

THE XLP GAP YEAR

'EXPERIENCE'

INSPIRE, TRANSFORM, GROW



XLP

WORKING TO CREATE POSITIVE
FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

WWW.XLP.ORG.UK

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE GAP YEAR?

Experience is an exciting and dynamic gap year programme run by XLP in partnership with local churches, serving some of London's most diverse, challenging and inspirational communities. Aimed at those who are 18 or over the gap year provides an opportunity for you to put your faith into action in one of the most multicultural cities in the world - it will change your life and the lives of the young people you meet.

As an 'Experience student' you will receive a combination of youth work and theology training and join XLP's teams running schools and community work in the inner city including detached youth work, arts and sports activities, church youth work, lessons and assemblies, mentoring and summer camps, an overseas trip and much more...

This unique gap year is designed to challenge you to deepen your relationship with God and with people.

Are you ready to take up that challenge?

"My XLP gap year was a life changing experience. It has equipped me theologically and practically and I still draw on this daily. I'd highly recommend the course to anyone wanting to put their faith into action."

- Paul, Former Student





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ABOUT XLP

XLP stands for “The eXcel Project” – aiming to encourage young people to ‘excel’ in life. It was started by Patrick Regan in South London in 1996 after a stabbing in a school playground. They needed someone to speak to their young people and help them with the issues they were facing. Patrick, a youth worker at a local church, answered the call.

XLP is about hope, and with hope comes the possibility of change. To bring hope into someone’s life you must learn to walk with them, to understand their world, and to journey together to a place where alternatives are possible. XLP journeys with over 1800 young people and their families each week and engages with over 12,000 young people every year. Working in partnership with local churches, it is creating positive futures for young people living in our inner city and making a serious and sustainable impact upon poverty and educational failure.

XLP is a Christian charity that is faith-based but not faith-biased: working equally with young people of all faiths and none. It has a wealth of experience running grassroots youth projects all year round and is continually striving to introduce new and exciting initiatives.

ABOUT LONDON

London is one of the world’s leading financial centres and also has a strong standing in the arts, transport, research and development, science, sports and fashion. However, the reality is that within London there are two very different cities.

There are over 1.2 million children and young people of school age in London. A significant proportion of those live on deprived inner-London housing estates and experience family breakdown, financial deprivation, poor housing, low income, unemployment, educational failure, gangs, crime and anti-social behaviour. However, XLP has witnessed numerous positive stories of young people whose futures have been radically changed. They have moved from a life of hopelessness to a life of hope and purpose. Joining Experience will give you an opportunity to change a life!



"Throughout the year I experienced a very personal change in my life - God used me in so many different ways to be a blessing to my local community. I thought the teaching was really good and I was well equipped before I was to be sent out."

- Stuart, Former Student

"Experience is more than just a gap year. It changed my life. Living in and amongst the most inspiring people I have ever met gave me an invaluable insight into true community, and the passion and drive to see genuine change in inner city London."

- Jazz, Former Student

WORKING IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

PARTNER CHURCHES

Your church placement is an important part of the year. You will be based with an XLP partner church where you will be involved in that church's own youth work and outreach to the community throughout the year. You will be supervised and supported by an experienced youth worker within the church. Your host church will provide accommodation for you with a member of the church, and a pastoral overseer who will meet with you at least once a month. We always aim to provide a placement that is well matched to the Experience student.

XLP TEAM

You will be assigned to one of XLP's borough teams (of 4-6 people) for the year along with other Experience students who are being hosted at other XLP partner churches in the same borough. You will be involved with a variety of different school and community projects under the supervision and direction of one of XLP's senior and highly experienced youth workers.

ARTS

Through music, dance, drama, rap and poetry, XLP aims to reach those who are struggling most with behavioural and educational issues as well as unearthing some incredible hidden talent. Every borough team runs an Arts Showcase which provides a platform for young people to express the challenges they face and to tell their stories through their chosen art form.

XL-R8 DOUBLE-DECKER BUSES

XLP has two customised double-decker buses that travel to inner-London estates to host a range of drop-in sessions providing an exciting and safe environment for young people to attend outside of school hours. You will work with your team and volunteers to provide strong positive role models and through activities, games and discussion, encourage young people to develop positive behaviour and life-skills, raise self-confidence, stay in education, find good alternatives, and set goals and work hard to achieve them.

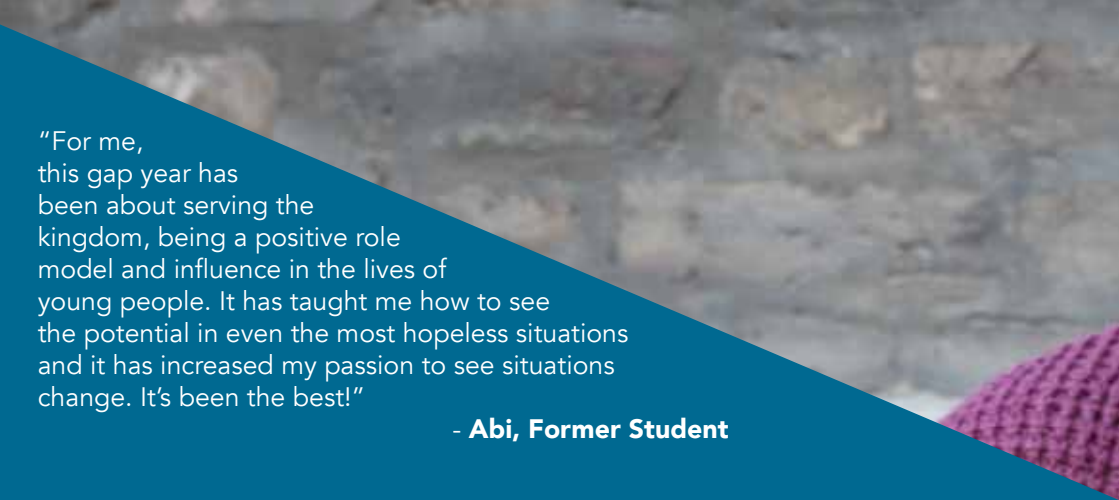
SPORTS, EXCURSIONS AND SUMMER CAMPS

For many young people, growing up in inner-London can mean few, if any, opportunities to experience life outside their own postcode; family situations and cost mean that holidays are often just not possible. Sports, games and trips are a key part of working with young people and XLP offers young people sports activities (football coaching, matches and tournaments), outward-bound excursions (Snowdon or a 'survival' weekend), summer camps (in Dorset), and discussion groups that tackle life issues.

"If you want to be challenged and you want to grow in your faith, come and do Experience."

- Davina, Former Student





“For me, this gap year has been about serving the kingdom, being a positive role model and influence in the lives of young people. It has taught me how to see the potential in even the most hopeless situations and it has increased my passion to see situations change. It’s been the best!”

- **Abi, Former Student**

WORKING IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

The key to XLP’s success in working with young people in the inner city is that we work with them in their family life, in their community life and also in their school life. You and your team will work in schools hosting lunch clubs and delivering assemblies and lessons that help to support young people in their ethical, behavioural and spiritual development.

Lessons – you will support school teachers with the delivery of specialist P.H.S.E. and R.E. lessons. Using the latest films, multi-media and creative resources to aid learning, you will be given the opportunity to teach and lead some sessions and learn how to offer guidance concerning issues such as gangs and violence, anger management, image and identity, and sex and relationships education.

Lunch Clubs – a safe and comfortable environment for young people in their school lunch break. A typical lunch club includes the use of games, videos, stories, challenges, and provides an excellent opportunity to build relationships with young people.

Assemblies – provide a great opportunity for the XLP team to make themselves known to the whole school very quickly and to present important ethical, spiritual and relational issues.

Reading Support – many school students in multi-cultural London struggle with their education if English is their second language. Providing reading support is a simple but effective way to help them to achieve in their education and for you to have a lasting impact on a young person’s life.

Mentoring – building one-to-one relationships with individual school students will be one of the most valuable and rewarding aspects of your year.



TRAINING

The Experience gap year course offers training in Youth Work and Theology. In addition to in-house staff such as Patrick Regan, teaching is also provided by speakers from organisations such as Soul Survivor, Street Pastors and Hope UK.

Key topics for the year include: Overview of the Bible, The Kingdom of God, The Gospels and Acts, Prayer and Evangelism, Leadership and Christian Lifestyle, alongside issues such as Multicultural Britain, Schools Work and Professionalism, Handling Difficult Behaviour and Building Intentional Relationships.

For those who are looking to explore youth work as a career, there is an option to gain a nationally recognised Level 3 (A-level) qualification in Youth Work during the year.

For those who complete their Experience gap year there is also an option to study for a further three years for a BA Degree in Youth Ministry and Applied Theology through a partnership between XLP, St. Mellitus College and Soul Survivor.

The Experience gap year will challenge you to grow in your faith, move outside of your comfort zone, and even consider whether youth work may be something that you are called to do. Career paths of some former students have included: full-time church/ youth ministry, teaching, community support work, the police, social work, and even becoming full-time youth workers with XLP!



"The Experience gap year taught me so much about grace, persistence and faith. It helped me to grow spiritually and rely on God more than I've ever had to before. It was also a lot of fun, with no two days ever being the same."

- Jen, Former Student

"My XLP gap year was probably one of the best opportunities to grow that I've had. It was the first part of a journey discovering what I was born to do."

- Helen, Former Student

"Every day brings a new adventure and a chance to be a bit bolder and better equipped than the day before."

- Josh, Former Student

OVERSEAS MISSION

Overseas mission is an excellent way to gain cross-cultural training, experience a different culture and way of life, and to gain a fresh perspective. XLP has relationships with organisations in Ghana, India, China, Turkey and Jamaica.

During the spring term, you will have the opportunity to go on a ten-day mission. In the past this has been to Ghana where we work with the Ashanti Akim Community and the Jubilee School that was built by XLP and the Ashanti Akim Community Organisation (AACO). The school is providing education for one of the poorest communities in Ghana and is transforming the lives of many children and their families.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The course runs from mid-September to the end of the following July with most students choosing to stay on and support summer projects during August. You are expected to raise the necessary finance. Full details of term dates, holidays when students can return home, and costs can be found on:

www.xlp.org.uk/gapyear/finance.php

If you require any further information, please go to the website www.xlp.org.uk or email experience@xlp.org.uk

If you want to take up the challenge of the inner city then please email experience@xlp.org.uk and request an application form.

Our Address is: XLP, All Hallows on-the-Wall, 83 London Wall, London EC2M 5ND
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"I loved my gap year with XLP! It was a challenging year where I learnt so much about myself and about my faith. XLP showed me the difference we can all make in a young person's life when we take the time to listen, respect and care about them as an individual."

- Ali, Former Student



"We love what XLP are doing; it's important that the rest of the church supports them. I want to encourage everyone to do all that they can to support the work of XLP. They're blazing a trail for the rest of us in our evangelism in the cities of this country."

- Mike Pilavachi, Executive Director of Soul Survivor

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