cases. (p. 4-6)

TO WHAT EXTENT DID YABC ACHIEVE ITS PRIMARY GOAL? (P.7-14)

The answer to this first and most central question of the evaluation was conclusive and dramatic.

- YABC does indeed deliver significant, lasting and observable attitude and behaviour change in the vast majority of its trainees. (p.9, 12-14)
- It does this many times more effectively (90% estimated rate) than average training rates observed in the relevant research literature (Georgenson, 1982, 10% on behavioural change; Saks 30% of learning transfer after 1 year). (p.10)
- A significant proportion of YABC trainees have been successful in role-modelling and stimulating similar attitude and/or behaviour change in others within their family, professional and/or social networks.
 - These changes in others are credibly, consistently and convergently reported by trainees, and confirmed and validated by strategic external observers in leadership positions at local, national, regional and global level. (p.11-14)
 - There is no direct data from second order beneficiaries of YABC that allows for quantification of this YABC inspired behavioural change in non-trainees.

*"In light of these considerations, it can be affirmed with absolute confidence that YABC has fulfilled its fundamental goal and function. But it has done a lot more than that: it has achieved this on a scale and with a depth that establishes it as **a globally outstanding example of best practice, and a worthy benchmark for behaviour change interventions inside and outside the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.**"*

Ismael Velasco, YABC Global Impact researcher

WHAT MANNER OF BEHAVIOUR CHANGE DID YABC GENERATE? (P.15-50)

The behaviour change generated by YABC was comprehensive, from the inmost dimension of mind sets, values and identity, through intimate personal interactions with family, friends and colleagues, to trainees' roles and activities within the Red Cross Red Crescent.

- YABC trainees underwent a reformulation of their identity and values that positioned the Fundamental Principles as their guiding orientation in a novel and profound way. (p.22-26)
- At the heart of this reformulation was a new affective attachment to the Fundamental Principles, which increased their affective attachment to the Red Cross Red Crescent and to its mission of service to humanity. (p.16-21)
- This inner realignment became translated into new conscious behaviours as well as new solution oriented action, expressive of newly acquired gained behavioural skills and of a new multi-layered connection and approach to the Fundamental principles. (p.27-31 and p.33-36)
- Their changed observable reactions, behaviours and life choices, , necessarily impacted on their relationships, breaking established patterns in a positive way, and automatically implicating others in their action to apply, live and promote the Fundamental Principles. (p.37-41)
- In many cases, this impact on their relationships also took the form of successful role modelling (or contagion in research terminology: inspiring change of mind-set and behaviour in others) role modelling, as the YABC trainees modelled in their own life more effective communication strategies, more authentic life choices, more successful relationships, or greater measures of subjective wellbeing. (p.42-48)
- These behavioural and attitudinal changes were sustained weeks, months and years after training, as attested by multiple data sets. (p.49-50)
- In addition to their own behavioural change and the contagion dynamics of role modelling, YABC also motivated its peer educators to engage in systematic social engagement behaviours, with only 620 peer educators reaching an estimated 120,000 people (at the time of the global survey, October 2012. In October 2013 the number of peer educators has grown to 830). (p.43-44 and p.132-134)

"I actually further loved the Movement thanks to this deeper understanding of its principles and values which YABC helped me to gain. My personal commitment for the Red Cross Red Crescent increased a lot because of this..."

YABC Trainer, Western Europe, Female

"Changing of mindsets is absolutely crucial: I have seen big changes in very conservative norms and traditions thanks to these YABC courses. Many of the males are socialised in having very sexist attitudes towards women. I have seen significant changes in males who have done the course and for females, they feel more empowered, and safer to speak out..."

Head, IFRC Delegation, South Asia

WHAT FACTORS IN YABC'S DESIGN OR IMPLEMENTATION HAVE ENABLED OR OBSTRUCTED BEHAVIOUR CHANGE IN ITS TRAINEES? (P.51-107)

There were three types of factors that determined the behavioural impacts of YABC: pedagogical, human and organisational. (p.59-60)

The most influential factor in producing positive behaviour change was the pedagogical factor. There was not a single element of critical feedback about the experience of the YABC pedagogy in 5550 pages of testimonies and analysis. In contrast, human factors and particularly organisational contexts contained both enabling and obstructive mechanisms. (p.54-58)

This implies that the YABC methodology was the primary driver and mechanism of change, and individual and organisational factors were contextual to it and moderated its effects. (p.52-56)

PEDAGOGICAL IMPACT MECHANISMS (P.61-76) (TO BE FURTHER DEVELOPED)

Two factors underpinned the extraordinary impact of the YABC pedagogy:

1. **The YABC conceptual framework** as embodied in the YABC chart. This conceptual framework mirrors closely amongst others **the *Motivation Information Behavioural Skills Model of behaviour change***. (p.62-64 and p.74-76)
 - The information element extends the Fundamental Principles in a coherent, nested way to include subordinate and less abstract value components and concrete behavioural skills. (p.53-54)
 - The motivational element consists of its focus on affective learning
 - The behavioural skills component is set out in the YABC chart and explicitly linked to diverse YABC toolkit training exercises.
2. **The YABC non-cognitive delivery method to deliver profound and intense affective learning**. This method mirrors amongst others closely Mezirow's transformative learning theory. (p.61 and p.64-73)
 - The non-cognitive training is delivered via the YABC toolkit activities (p.64-65)
 - It uses simulations, role plays, physical representation, sensory experience and game situations to take participants through a sequence of experiential dilemmas designed to trigger strong emotions and shake up taken for granted beliefs about self and other. These experiences and beliefs are then affectively explored in the light of the YABC chart. (p.69-73)
 - The result is a redefinition of self and other and an assimilation of the YABC chart and the Fundamental Principles into an emotionally engaged personal vocabulary of values by which they make sense of their day to day lives. (p.65-69)
 - These emotional and intellectual reformulations are then anchored in the trained behavioural skills that guide and equip them to heuristically (*ie* intuitively and based in experience) apply them (p.70-73)

“What YABC adds to this (Mezirow) perspective is a unique and deep orientation toward the Fundamental Principles, that elevate this process to the level of values, and generate not just personal transformation, but most particularly ethical transformation in ever closer and more profound alignment with the Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values.”

Ismael Velasco, YABC Global Impact researcher

HUMAN IMPACT FACTORS (P.77-98)

Human factors related to the selection of peer-educators and trainers were critical to maximising the effectiveness of the YABC training intervention in three ways: an exceptionally high positive predisposition in the trainees; high quality and highly approachable trainers; and group effects resulting from their affinity, emotional interaction and YABC social identity. (p.77-78)

- The cohorts of recruits for YABC peer education training were highly atypical of the general population in three dimensions which empirical studies have found to be positively correlated to affective learning, social identification, and post-training application of learning to behaviour (p.79-82):
 - Highly pro-social personality traits
 - Strong organisational commitment
 - High motivation to learn.
- The trainers shared all the above qualities and in addition brought excellent facilitation skills and high approachability traits, which are associated with both higher cognitive and affective learning, and stronger group effects. (p. 91-98)
- The group culture created at YABC events generated a very strong social identity around the Fundamental Principles, strong enough in its own right to be able, as per established research, to override contrary values and behaviours in group members. It also helped embed the new values, attitudes and skills into the social identity of YABC peer educator, greatly facilitating post-training behaviour change. (p.83-90)

ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT FACTORS (P.99-118)

Overall, one can say that organisational factors have been a net enabler of behavioural change. At the same time, however exceptional the success of YABC has been, there remains significant potential trapped or wasted through lack of leadership awareness of what YABC is, its benefits and impact, and support. Should YABC be taken more seriously more universally, and integrated more deeply, the constructive impacts of YABC are likely to be even more effective than they already are.

On the positive side, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement was largely a positive environment for the deployment of YABC and 9 out of 10 peer educators felt adequately supported by their National Society or did not feel the need for such support. (p.99-106)

National Societies across the world have incorporated YABC into their strategic plans, integrated it into existing programmes and invested human and economic resources. This has provided a huge range of contexts for YABC trainees to practice their new skills and apply their ethical, emotional and behavioural learning. (p.103)

The two foremost organisational enablers of behaviour change and social engagement in the peer educators were (p.101-106):

- High levels of leadership support whenever leaders had participated in or observed directly YABC (p.101, 102 and 106)
- High levels of programme integration (p.104-105)

On the negative side, organisational barriers were the most common and most significant obstacle to the full potential of YABC. At least a one in ten peer educators feel unsupported by their Red Cross Red Crescent National Society and trainers from 5 different zones, most deeply involved in the institutional engagement and positioning of YABC, coincided strongly in finding that it was "very typical" for them to have to struggle against institutional resistance. (p.107-117)

Barriers encountered included (p.108-118):

- An organisational culture resistant to change (p.109-111 and p.118)

- Lack of support from the Red Cross Red Crescent local and national leadership and at IFRC leadership level (p.112-113 and p.116-117)
- Marginalization of YABC against competing priorities (p.114)
- Tokenistic consultation with the youth (p.115)
- Lack of integration into mainstream Red Cross Red Crescent programmes. (p.115-116)
- Lack of clarity at the national level on the process of training trainers, leading to dependence on IFRC-organised training and therefore low replication. This has resulted in a greater demand for trainers than there is supply, holding back the speed of YABC expansion. (p.117)

These barriers could easily pass unsuspected by external observers, masked by the degrees of success of YABC trainers and peer educators sometimes even in the presence of these factors.

WHAT OTHER IMPACTS DID YABC HAVE? (P.119-145)

In line with the initial vision and objectives, the data demonstrated that the impact of YABC went beyond individual behaviour change to achieve organisational behaviour change in the RCRC as well. This happened through four main dynamics:

1. Improved personal work performance

- YABC trained personnel often volunteered longer hours, worked better and for longer periods in more stressful or risky situations. (p.136-137 and 139)

2. Programme integration (p.120-125)

- The gains in personal productivity naturally increase the delivery capacity of programmes with high participation or strategic involvement by YABC-trained volunteers or staff members. (p.135-137)
- When YABC is integrated, it greatly multiplied the range of activities a programme can offer, through the YABC toolkit. (p.126-127)
- To a lesser extent, the initiatives of the YABC trainees also multiplied the number of activities.
- Cases where the quality of decision making of YABC-trained staff and volunteers improved were noted in fields like staff/volunteer recruitment and coordination and programme management, leading to better outcomes and distribution of resources. (p.139-140)
- YABC participation or techniques often improved effectiveness of interventions. (p.140-142)

3. Role Modelling/Contagion

- Contact with YABC peer educators often generated positive behaviour change in colleagues
- It improved the cohesiveness of teams (p.137-138)
- It raised the ethical climate of professional environments (p.138-139)
- It motivated greater propensity to volunteer in those that participated in YABC activities from outside the RCRC, and resulted in a definite but unquantifiable increase in volunteer numbers. (p.128-132)

“YABC is a platform to capture new and retain volunteers. [Three countries in our zone¹] are good examples of this. We have seen that following YABC activities offers new dimensions of work to volunteers and captures the interest of new ones.”

IFRC Zone Director

“When working with beneficiaries, their approach would be more human, more personal, maybe somehow less focused on the technical aspect and rather trying to find the correct words to interact with them, mixing the values with the support and assistance provided. Indeed, I noticed that the way a technical officer approaches beneficiaries is very different if s/he has been trained or not on YABC. [...] YABC has brought better results than other programmes with regard to the bonding between the two communities (South and North). YABC provides a unique platform where individuals from both communities have an opportunity to really sit and talk together about their real social issues, about the difficult times they went through, without entering into any political debate. YABC is an amazing neutral process for reconciliation work. It increases mutual understanding between participating individuals from both communities.”

Former Senior Coordinator Post-Conflict Recovery Program, IFRC

4. Economic impact (p.145-151)

- YABC represented an exceptional social return on IFRC investment. (p.145-148)
- The economic value of YABC's in-kind contribution to the RCRC cannot be quantified exactly but evidence suggests it is likely to exceed the total IFRC investment in US dollar terms. (p.148-150)
- YABC's success in leveraging national level investment has meant that the investment by the IFRC's Principles and Values Department in YABC was a good practice example in designing for financial sustainability and self-replication. (p.151)

LOOKING AHEAD

In conclusion, YABC is an extraordinarily effective mechanism for delivering large-scale behavioural change that increasingly embodies and applies the Fundamental Principles.

The Red Cross Red Crescent would greatly benefit from full mainstreamed integration of YABC across all Red Cross Red Crescent programmes as a mechanism for staff and volunteer training, motivation and development, including at the highest leadership levels. Doing so would be highly likely to raise motivation, productivity, unity and alignment with the Fundamental Principles across the movement, as well as enriching the community engagement tools at the disposal of every programme.

YABC has been also found to operate as a de facto delivery mechanism for cultural change and quality improvement in Red Cross Red Crescent societies and programmes which invest seriously in its deployment. This dimension could be usefully systematised and developed to become as coherent, impactful and measurable as its behaviour change component.

YABC has also been found to increase the propensity to volunteer. The integration of systematic volunteer recruitment processes into YABC social engagement activity could also turn YABC into a large scale mechanism for volunteer expansion and development.

Finally, YABC has the potential to generate consistently very rich data on the practice and understanding of the Fundamental Principles in the Red Cross Red Crescent across the world.

YABC would benefit from the incorporation of an appropriate evaluation system to generate constant organisational learning on the meaning and practice of the Fundamental Principles at the grassroots across the world, using the YABC chart as a simple and effective underpinning indicator framework.

¹ The names of these countries have been redacted to maintain the anonymity of the interviewee.