

Miriam Hyman Memorial Trust

Evaluation & Impact

of

Miriam's Vision: A Response to the 2005 London Bombings

Executive Summary

March 2018

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Miriam Hyman was one of the fifty-two people killed in the London bombings of July 7th 2005. The way in which she lost her life led to the realisation that young people need to be better educated about social inclusion, respecting fundamental rights and rejecting violent terrorism and extremism in conflict resolution.

Miriam's Vision: A Response to the 2005 London Bombings was designed for 11- to 14-year-old learners (miriamsvision.org). This free education resource was developed by the Miriam Hyman Memorial Trust (MHMT) in association with the UCL Institute of Education and Cophthall School, which Miriam attended. Written by teachers for teachers, it focusses on the consequences of 7/7 and is a preparation for responsible adulthood, developing both life skills and academic ability, to promote **a more inclusive society, safer from all forms of violent extremism.**

Miriam's Vision is underpinned by two self-evident facts:

- Adversity, from the mundane to life-changing situations, will affect people of all ages;
- A major contributory factor to the London bombings was fear between communities because of differences in race, religion and tradition.

Miriam's Vision shows by example from the events of 7/7, what it means to **act constructively in the face of adversity**. As one learner said: "people who do these attacks are trying to pull us apart when it really brings us together". In terms of **diversity**, a teacher said: "*This is a very mono-cultural part of the country. It took them (learners) a long time to get their heads round the fact we live in a multi-cultural country; that people's rights have been infringed because of their colour or religious beliefs.*" Learners expressed **empathy** for the condition of others: "*So important to know about the consequences for the families, the injured ... they all had a life ... I still feel shocked to think about the loss of life ... it's so crazy.*"

Mission: To systematically incorporate Miriam's Vision into school timetabling, within a range of classroom situations where educators are mainly facilitators and learners take as much responsibility as possible for their own learning.

Miriam's Vision lesson plans include:

History, Citizenship and PSHE: Dealing with adversity and coping mechanisms;
Geography, Art and Dance: Contextualising diversity, defined as local response to universal needs.
miriamsvision.org/nationalcurriculum

Benefits for learners

- Knowledge, understanding, coping strategies to assist rational action.
- Acquiring social and emotional life skills, in addition to academic competence.
- Understanding diversity.
- Developing empathy.
- Building confidence and self-worth through activities that impact the real world constructively.

Benefits for teachers

- Access tried and tested free, unique, high quality lesson plans, supporting resources and guidance notes in six subjects. Modules range between three and seven lessons.
- Meet curriculum requirements wherever indicated.
- Provide a non-confrontational approach to controversial issues including violent extremism.
- Facilitate learning: encourage learners to take as much responsibility as possible for their own work.

Benefits for schools

- Provision of a tried and tested learning programme to fulfil the "duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". (Prevent Strategy)
- Provide contexts to "promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs". (Prevent Strategy 2011).

Benefits for parents

- Security in the knowledge their children are receiving a “rounded” education in intellectual skills, social and emotional probity.

Confidence that education includes preparation for the challenges of the 21st century.

- Assurance their children have the freedom to express themselves fearlessly in the safety of the class-room, providing they show respect for the fundamental rights of all.

Benefits for employers

- An educational system which produces a flexible workforce suited to the 21st century, adept in social and emotional skills in addition to academia.

- Respecting other value systems.

- Questioning received wisdom, thinking critically, acting rationally, communicating effectively.

- Handling challenges with equanimity.

Benefits for the community

- Safer from extremism.

- Better awareness of the needs of others.

- More genuinely inclusive and cohesive

- Improved relationships and atmosphere.

Five messages incorporated in the lesson plans are about awareness of transferrable life skills

(i) We may not always be able to control what happens but we can control our responses.

(ii) Negative events can have both positive and negative results.

(iii) People from other backgrounds and traditions have similarities as well as differences.

(iv) Choice of peaceful rather than violent routes to resolving conflict.

(v) Empathy rather than apathy can make a positive difference to the quality of one’s own life *and* that of others.

Teacher: All essential messages to students said to be immensely valuable in providing skills for life and **“should be discussed in all schools.”**

Creating a strong evidence base:

The Trust considered it of crucial importance to examine empirically and **evaluate the interpretation, implementation and potential impact of Miriam’s Vision *unique* lesson plans and supporting resources in actual classroom settings.**

This was made possible by a grant from the Treasury and passed on to the DCMS through the Cabinet Office. A comprehensive study was conducted from 2016 to 2018.

Education programme and research structure

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Schools invited to participate | 54 | |
| | Pilot | Main Study |
| PROGRAMME | | |
| Number of schools | 8 | 7 |
| Number of learners reached | 380 | 670 |
| Number of teachers involved | 14 | 30 |
| REAEARCH | | |
| Number of schools | 8 | 7 |
| Learner questionnaires completed | 225 | 670 |
| Learner focus group participation | 0 | 80 |
| Teacher interviews | 15 | 14 |

Key features of Miriam’s Vision

- Miriam’s Vision is a first-hand account of the events of “7/7”; the narrative is engaging and is a non-confrontational way of dealing with the threat of violent extremism. Underlying negative conditions such as fear, ignorance, apathy, low self-esteem, and vulnerability are addressed, rather than symptoms expressed in race hate, stigma, prejudice, etc.

- Lessons are delivered in a range of learning situations which are secular and a-political.
- Time is allowed for reflection in each subject, enabling learners to relate the lessons to their own lives and communities, seeing the world in a balanced light at the end of each Scheme of Work.

Key findings

1. Only 2.5% (or 16) out of 670 learners surveyed already knew about the 7/7 London bombings. Miriam's Vision fills a gap in knowledge and understanding of these events and their consequences which are of immediacy for government and citizens.
2. Teachers confirmed that the five essential messages in Miriam's Vision developed skills for life which would have a long-term impact on young people. "Rather than telling them (learners) or teaching them they realised themselves how they could behave responsibly".
3. Fourteen focus groups of a total of 80 learners demonstrated maturity in appreciating the multi-faceted aspects of "understanding" resilience in adversity, contextualising diversity and raising awareness/empathy for "others".
4. Teachers were enthusiastic about the approach to a Prevent strategy based on factors which bind societies and promote British values through experiential learning.
5. Schools using Miriam's Vision can show that this programme assists Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, relevant for Ofsted inspection.

Learners and their teachers were strongly in favour of introducing Miriam's Vision to schools.

Learners:

- "The most important thing I learned from Miriam's Vision was about terrorist attacks but you don't have to respond negatively to negative events". **89% agreed "we can't always control what happens but we can control our response"**. "I've never learned about terrorism before... can't take life for granted.

- "We need to hear what everyone thinks ... and talk about it in school...in case you are scared ... we need to understand."

- "I will never be bowed by terrorism" and "we should not be protected from bad things ... we need to know what's happening around the world so that we can learn from it and can see the significance of the consequences for other people ... and maybe we can use it in the future to keep us safe".

- **79% agreed they were made aware of the needs of others.**

- Miriam's Vision is a "vision of hope... for the right to live, and enjoy life." "We learnt not to take everything at face value, ... but research and question, (trying) not to judge people; (but) get to know them."

"This is an amazing unit of work which will educate and inspire ... will help people to understand what happens and help prevent events like this happening again... All the victims had their own unique lives and you don't have to respond negatively to negative events".

Teachers:

- All the main messages in the lesson plans were immensely valuable in providing skills for life and "**should be discussed in all schools**".

"This has been an unusual opportunity because they would hear (about terrorism) on the news, so to come to school, explore attitudes and opinions of other people ... has been a hugely rewarding experience." "This is recent history, and could affect us all so we should know how to deal with it."

- Miriam's Story and 7/7 is 'more relevant now than ever'. Initially it was not easy for learners to think "I'm going to be positive about this." But they were inspired when they saw the good things that were happening as a consequence of 7/7.

- Provided "a platform to discuss matters of real concern to the students and perfect to for Key Stage 3."

There is an urgent need for informed, open discussion in schools for learners aged 11 to 14 which relate to the current global political, social and economic climate. Teachers and learners realise that fear can be overcome by understanding, that there are constant opportunities for making positive choices, that actions have consequences for individuals who make them and for others.

Miriam's Vision is unique:

- It is topical yet sufficiently distant in terms of the original incident, for positive outcomes to have been implemented and developed.

- Learners engaged *throughout* all the lessons in an emotional, social and intellectual learning experience which is current and of great concern to government and citizens. "The way the lessons are presented; so positive and empathetic, is unique and makes it stand out compared with many other resources ... especially now that terrorism is current. It's brilliant."

- Miriam's Vision was developed from knowledge to understanding, to coping with confidence and acting rationally in order to deal with fear, irrespective of its symptoms in violent terrorism, race hatred, knife crime, or any other form of non-constructive behaviour. Fear is replaced by curiosity, generosity and understanding; by learning from example of those involved in 7/7, and in actually experiencing another culture. Teacher: *"The Resource shows coping mechanisms and ways to be positive about difficult, negative situations. ... This will have a lasting impact on students"*. Learner: *"We learned a lot that we wouldn't learn in normal lessons, like ... the massive effect on people's lives, so we need to know why everything is how it is, then we wouldn't be scared by it but able to deal with it"*.
- Awareness that emotional literacy should have a place in educational programmes, not least because of the connection with mental health.
- The "Duty (on schools) to prevent people being drawn into terrorism" is put into practice by encouraging open discussion about features which bind societies.
- Promotes British values through experiential learning.

The way forward

The Miriam Hyman Memorial Trust needs to build on the positive response from schools, the enthusiasm of teachers and learners, supported by the strong evidence from this research, to grow the programme. The next immediate steps are to:

1. Disseminate Miriam's Vision by accessing more schools.
2. Continue evaluation and refinement of the Resources.
3. Raise awareness in schools and in the wider community.
4. Involve parents.
5. Extend Miriam's Vision to primary schools.
6. Raise awareness of the need for systematic inclusion of controversial or "difficult" subjects in basic teacher training. "It is crucial to learn *how* to deal with difficult and upsetting situations because it is a preparation for life". (School M3 History teacher).

The evidence is that Miriam's Vision will retain relevance by promoting transferable life skills and reasoned response to adversity; by contextualising diversity through experiential learning, and engaging in narratives that impact positively on the needs of others. Education in social and emotional skills, in addition to academia, can provide a useful route to living in an inclusive society, safer from all forms of extremism.

Watch the MHMT Miriam's Vision video on Youtube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=UdT0r8IOF80

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The author of this report is Mavis Hyman, Chair of Trustees of the Miriam Hyman Memorial Trust and whose career (before retirement) as a sociologist was in social research, housed in departments of London University.

Two MHMT trustees with backgrounds in education and also members of our Advisory Group carried out the fieldwork. James Playfoot conducted the pilot. Esther Hyman conducted the main study and amended Miriam's Vision based on feedback.

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