



In Chandigarh, India, Vivek High School students recycle waste materials into useful household objects, weaving polythene bags and waste wool into tablemats and coasters.

also used the term “movement” to describe Gordonstoun, the badge schemes and Outward Bound.

Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Hahn had very similar views on education. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, from before the First World War to after the Second World War, stated that the education system should include the holistic education of students through activities rather than just academic education and the cult of games. Hahn had been holistically educating his own students since 1920 and, on a number of occasions, explicitly argued that state education was based too much on academic learning.

It therefore appears that this movement, through demonstrations of its educational system and soliciting educational institutions, tried to change or, at the very least, influence the educational system at the time, to modify it to become one that was holistic in nature, dealing with the development of the “whole” person. This was to be the Salem system that Hahn had used at his schools and which was represented in the County Badge Award with its four elements – project, expedition, service and sporting achievement.

Your Disability is Your Opportunity

Hahn’s aim was holistic education, which was based on the German educational reform movement and on his and Prince Max of Baden’s experiences in Germany during and after the First World War. Hahn believed that this aim would be achieved through a balanced curriculum, with activities added to academic education. Therefore, for a balanced curriculum with the aim of holistic education, it is the combination of elements that is important with subsequent learning in each of these elements. As it is likely students will have strengths and weaknesses in different areas, then it is important not only to develop these weaknesses, but also, Hahn believed, to teach them how to overcome these:

“Make children meet with triumph and defeat. After you have replenished their tanks of vitality, by discovering and maintaining their strengths, but not before, you should tackle their weaknesses. It is possible to wait on a child’s inclinations and gifts and arrange carefully for an unbroken series of successes. You may make him or her happy that way – I doubt it – but you certainly cripple him for the battle of life. It is our business to plunge the children into enterprises in which they are likely to fail, and we may not hush up that failure; but we should teach them to overcome defeat”.

This concept of triumphing over adversity is something Hahn returns to time and time again in all of his educational endeavours. Hahn uses phrases such as, “he that overcometh, eats from the Tree of Life”, “your disability is your opportunity” or “the boy has defeated his defeatism” to describe the concept. “Make the children meet with triumph and defeat” was the second of the Seven Laws of Salem that are still a central part of the Salem system:

1. Give children the opportunity for self-discovery.
2. Make the children meet with triumph and defeat.
3. Give the children the opportunity of self-effacement in the common cause.
4. Provide periods of silence.
5. Train the imagination.
6. Make games important, but not predominant.
7. Free the sons of the wealthy and powerful from the enervating sense of privilege.

The value of these laws lies in the combination of the elements as the value of the County Badge was deemed to lie in the combination of the four elements. The impact of Hahn can clearly be seen in this statement:

“In the past, a boy has too often been allowed to concentrate on the activity in which he can most likely excel. This is to encourage his strength; but he also needs to be helped to overcome his weakness. The majority of boys will face one or two tests with the feeling that they can never master them. They need to be shown how to defeat their defeatism.”

The concept of overcoming your weakness can be seen in the German Sports Badge which contained different sections, with students having to reach certain standards in all sections to get the award. As Hahn wished to see development in all aspects of an individual, different elements were added to the German Sports Badge (service, expeditions and project).

Expeditions were added as Hahn believed they required the individual to carefully plan them and carry them out with endurance. He had found that expeditions provided the antidote to the effects of undue hero worship on the student athlete who was often “no friend of wind and weather”. Therefore, expeditions provided a different type of test of the athlete and also provided the opportunity for the shy or non-games player to shine, fulfilling his aim of holistic education.

The method of education that Hahn was advocating allowed for the individual to have “discovered his strength and begun to cure some of his weakness”.

The average boy, when first confronted with these tests, will nearly always find some that look forbidding, almost hopelessly out of his reach. Others he will find easy and appealing to his innate strength; but once he has started training he will be gripped by magic – a very simple magic, the magic of the puzzle, for you cannot help going through with a game of patience that has begun to “come out” – and he will struggle on against the odds, until one day he is winning through in spite of some disability. There always is some disability; but, in the end he will triumph, turning defeat into victory, thus overcoming his own defeatism”. Hahn believed that the incentive to complete the scheme and gain the badge, at Outward Bound or through the County Badge Scheme, provided the individual with the motivation to overcome areas of weakness. Thereby learning would occur (or be likely to) and “the boy has defeated his defeatism and now becomes a self-trainer, determined to persevere”

The expedition test is one part of this method but “the expedition test is considered more important than any other, for any expedition worthy of its name contains conditions of adversity”. Hahn stated that he regarded the expedition test as “vital”. “Expeditions can be a great help in training the ‘power to overcome.’ They should have a place of honour in the timetables of schools.”

Hahn felt that the young had an innate urge to test themselves. In the context of war therefore, education should contain “risks, supreme tests and a glamour which will make the romance of war fade”. A phrase that he used often was that these should be “conquests without the humiliation of the conquered”.

When talking about the activities around which Outward Bound schools are based, Hahn states that, “the sea and the hills are by no means the only possible transmitters”, and that, “endless variations are possible: practical seamanship; bird-watching; a chapter of contemporary history; mountaineering; the handling of forestry tools; pre-mining training; bee-keeping; free stone-masonry; horsemanship”.

In 1936, Hahn had stated his wish to start a horsemanship school with students from outside the school who would board in their own homes. In 1936, a similar scheme - but this time for girls - was being discussed.

It appears that the intention of these hostels was the holistic development of the individual, but this time through the activity of horsemanship.

Although Hahn is associated with outdoor activities, we believe it is an important and possibly overlooked point that he believed the concept of “overcoming your disability” could be applied to many activities. Expeditions provided vital tests, but these expeditions could be centred on a number of activities. The important point was that the activities provided the students with the opportunity to overcome their disability.

Along with the four pillars, these two themes of inclusion and expansion and finding strength through overcoming our disabilities, are visible in the organisations that Hahn inspired and are at the heart of his philosophy of education. This book captures images of these organisations today and will no doubt be popular throughout the ever-growing extended family of Hahn. Together, the words and images describe the influences Kurt Hahn had, and continues to have, on providing powerful developmental and engaging educational opportunities for people around the world.

Nick Veevers BEd MSc is an outdoor educator and school teacher in North West England. He has taught extensively in Outdoor Centres and, more recently, developed outdoor programmes in Schools about which he is passionate.

Pete Allison PhD FRGS is a lecturer at The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh. He is a former Outward Bound instructor and committed to expeditions and experiential learning.

Together, they have recently written a book on the early life of Kurt Hahn with a focus on outdoor activities.

Sophie Weidlich MA, Kurt Hahn-Archivist, Schule Schloss Salem, 1990-2010. She has been an Educational Consultant since 2004.

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The second generation of UWC graduates in Mostar celebrates the pursuit of peace through education in post-war Bosnia.

Chronology of Kurt Hahn’s Life

by Nick Veevers and Pete Allison

1886	Kurt Matthias Robert Martin Hahn is born to wealthy upper middle-class Jewish parents on the 5th of June in Berlin.	1940	County Badge Experimental Committee formed. Gordonstoun is evacuated from Morayshire and moved to Plas Dinam (Wales) for the duration of the war, returning in 1945.
1904	Hahn graduates from the Wilhelms Gymnasium in Berlin that is based in the traditional curriculum.	1941	First ‘Outward Bound’ courses run in Aberdovey, Wales.
1902	Together with two students from Abbotsholme School in England, Hahn goes on a walking holiday in the Dolomites. Here they discuss their educational experiences and at the end of the trip the two boys present Hahn with a copy of German educational reformist Hermann Lietz’s book Emlohstobba – the reading of this book and the meeting with the two students plays a significant part in Hahn’s future career and educational development.	1946	The Outward Bound Trust is formed under the chairmanship of Sir Spencer Summers.
1904-1914	Hahn studies classical philosophy and philology at the Universities of Berlin, Heidelberg, Freiburg, Gottingen, and Oxford.	1949...	The following Schools are founded along the lines of Salem and Gordonstoun: Anavryta, Greece, 1949; Louisenlund, Germany, 1949; Battisborough, England, 1955; Rannoch, Scotland, 1959; Box Hill, England, 1959; Athenian School, USA, 1965.
1910	Hahn publishes, at the age of 24, Frau Elses Verheissung (Frau Else’s Promise), a book on an educational theme.	1953	Hahn retires as Headmaster of Gordonstoun due to ill health.
1914-1918	Hahn works for the German Foreign Office (Zentralstelle fur Auslandsdienst), interpreting and analysing the British Press and preparing reports on Britain’s political, economic and wartime activities, as well as the morale of her people. Later, he becomes the private secretary to Prince Max of Baden, the last Imperial Chancellor of Germany.	1956	The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme starts (based on Hahn’s earlier Badge Schemes).
1920	Schule Schloss Salem, a co-educational boarding school, is founded by Prince Max of Baden and Kurt Hahn and officially opened in Prince Max’s home in Salem, southern Germany, on April 14th.	1962	Atlantic College established in Wales by Kurt Hahn and Sir Lawrence Darvall - the first of the United World Colleges.
1930-1933	Rise of the Nazi party in Germany.	1966	Round Square is founded – made up of schools following Hahn’s educational philosophy.
1932	August – Hitler supports the murderers of a young communist (known as the Potempa or Beuthen murder) and, as a result, Hahn sends a letter to all Salem alumni and asked them to break with Hitler or with Salem.	1974	Hahn dies on December 14 at Ravensburg near Salem, where he is buried on December 20.
1933	Hitler is appointed Chancellor (January), Hahn is arrested and put in Prison (March 11) and later released (March 16). Hahn, at the age of 47, is forced to flee Germany for England.	Apart from the cited material, this history has been adapted from the Kurt Hahn archive (2006), Rattan (2004), and Rohrs and Tunstall-Behrens (1970).	
1934	Hahn founds and becomes Headmaster of Gordonstoun School, Morayshire (Scotland).		
1936	Gordonstoun Badge is first mentioned, which changes name to the Moray Badge later in the year.		
1938	County Badge scheme is first mentioned. Hahn becomes a naturalised British subject.		



Outward Bound: The Inward Odyssey

www.outwardbound.net

Patron HRH The Duke of Edinburgh



Were it not for the rise of fascism and the exigencies of war that brought Kurt Hahn and Lawrence Holt to the table at Aberdovey in the summer of 1941, there might never have been an Outward Bound. Hahn’s passion for social justice—he intensely disliked social and political chaos, especially the virulent strain that menaced Germany after World War I—and his fervent optimism about humankind inspired him to embrace a youth development opportunity that Holt had proposed to fund. Holt wanted a sea school that would attract youth from a cross section of British industry, community, and education, including Hahn’s famed Gordonstoun School, and prepare them for leadership. The school would involve “training through the sea, not for the sea” to build character when faced with adversity. It would also include rescue training, athletics, and community service. Holt, the newly appointed senior partner in the famed Blue Funnel shipping line, gave Hahn just a couple of months to begin enrolling students.

Today, almost 69 years later, Outward Bound is still enrolling students, at the inspiring pace of nearly 250,000 each year. Reaching across a vast range of political and socio-economic circumstances, Outward Bound’s students come from far more than the 35 countries in which it now operates. As in its beginning, the organisation works primarily with young people, but also with adults, educators, businesspeople, and political leaders. As Hahn intended, Outward Bound strives to include a diverse mix of participants, including, through the generosity of its supporters, many whose economic situation would otherwise be an obstacle to involvement.

While Outward Bound still hews strongly to Hahn’s belief in the value of an “expedition” as a means to test resiliency and develop confidence, Outward Bound has moved to include experiences beyond those of its most famous venue, the rugged outdoors. One can now experience Outward Bound expeditions in a multiplicity of settings, from the classroom to the boardroom, from the dramatic landscapes of the Indian Himalaya to the gritty cityscapes of Glasgow. Its activities are no less diverse—in any given year Outward Bound’s participants can be found climbing unfrozen waterfalls in Japan, sailing the Malacca Strait off the coasts of Malaysia and Singapore, helping in a Philadelphia soup kitchen, or riding camels on the desert sands of Oman. Its activities are limited only by the imagination of its staff.

On the surface many see Outward Bound as an outdoor organisation, but at its core Outward Bound is about building character through experiences involving adventure or service that stimulate compassion. It is, as Hahn said, more about training through the sea than for the sea. As the late Yale University Chaplain, William Slone Coffin Jr., mentioned during his keynote to the 1988 Outward Bound International World Conference in Cooperstown, New York, “Outward Bound is at the service of something bigger than Outward Bound.... I think values are less taught than caught, and that’s why I’m a great believer in Outward Bound....”

It was written some years ago that Hahn was “a citizen of global mankind.” Outward Bound has become a denizen of Hahn’s vision of empowering people worldwide to strive for a more just society. Hahn’s educational ideas and ideals have been projected across the globe to 35 countries on five continents. “To serve, to strive and not to yield.”

Ian Wade, Executive Director, Outward Bound International