



We're changing lives through the power of outdoor adventure



Summary

Based in the heart of Merkinch and South Kessock, our outdoor youth groups provide regular positive, healthy, social activities for those who wouldn't otherwise get the opportunity. We aim to build deep, long lasting relationships with young people that develop from primary school into young adulthood.

Progressive Opportunities



Our work in numbers



In 2025 Àban has worked with 281 individual young people across all our activities.



Together our participants have taken part in 724 experiences, totalling 11,077 hours of contact time in the outdoors.

Collectively participants and staff have:





Alladale Wilderness Experience (AWE)

Àban delivered the AWE in partnership with The European Nature Trust for the second time in 2025. Over 6 weeks, 106 S2/3 pupils attended a 5 day residential where they learnt about the nature around them and immersed themselves in their surroundings with mountain biking, bushcraft and hillwalking. Pupils from Dornoch, Tain, Dingwall, Alness, Wick and Invergordon spent their week sleeping in tents/hammocks and cooked for each other which helped them to further develop their social skills, resilience and confidence.

the
european
naturetrust

Theory of change

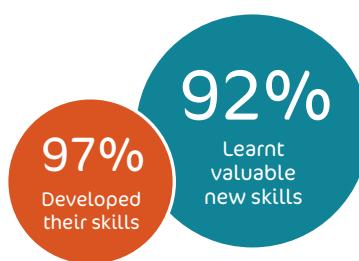
Our theory of change is based on the Adventurous Learning model*. Participants experience Authenticity, Autonomy, Uncertainty, Mastery and Positive Social Relationships during the group activities. On our longer, progressive community based programmes we measure the impact of this way of learning through a series of questions post-experiences. You can see the results for 2025 below:

*Beames, S., & Brown, M. (2016). Adventurous learning: A pedagogy for a changing world. Routledge.



Mastery

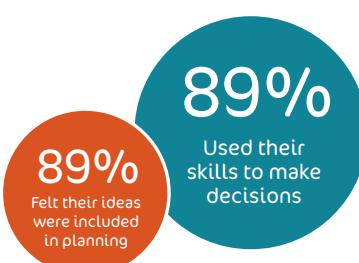
Getting better at something improves young people's confidence and self belief enabling them to take on future challenges.



"I have learned how to manage my emotion on the wall while trusting myself. I have also asked for help more. Physically I learned new stretches and how they help before and after climbing".

Autonomy

Experiencing the freedom to make real decisions helps young people to feel a sense of responsibility and control over their lives.



"I get a sense of responsibility and more confidence by knowing my capabilities".

Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a necessary ingredient for young people's development as it enables creativity, choice and provides real world relevance.



"Àban has given me the confidence and the opportunity to do things I thought wasn't possible and I wasn't capable of".

Authenticity

Adventures which feel authentic, relevant and repeatable are key for young people to continue with the skills and healthy habits in their own time.



"I have since visited some different walks +craggs... gone outside more often with friends and have been more active overall".

Positive Social Relationships

Positive relationships with peers and adults who can role model healthy, pro-social behaviours allow participants to develop trusted connections they may not otherwise have. These relationships often extend beyond the clubs influencing the participants whole ecosystem.



"I've met new friends that I definitely wouldn't have met otherwise I feel like i've also developed my confidence in a group "

Case Study

"Àban has helped me a lot as a person, I go outside a lot more ever since starting their youth activities and I've had lots of opportunities within Aban for personal progression like being a Youth Rep. Aban takes off a lot of the social pressures of being constantly online if you are outdoors with them, and I think that really helps."

