

YOUTH PROGRAMMES

bridging the boredom gap

Nestlé UK is supporting programmes for teenagers that aim to tackle after-school restlessness that can lead to anti-social behaviour and even crime. At the same time its support for such activities is creating brand goodwill

Statistics may be famously boring, but statistics on boredom are surprisingly interesting. Try this one for size: until the summer of 2002, there were no statistics on what children do after school. It was only when the Nestlé Trust, which manages all of Nestlé UK's community and charitable work, in partnership with 4Children asked the pollster MORI to come up with some figures, that any serious light was shed on the subject.

The detailed examination of what 11-18 year olds do with their time when they are out of school unearthed some worrying findings. One in three teenagers go home to an empty house. One in four hang around with nothing to do when not in school – just the time when they are most likely to get into trouble. Seven in ten parents and teenagers think young people commit crimes because there is not enough for them to do. Boredom, the report concluded, has links with antisocial behaviour and sometimes crime, particularly among teenagers.

The findings prompted the Nestlé Trust, which focuses on supporting young people, to deepen its involvement with 4Children, the national charity dedicated to creating opportunities for all children, with which the Nestlé Trust has worked for more than eight years. And they led directly to the two organizations jointly

Make Space has taken a radical new approach to meeting the needs of teenagers and their parents

setting up the Make Space campaign, which since October 2002 has been taking a radical new approach to meeting the needs of teenagers, parents and communities. The £2.5million (\$4.6m) national campaign led by 4Children and supported by the Nestlé Trust is creating a new generation of contemporary out of school clubs for 11 to 16-year-olds and has a target of 3000 clubs across England by 2015.

'Make Space is best understood by the social need it is trying to address', says Ian Rayson, Nestlé UK's head of corporate social responsibility. 'The research we carried out before deciding to proceed showed that young people outside school hours often don't have the places to go or activities to get involved in. This is an important contributory factor to them getting into trouble and also makes them vulnerable. Make Space gives kids a safe place to go where they can have some chill-out time with their mates. It's not like school – these are after school clubs, not an extension of school. They're a modern take on youth clubs, if you like.'

Each organization brings to the partnership what the other cannot: in the case of 4Children, knowledge and expertise of what children need and vital links with local authorities and others working in the same field, together with the skills to ensure children have a say in how the clubs are set up and run. Laura Funnell, the head of Make Space, stresses that the benefits of linking with the Nestlé Trust extend beyond financial support. 'As members of the Nestlé-sponsored network, Make Space Clubs are able to access a wide range of free benefits



■ the Make Space campaign, which promotes out of school clubs for 11 to 16-year olds, 'gives kids a safe place to go where they can have some chill-out time with their mates'

which directly support the young people attending the clubs, and many of these are exclusively designed for Make Space,' she says.

An example of this is Nestlé's Exercise Your Choice programme, which was developed by the Institute of Youth Sport in consultation with young people and a panel of sports specialists. It gets thousands of youngsters every year involved in sports activities that are outside the mainstream – among them basketball, dance and street sports. The Nestlé Making Healthier Easier initiative – in conjunction with the British Nutrition Foundation – provides Make Space Clubs with advice for young people on the foods and drinks they consume and promotes an active lifestyle.

Working with the company to build the network of clubs – there are now more than 1000 – has boosted the charity's wider campaign to ensure that government policy takes account of the needs of young people. It has helped to raise awareness at the highest level, and Tony Blair, the prime minister, has singled out Make Space for praise.

'Deciding to create Make Space, and setting the target of 3000 clubs by 2015, was a big step for us', says Rayson. 'We've been investing in children's activities for years – our support for children's tennis goes back more than four decades and a major part of our business in the UK is the Rowntree business, which has strong links with social issues. But Make Space is far and away the biggest initiative the Nestlé Trust has ever embarked on, and when we started out there was no guarantee it would work. We wanted to invest more, and to move away from being simply a corporate giver of money to being much more involved as partners.'

Involving the company's staff in the work of Make Space is an important part of this. Nestlé employees helped to set up the pioneering Make Space Club at Haling Manor School in Croydon, South London, near the company's UK headquarters, where part of the school canteen has been converted to create a space for the club, which has its own youth worker. The ongoing arrangement works both ways, with children from the school also visiting nearby St George's House, where the company is based.

'As a major employer, these local links are very valuable to us, but the benefits of being a partner in Make Space go much wider', says Rayson. 'It is important that companies like Nestlé are socially responsible. All over the country, people who buy our products are sensitive to what Nestlé does. We want to ensure that our involvement with Make Space and the work we do with young people is widely recognized.'

■ Further information: www.nestle.co.uk and www.makespace.org.uk

The Make Space information line for parents and childcare professionals offers advice and support on all aspects of childcare, including details of local out of school clubs. The number is +44 (0) 20 7522 6960.



■ Nestlé UK's Exercise Your Choice programme was developed in consultation with young people, and has got hundreds of youngsters involved in sports activities that are outside the mainstream

the company

Nescafé, Kit Kat, and Carnation are among the brands owned by Nestlé UK, which has 7000 employees in 13 locations. It:

- contributed more than £2million (\$3.7m) to community projects and charitable organizations in 2004, managed under the umbrella of the Nestlé Trust
- is a member of the Per Cent Club of companies which aim to donate a minimum of one per cent of their pre-tax profits to the community
- is the UK arm of the international company Nestlé, which was founded in 1866 and has 247,000 employees and factories in almost every country in the world.

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This programme is an example of innovative thought (addressing the issue: what do young people do after school?) with follow-up research (in the form of a MORI poll) and real action to make a real difference in setting up the Make Space campaign with the charity 4Children. The immediate success of 1000 clubs since 2002 demonstrates that a need is being met to modernize the youth club concept.

features of particular interest:

- building on an existing long-term partnership between the Nestlé Trust and 4Children
- integration with other Nestlé programmes to build sustainable capabilities in helping young people
- involvement of staff and spreading awareness of the programme to a wider group.

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