

## TFN Impact Report

<b>Name of your Organisation:</b>	Just Like Us
<b>Name of the project TFN funded:</b>	Ambassador Programme
<b>Date Funded by TFN:</b>	07/12/2017
<b>Were you able to undertake your project as planned?</b>	Yes
<b>Can you describe and/or demonstrate the specific impact that TFN funding has had against your initial objectives?</b>	<p>TFN's support has enabled Just Like Us to grow the scale and success of our Ambassador Programme. Donations have helped cover the costs of training almost 100 LGBT+ student role models from our hubs at Bristol, Cardiff, Oxford, London, Manchester and Durham. Since January 2018, our Ambassadors have delivered talks and workshops to over 13,000 school pupils across the UK. Monitoring and evaluation has shown the transformative impact this programme has had on the young people we work with: 85% of school pupils understand why LGBT+ equality matters and what they can do to support LGBT+ peers. We have received moving qualitative feedback from teachers, such as:</p> <p>“It was great to be able to hear the experiences of a young lesbian. Ffion Lewis, who visited us, is one of a former pupil. To hear her experiences made the talk all the more relevant as it was specific to our school. The presentation was clear, concise and helped all the LGBT+ pupils who were present to realise that being LGBT+ is no barrier to living a happy, healthy and successful life. The fact that Ffion was so open and willing to answer questions certainly went down well with the pupils.” Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr</p> <p>And most importantly, feedback from pupils and volunteers about the impact the programme has had on them:</p> <p>“Volunteering has given me the ability to talk to my family about my identity, which I've never been confident enough to do. I came out six years ago, but I think it's because of just like us that I've finally been able to normalise it to my parents.” Just Like Us Volunteer</p> <p>“I personally loved how the two presenters mentioned how being gay will not affect your education. It really touched me, being lesbian myself, and I felt I could strongly relate to both” Pupil</p> <p>“Your Ambassador’s story really inspired me, personally I am a lot like Lauren (except I’m a guy) in the sense that I was the first to come out and be comfortable with it. I felt warm in knowing...others were going through the process.” Pupil</p> <p>TFN's support has helped us to develop and deliver our new training programme and empowered an inspirational group of LGBT+ young people committed to ensuring that LGBT+ school students are able to be themselves and their best.</p>

## TFN Impact Report

<b>What portion of the project did TFN fund?</b>	18%
<b>How many direct beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?</b>	12,500
<b>How many indirect beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?</b>	7,000
<b>Were you able to leverage further funding as a result of TFN support?</b>	No
<b>Did you receive any pro-bono support, volunteer offers or introductions as a result of the event?</b>	Yes, we've benefited from advice and introductions to support our corporate fundraising.
<b>How important was TFN funding in helping you achieve your objectives?</b>	We would have found it difficult to achieve our objectives without TFN funding
<b>Has the training you received from TFN better prepared you in pitching your organisation to potential funders?</b>	Yes
<b>Has TFN increased your capacity to raise further funds?</b>	Yes
<b>Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any other significant changes?</b>	Since we presented at TFN, Just Like Us has grown from 1 full time employee to 3 full-time and two part-time members of staff. Our national campaign, School Diversity Week, reached 650,000 school students in almost 340 constituencies.
<b>Do you have any other comments or feedback on the experience of the TFN process?</b>	TFN was the most enjoyable and inspiring fundraising experience. Alongside introductions to potential donors and supporters, we developed on-going and supportive relationships with the other charities presenting so we can continue to share and learn from each other.
<b>Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of the project?</b>	<p>Tom's story -</p> <p>I came out as gay at 22. In the midst of a suicidal depression, I began realising how detrimental hiding my sexuality and mental health struggles over the previous decade had been. I'd tried desperately to be a 'normal' straight man, afraid of who I really was. This prevented me ever learning to accept and become comfortable with my true self. I was storing mental health and self-esteem issues that have taken well into my twenties to come to process.</p> <p>Something that kept me going during this time was an idea,</p>

## TFN Impact Report

somewhere in the back of my mind, that if I made it through, I wouldn't want my struggle to be in vain. Coming out the other side, I wanted to prevent other young people having to struggle as I did, nor reach crisis points like mine.

It was while studying for a masters at UCL in 2016 that I first encountered Just Like Us, in its early days of recruiting and training LGBT+ university students to become ambassadors. It seemed the opportunity I needed - using my story to empower others. Tentatively, I signed up.

Empowering others gives only half the picture. Little did I know the immeasurably positive impact that volunteering with Just Like Us would have on me.

Though I was finally open about my sexuality and mental health with those closest to me, feelings of shame and fear about myself lingered. Speaking in schools about my own experience was the step I needed to start owning my story, and accept my sexuality and my struggles as essential parts of what makes me me.

Previously, I'd barely spoken in front of an audience of more than 30. And never ever about such personal stuff. I was terrified before my first assembly, which I delivered solo to 320 year nines in an east London school. Yet I emerged buzzing from what was an exhilarating, empowering experience. After my talk, students asked genuinely thoughtful and kind questions about me and my story. I remember thinking, if this has helped even one of these kids get closer to accepting themselves, it's worth it.

The more I've delivered my story through assemblies and workshops, the more naturally it has come to me. I've now spoken to over 2,000 kids, and it's transformed me in ways I'd never anticipated.

The icing on the cake? I gave assemblies at my own secondary school. This was a major milestone in my journey - I'd come full circle, and laid some remaining demons to rest. The 14-year-old Tom wouldn't have dreamed he could ever do something like this. It's given me hope for the future.