

2009 NATIONAL YOUTH MENTORING CONFERENCE

In August, the Youth Mentoring Network hosted the biennial 2009 National Youth Mentoring Conference.



More than 25 presenters spoke to a sold-out conference held in Māngere, Auckland.

The conference aimed to create an environment of information-sharing, networking and learning amongst those currently working with young people. It also aimed to raise awareness of the benefits that can be achieved through positive role modelling and effective youth mentoring practice.

Minister Paula Bennett opened the conference explaining that mentoring can sometimes be the turning point for a young person.

“These young people need us. They need a hand up, someone to listen to them and believe in them, someone who can guide them towards finding and fulfilling their very best potential, someone who can model a different way to be – a way

that embraces, strengthens, encourages and provides support.”

During the action-packed 2 days, Pat Bullen and Dr Sue Farruggia from the University of Auckland covered research results on positive youth development and the use of informal mentors.

Ian Williams, from the University of Melbourne, spoke about the role of mentoring in therapeutic adventure.

He mentioned that outdoor activity fits very well with mentoring as young people walk alongside an older mentor. The approach is very much about ‘building what’s strong versus fixing what’s wrong’.

Principal Youth Court Judge Andrew Becroft highlighted some alarming youth justice trends. He shared what is being seen in New Zealand’s youth courts and challenged the audience to provide positive male role models.

Workshop sessions were held, and speakers from well-established programmes working within youth mentoring shared their experience.

Michael Barnett, Chief Executive of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, talked about the success of CadetMax – an employment transition programme, while Taniera Hawke, shared the positive outcomes of the Maori mentoring programme He Ara Tika.

A survey undertaken at the conference highlighted several areas of assistance required by the sector. As a result, the Youth Mentoring Network has announced they will be working on developing:

- a national register of youth mentors with access to volunteers by youth mentoring programme providers
- youth mentoring training involving opportunities for:
 - mentors to complete five

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- 1-day workshops and receive a Foundation Certificate in youth mentoring in New Zealand
- organisations wishing to set up a youth mentoring programme to attend a 3-day workshop. They will receive registered certification by the national body for youth mentoring in New Zealand.

General Manager for the Youth Mentoring Network Bev Cassidy-Mackenzie says,

"Attendees found the conference valuable. We are proud to have the opportunity to respond to what the sector needs and provide solutions that will assist effective youth mentoring programmes."

For more information about the *Guide to Effective Practice in Youth Mentoring New Zealand*, visit the Youth Mentoring Network website www.youthmentoring.org.nz.

Young people come up with ideas for Youth '07 resources

When thinking about how to get your message across to young people, it is important that you involve them.

Youthline recently held workshops with young people to get their input into how best to communicate the findings of the *Youth '07 Health and Wellbeing of Secondary School Students in New Zealand* report.

The focus was on developing youth-friendly resources so that important findings from the report could be understood by young people.

With the help of funding from the Vodafone Foundation and input from the young people, an interactive online quiz and posters were created.

"It was really great to give the young people the opportunity to be involved in this project. They had fantastic ideas, and we were able to use these together to create something that was interactive and eye-catching," says Nao Guy, Youthline Information Services Manager.

In July, Youthline presented the resources to the Australian and New Zealand Symposium on Youth Health Workforce Development hosted by SYHPANZ (the Society for Youth Health Professionals Aotearoa/New Zealand) and received a

lot of positive feedback from the organisations that attended.

"The young people were really excited to see the final product that they had created as a result of all their ideas and hard work," says Nao.

The posters have been distributed throughout the country to schools, health centres and organisations that work with young people, such as NZAAHD and the National Youth Worker Networks.

If you would like copies of the poster sent out to you, please email: nao@youthline.co.nz.



Activate present to Select Committee on transport issues

Activate are a Wellington-based youth advisory group for the Ministry of Youth Development. Formed in 2005, members are aged between 15–21 years.

Tai Ahu, an Activate member, shares his experience on presenting an oral submission to the Select Committee in Parliament.

Our role is to inform the Government on youth issues and opinions and be a link between the Ministry of Youth Development and young people. We strongly believe that young people need to be involved in decisions that affect our communities. We meet once a month for 3 hours to discuss a range of different issues that affect young people in Aotearoa. As a result, we have made submissions to a number of different Select Committees that go towards making laws young people have to abide by.

On 30 July, Activate submitted to the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee on two Bills that were currently before Parliament: the Vehicle Confiscation and Seizure Bill and the Land Transport (Enforcement Powers) Amendment Bill.

We collected a wide range of views through surveys and talking to young people. These views included the opinion that the Bills created mistrust between young people and Police.

Oliver Ibbetson, Tai Ahu and Alexis Luo represented views across a broad spectrum of New Zealand youth, including young car enthusiasts, youth workers and other interested young people. These Bills propose to create more serious legal consequences for car enthusiasts, including:

- giving councils the power to ban or restrict street racing and cruising
- giving Police the power to take young people's licences off them if they fail to stop for Police
- increasing the fine from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for not providing Police with truthful information
- giving Police the power to crush cars that young people street race in
- giving Police the power to sell cars if young people do not pay their fines.

"It will only breed resentment and disrespect for the authorities," one young person said.

The resounding response was that the proposed law would not achieve what it was designed to achieve and that the real issue of education around driving attitude was being ignored. One young person said, "It will decrease the number of racing cars on the street but not necessarily change driving behaviours."



Heaps of young people felt that there was no real harm to cruising and that the current law is something that young people do not know enough about. Government needs to specifically consult young people when they are introducing laws.

Although we were really nervous, we received warm responses from the Select Committee. Some of the members were sympathetic to the views we expressed, while others were a little less so. The Select Committee was impressed with our submission and asked to hear more from Activate in terms of how the wider community can engage with young car enthusiasts.

We also made Prime news that evening!

We encourage any young person to have a say on these and other issues – **kia kaha koutou mā!**

To find out more about Activate, contact the Ministry of Youth Development by email mydinfo@myd.govt.nz or phone (04) 916 3300.

UPDATE ON E OHO

In our July issue of 12to24 we featured E Oho – a group of young people from the Fordlands, Western Heights and Koutu communities in Rotorua.

As a result of the submissions they made to the Rotorua District Council requesting the development of youth-friendly spaces, the council has allocated \$600,000 to their ideas.

Paula Bennett, Minister for Social Employment and Development, wrote a letter to the young people of E Oho and congratulated them on their achievement.

The Ministry of Youth Development and Rotorua District Council are very proud of their achievement and congratulate them.



GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

For SENZ Training and Employment Centre, youth development means getting out of the classroom, taking young people out of their comfort zones and connecting their learning to the real world in the community.

South Auckland students on the SENZ programme helped organise and referee school sports camps at the Tōtara Springs Christian Centre in Matamata.

The 2-week long camps held in June brought together over 600 students, teachers and caregivers from over 16 intermediate schools from Waikato and Auckland. Sports competitions were held including basketball, touch, rugby, soccer and softball.

The SENZ students said it was tough getting up early in the morning and serving breakfast to the school students, but they appreciated the experience they got working with children, improving their communication and refereeing skills, and working as a team.

"I gained a lot of confidence and refereeing experience," says student Christian Tui.

When asked what the most difficult aspect

of the camps was, they all said that it was dealing with parents who disagreed with their refereeing calls. However, after a bit of coaching and encouragement from their tutors and the camp co-ordinator, they applied assertive communication skills (part of what they are taught in the programme) and became more confident in their refereeing decisions.

"It was awesome! A lifetime experience!" says student Banks Soe.

"Giving back to the community – that's what it's all about, and encouraging them to do that is important," says Coaching Squad Tutor Issac Liava'a.

"We enjoy having the students down for the week and are happy with their attitude and effort. SENZ are well liked by the kids and fit into Tōtara Camp well. We look forward to continuing this partnership," says Andrew Lind, Tōtara

Springs Sports Camp Co-ordinator.

SENZ continue to extend their community reach and, in August, ran a basketball activity centre at the launch of the Government's Kiwisport programme at Bairds Mainfreight Primary School.

Prime Minister John Key announced the initiative in the Ōtara school hall and then joined in with the children at the activity stations outside.

SENZ are currently working with Manukau Counties Sport to see how they can get involved in a pilot sports programme operating with 10 Ōtara primary schools.

Funded by the Ministry of Youth Development and based in South Auckland, SENZ provide challenging, exciting and rewarding programmes for young people. This helps develop skills that lead to employment, tertiary education or further training.

Porirua young people say what they need

Young people from the Porirua Youth Advisory Group (YAG) recently made a submission on the Porirua Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

Bronwyn Kropp, a member of YAG, shares the experience with us.

It's a funny moment in life when you find yourself here, in the council chambers, beside 17 other young people telling the wise and powerful not what your city wants, but what it needs.

Presenting an oral submission on the Porirua City Council's LTCCP was a daunting task for the city's YAG.

It was something we always knew we would do but did not know what form it would take.

After surveying 400 young people in the city and gathering a further 400 signatures of support, we discovered what Porirua really needs is a dedicated youth area. To YAG, this was a youth hang-out but youth hang-out means many different things to many people.

Our proposed youth hang-out will, above all, be a safe and inclusive youth-motivated facility.

To other young people, this is not a hard vision to sell; however, city councillors are a totally different matter.

It was important for us to put whatever we were proposing to council in context. Forty per cent of the population in Porirua are aged below 25, and currently, there is not one location that provides what we feel a youth hang-out should be.

A specific youth-dedicated area must be somewhere that addresses the needs of young people and provides access to resources. Young people need somewhere they can be inspired and dream big.

We propose young people be instrumental in the management of our hang-out – something we believe will make all the difference to its success.

The whole project of the submission was always much bigger than just the 18 young

people in our meetings; we brought the voices of our local communities, our schools and interest groups and our community as a whole.

For us, it was important to address the councillors on their terms. Every detail of our submission, written and oral, was highly considered, right down to what we would wear. We chose to dress in either corporate style or in our school uniforms to reflect the importance of the situation and how seriously we took it. This may seem to be a minor detail but to us it was the little things that mattered, the things that said "we really want this and will go the extra mile to get it".

Along with this approach we thought it was crucial to impart a vision upon our audience. That they could walk away seeing what we were proposing was critical to the success of our submission. It's easy to quote facts and figures, which necessarily made up some of our presentation, but they can be read.

The advantage of being there in person means that you can put a spin on an idea to target a specific audience.

It is very hard to recognise the problems with your own ideas so we included possible problems we might face and how we would solve or mitigate any pre-conceptions about a youth hang-out.

After giving our presentation to council, it was straight back to work on our next project.

We were shocked to find out only days later that we had been granted the feasibility study. Now the hard work really begins. We are currently in the selection phase for who will conduct the study, planting the seed of something that will be of huge benefit to our community.

As clichéd as it sounds, we are making a dream a reality.

FROM OUR Aotearoa Youth Voices Toolkit resource...

A RESOURCE FOR INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING

When the council asked us about what to do with the skate park, I said we needed to ask skate boarders, as only one of us had ever been to the park before!

**YOUTH COUNCILLOR,
17 YEARS**

It's giving young people a voice within the community so that we all have a say in what goes on – creating something that is suitable to everyone because everyone deserves an opinion to be listened to no matter what their age is.

**YOUNG PERSON ON
A STUDENT COUNCIL,
17 YEARS**

FOR YOUR COPY OF AOTEAROA
YOUTH VOICES TOOLKIT
EMAIL MYDINFO@MYD.GOV.TZ





EQUIPT FOR LIFE

614 Youth Services – Salvation Army is based in Wellington and supports youth from the community.

The Ministry of Youth Development fund 614 Youth Services to deliver the Equipt youth development course.

Equipt is a course designed for young people aged 17–24 and focuses on building their confidence and skills.

It runs four times a year over a period of 10 weeks and monitors young people as they complete the course and progress into further training or employment.

Equipt is based around students completing NZQA standards and gaining practical experience. The adventure-based learning activities include caving, kayaking, white-water rafting, high ropes, abseiling and tramping.

Eight students recently completed the mountain craft unit standard – the aim was to participate in building a snow shelter and camping overnight.

In their week-long tramp to the snow on Mt Tongariro, the students learnt survival skills including how to build different kinds of shelter. They then had to spend a night sleeping in their self-built shelter in sub-zero temperatures.

“It was a great experience and the first time I ever touched snow,” says Staenson.

The students were surprised at how warm they could be when sleeping under half a metre of snow on the mountain. Some chose to carve ice out of the snow and build themselves an igloo, providing sleeping space for three people.

“I enjoyed seeing my group pull together and help each other out. I learnt new skills and how to build snow mounds as shelter, which is something I would never have had the chance to do normally,” says Deni.

Students also have the opportunity to gain other qualifications including driver’s licences and first aid certificates. They are invited to join the larger youth services programmes and attend a weekly meal.

YOUNG MAN GETS HIS LIFE BACK



Kristin was homeless, had no money, no ID, and didn't know what he wanted to do with his life.

Kristin had been living at the Wellington men's night shelter and needed somewhere to stay.

614 Youth Services provided Kristin with accommodation in their male transitional home The Inn and enrolled him on their Equipt course.

Kristin's confidence and self-awareness grew as he realised that he could be a success.

He completed the course and got a part-time job at a collections booth where he has been working for 3 months.

Foundation for Youth Development going green

The Foundation for Youth Development (FYD) is working hard to ensure that sustainable practices are instilled across the organisation and within all its programmes, including Kiwi Can (not to be confused with KidsCan), Stars and Project K.



Helping local youth make reusable shopping bags and painting a mural depicting Te Atatū peninsula's eco life are two major projects put together for International Youth Day on 12 August.

Approximately 300 FYD programme participants from Waitākere's Rutherford College will be involved in the activities. Due to temperamental Auckland weather, these have been postponed until mid-September.

"The kids will be making their reusable bags using a natural material – unbleached cotton. It's a win-win for all involved and helps tackle the current challenge of eliminating the use of plastic bags," says Amanda Wheeler, FYD Waitākere Director.

A mural of Te Atatū peninsula will be painted at Rutherford Primary School. It is intended to help brighten up a great local primary school, whilst depicting wonderful local environments.

"The skills students learn from completing their environmental projects include developing awareness and understanding of a natural resource, identifying and solving problems associated with protecting the environment and recognising the impact humans have on the environment," says Amanda.

The Foundation's National Office has recently established a 'green team' of six staff members. They are responsible for identifying development priorities, researching 'green' options and delivering 'green' actions that support environmental sustainability.

FYD provides education and training to staff about environmental sustainability issues and to gain knowledge and align with environmental best practice. They collaborate with like-minded organisations such as EnviroSchools, Sanford, Trees for Survival, Auckland Regional Council and New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Materials (NZCCM).

"We're embracing this year's sustainability theme by recognising the vital role young people play in addressing environmental issues," says Amanda.

To date, Waitākere-based participants of FYD's Stars programme – a programme designed for Year 9 students – have already planted over 1,200 native trees, as part of the Waitākere City Council's Twin Stream Project at Oratia.

Mountaineer and co-founder of the Foundation, Graeme Dingle, said he praised FYD, Waitākere and students for getting behind International Youth Day.

"Getting young people involved in environmental and sustainable projects helps to teach them about the bigger picture."

Kiwi Can children are also educated about the importance of creating a sustainable environment through their Kiwi Can lessons.

"These lessons, which are taught to primary and intermediate school children in 70 schools across the country, cover the importance of environmental sustainability, biodiversity, personal and social responsibility, and interdependence," Graeme says.

"We're doing our bit to reduce the harmful impacts on our planet by educating the next generation to preserve and conserve what they already have."

Safer Journeys – a guide for young people



In mid-August, the Ministry of Transport released *Safer Journeys* – a discussion document outlining key road safety issues and possible government actions that could help to make New Zealand’s roads safer. The document is being used as part of a nationwide consultation process.

As the next generation of drivers and road users, the Government is particularly keen to hear from young people on road safety issues affecting them.

David Eyre, Manager of Road Safety Management at the Ministry of Transport, says that, sadly, young drivers are a group that faces a high road safety risk.

“New Zealanders aged 15–24 make up 14.5 per cent of New Zealand’s population and 16 per cent of all licensed drivers, yet in 2008, they were involved in around 37 per cent of all fatal crashes and 37 per cent of all serious injury crashes.”

It’s no surprise, then, that young New Zealanders have one of the highest rates of road death and injury in the OECD.

To make sure young people were aware of the road safety consultation, the Ministry of Transport approached the Ministry of Youth Development to produce a youth version of the *Safer Journeys* discussion document. This would focus specifically on issues affecting young people.

Regional staff from the Ministry of Youth Development worked with a group of young people to write the youth guide. They facilitated group discussions informing young people about road safety and how to feed into the submission process.

An online survey was promoted to young people through the Aotearoa Youth Voices network, youth councils, secondary schools and youth organisations.

“To achieve this kind of reach to young people is exciting for the Ministry of Transport,” says David.

The Ministry of Youth Development will collect all submissions and write up young people’s views in a report that will be sent to the Ministry of Transport.

“Some of the proposed actions for improving road safety for young drivers are controversial, so it is particularly important for the youth of New Zealand to make their voices heard,” says David.

The proposed actions include:

- raising the driving age to 16 or 17 and extending the length of the learner licence period from 6 to 12 months
- strengthening the restricted licence test to encourage 120 hours of supervised driving practice
- increasing the benefit of professional driver training
- impounding vehicles of those who breach their licence conditions
- introducing compulsory third-party insurance
- introducing vehicle restrictions.

The partnership with the Ministry of Youth Development has been very useful in helping the Ministry of Transport target a traditionally hard-to-reach group in lieu of gimmicks and competitions.

Feedback received from road users will be used to develop a national road safety strategy for the next 10 years. This strategy will be released in December 2009.

Ministry of Defence review

In April this year, the Government announced a review of Defence.



A public consultation process was launched in June by the Minister of Defence to encourage all New Zealanders to make known their views.

As part of that process, the Defence Review 2009 team has been consulting with various focus groups and interested parties.

Working alongside the Ministry of Youth Development and with advice from the Activate youth advisory group, the review team wrote a questionnaire encouraging youth to identify issues in defence they considered to be important and of interest.

Focus groups held in Auckland, Porirua and Christchurch encouraged debate about defence and security matters and provided

us with youth perspectives on the future of the New Zealand Defence Force.

The challenge in asking young people to contribute was to assure them that their opinions, thoughts and insights were valued and would be taken into account in the broader review process. Many of the participants involved had family or friends that were in the services, and some had relatives currently deployed on operations.

Key themes that emerged from the consultation included wanting the New Zealand Defence Force to have:

- greater involvement in the community (yet acknowledging that their primary role is to keep New Zealand citizens safe)
- further participation with youth and the youth justice system
- a bigger role in assisting and looking after our neighbours in the South Pacific.

The review team appreciates the support and involvement the Ministry of Youth Development has displayed throughout this process.

“We would like to thank the pupils of Auckland, Elkington Porirua and YMCA Christchurch. We also appreciate the network of regional youth co-ordinators that assisted with the focus groups around New Zealand.”

The engagement with youth in the community through the able assistance of the Ministry of Youth Development has been a positive and constructive experience. The findings of the youth focus groups will now be reflected in the report on public consultation.

The Government has organised a series of meetings throughout the country to provide members of the public with a further opportunity to contribute to the Defence review.

For more information related to the public meetings, visit our website www.defence.govt.nz or phone (04) 496 0993.

FROM OUR Keepin' it Real resource...

A RESOURCE FOR INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE
IN DECISION-MAKING

“If organisations really knew the good stuff that can happen when you involve young people in decision-making, everyone would be in on it.”

**FORMER YOUTH BOARD MEMBER,
17 YEARS**

“Wouldn't it be great if youth participation was everywhere - like young people were part of decisions from school to their community and the government too?”

**YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER
FROM A RURAL COMMUNITY
ORGANISATION, 16 YEARS**

FOR YOUR COPY
OF KEEPIN' IT REAL
EMAIL [MYDINFO@
MYD.GOVT.NZ](mailto:MYDINFO@MYD.GOVT.NZ)





A place for young people in Stratford

The 'Focus on Youth – by Youth for Youth' project is an innovative new venture for young people in Stratford.

The Stratford District Council received funding to employ a Youth Initiatives Facilitator to research the concept of a youth centre. Funding was provided by the Ministry of Youth Development's Youth Development Partnership Fund and Mayors Taskforce for Jobs.

This is the result of a lot of work done with young people in the community to identify their issues and needs.

In 2002, the Stratford District Council identified a lack of connection with young people and decided to create opportunities for them to be more involved with activities and decision-making.



The need for a public place for young people to go where they can feel comfortable and safe has been strongly voiced.

Youth forums were held and a Youth Council was formed. Over the past six years, the Youth Council has become an active and strong group representing young people in Stratford.

Last year, Celia Lashlie and Jan Francis from the Mayors Task Force for Jobs facilitated a community forum. Members from the community, including young people, met together for 2 days to talk about their needs.

Young people identified three things that were important to them, including a place to go, education employment/training opportunities and health services. With more discussion, it was realised that the latter two needs could be encompassed by addressing the first.

Over the next three months, Youth Initiatives Facilitator Ellen Hall will work with the Youth Council and members of the community to investigate the feasibility of having a youth centre in Stratford.

The most important part of the project is that young people will be involved throughout the process to ensure their needs are being addressed.

"We're conscious that the project needs to be sustainable. By involving young people in the development of the plan, the result will be an inclusive and vibrant outcome," says Council Community Services Manager Pauline James.

If, after the feasibility study has been completed, the result is that a youth centre is viable, then Ellen will develop a project plan.

"We want to thoroughly research the youth centre concept, looking at what works well in other places, and the unique requirements that Stratford young people have," says Ellen.



Students from the Malcam Charitable Trust worked alongside local members of the community to help lay pipework for a new ice luge in Naseby.



STUDENTS BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH OLDER GENERATION

Working alongside the members from the Maniototo Ice Rink, the students built relationships and learnt new skills. Most of the locals the students worked with were old enough to be their grandparents!

It was a great experience for the students to work with people who have a passion for their community. This encouraged them to 'up their game' because their work was appreciated. They received lots of positive reinforcement, home baking and hot food at morning and afternoon tea from women in the community.

It was a big job to lay the pipe work for the luge. The 5-hour work days became 8-9 hour days. Everyone worked together

as a team, placing 30 individual pipes, 50 metres long, in each section. The pipes were then untangled and tightened and nailed down at 1-metre intervals.

The ice rink revamp involved first levelling the rink area and placing lengths of 100 x 50mm timber to raise the height and filling in the gaps with wheelbarrow loads of crusher dust.

On 4 June, the Maniototo Ice Rink

Committee members made the trip down from Naseby to attend the students' graduation from the semi-residential conservation course based in Alexandra. They expressed their gratitude for all the hard work and effort that students put into the project.

In July, those same students made the trip up to Naseby to experience the ice luge and skating rink and, of course, the best jam and cream pikelets ever!



Recognising students with Adventure Conservation Awards



The first Adventure Conservation Youth Awards were held on 7 July at YMCA South Canterbury, Timaru.

This new initiative is aimed at recognising individual growth, celebrating the valuable contributions young people have made to local communities and the important role young people have as visionaries.

Parents, grandparents, friends and caregivers of students all turned up to recognise the 12 students who completed the Adventure Conservation programme.

Award winners received individual achievement certificates, which were presented by various community celebrities and role models from within the community – Stu Mori from Police Youth Aid, Russell Leech, National President of YMCA, Bob Murray, life member of YMCA, and Kim Pursell and Kirsty Henderson from Youth Alley.

The awards covered four main categories for the 24-week Adventure Conservation course run from January–July 2009.

Congratulations to the young people who were recognised for their efforts. The recipients for the awards included:

STUDENT OF THE SEASON

Cassie Beck and Ronan Causipan

MOST CARING STUDENT

Jessica Manunui

MOST RESPECTFUL STUDENT

Kaleb Murphy

MOST RESPONSIBLE STUDENT

Ronan Causipan

MOST HONEST STUDENT

Laison Field

BEST ATTENDANCE BY A STUDENT IN THE PROGRAMME

Laison Field, who achieved 100% attendance.

Other youth awards were also presented to recognise the students who excelled in activities including sport, cooking, arts, culture, music and the outdoors.

The awards night would not have been a success without the help and support of the tutors and staff of YMCA South Canterbury.

The Ministry of Youth Development fund the YMCA in South Canterbury to deliver the Adventure Conservation programme in the Timaru region. They have a dedicated focus on the youth in the community and are committed to delivering programmes to all people most in need of assistance.



WHAT'S HOT IN THE WORLD OF RESEARCH?

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURED PROGRAMMES – A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE

The Ministry of Youth Development has recently been adding to its own understanding about the effectiveness of youth development programmes and wishes to make this knowledge more widely available to the youth development sector.

Rachel Winthrop (formerly a Principal Advisor) recently undertook a review of the structured programmes that the Ministry of Youth Development fund.

This review involved meeting with youth development practitioners, providers and officials and analysing research and evaluation literature on the effectiveness of youth development programmes. It was not a review or evaluation of specific programmes.

This review has resulted in a 90-page report based on the research findings, titled *Youth Development Structured Programmes: A Review of Evidence*, which the Ministry of Youth Development is preparing for publication on its website.

Important conclusions that have resulted from this report include the following.

Positive development happens when young people have enough opportunities to:

- experience supportive adult relationships
- learn how to form close, lasting relationships with peers that reinforce healthy behaviours
- develop positive social values and norms
- feel a sense of belonging, of being valued and that they matter
- develop confidence in their ability to master their environment (a sense of personal efficacy)
- build their skills
- make a contribution to their community.

The Ministry of Youth Development recently hosted three regional forums in Christchurch, Rotorua and Levin. The aim of the forums was to provide emphasis

on the Government's priorities for future direction – extending the reach and range and ensuring value for money.

Rachel recently spoke at the forums, and a number of her key messages were discussed. Her review indicated that there is a strong body of research evidence that shows effective programmes can support positive youth development and acknowledging that we know enough about what works to be doing it in our programmes.

KEY MESSAGES

- If it's not strengths-based, it's not youth development, but a strengths-based approach is not enough.
- Activities need to be appealing to the young people attending the programme.
- There is no 'best' youth development activity – outdoor recreation programmes can work brilliantly but are not necessarily better than arts or heritage-based activities.
- Activities need to be selected on the basis of the learning opportunities they provide and how well these learning opportunities will lead to the kinds of growth you want to foster.
- You need to be clear about the kinds of growth you want to foster.
- How you deliver the activities is the most important element of effective practice.
- You need to be preparing the young person for what they will do after the programme, from the first day of the programme.
- A key aspect of recent research evidence is the question of what happens next? For example, what happens after a young person has completed a 20-week course and returns to their 'natural setting' of family, friends, school and community?
- It may seem a contradiction, but in many ways, in youth development programmes, everything we do is to help young people to have a good life without us.

WHAT NEXT?

As this report has shown, while there is a good body of literature that exists showing the effectiveness of youth development programmes, there are some areas in need of more literature – especially New Zealand-specific.

The Ministry of Youth Development will share its research with the sector to help encourage innovation and good practice knowledge. Some of this knowledge will be very familiar to people involved in the youth sector.

Many of the providers of youth development programmes currently funded by the Ministry of Youth Development are being challenged to extend the range and reach of the programmes they offer young people. Rachel's work is giving them a timely set of principles to help them navigate on this journey. We will be checking in on their progress in future issues of *12to24*.

If there are other websites, reports or research issues that you would like featured in future issues of *12to24*, contact Marten Hutt – marten.hutt004@myd.govt.nz.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS UPDATE

The systematic reviews co-funded by the Ministry of Youth Development and the Health Research Council of New Zealand, and recently profiled in *12to24*, have now been contracted and research is under way.

These are reviews on social marketing (Quigley and Watts), mentoring and youth work (both carried out by the University of Auckland). These publications will be of importance to the New Zealand youth development sector, and the Ministry will be able to discuss draft results in late 2009 and, in early 2010, start disseminating final copies of these reports in various formats.

Current and historical book review

Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928)
Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa* (1984)

As the recent book by Professor Linda Bryder on the so-called 'unfortunate experiment' about cervical cancer treatments shows, there is still considerable debate and interest that can be generated from historical events and writings.

This is often called 'revisionism' – when an accepted view of things is revisited and re-examined. This review article looks at a similar ongoing debate that relates to youth development thinking in the South Pacific on Samoan adolescents.

The Mead-Freeman debate reminds us that influential books on youth development have been written in our own neighbourhood. It tells us about how young people have and continue to be viewed.

The case study shows us that we can sometimes underestimate or discount young people telling us what they think we want to hear in order to validate our own youth development perspectives or practice.

In this issue, we focus on the response to the biggest-selling anthropological work of all time, Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, first published in 1928. A classic, it is one of the most significant books ever written about young people in this part of the world.

In 1984, Margaret Mead's book was challenged by New Zealand-born anthropologist Derek Freeman, who has held major academic positions in Cambridge, Canberra and Samoa. The debate has raged ever since.

Born in 1901, Mead arrived in Samoa in 1925 as a young American PhD candidate, and she spent several years living in Samoa. Her book became an instant best-seller and was a crucial work in the nature versus nurture debate. The things she believed to have found in Samoa seemed to back up her thesis that culture mattered more than biology.

She interviewed 68 Samoan girls between the ages of 8 and 20 in three Samoan villages and focused on the development of adolescence. The sexual freedom that she chronicled – where Samoans were romantically portrayed as living in an island paradise where free love reigned and jealousy was unknown – was positively compared to uptight European society. Her views were a revelation at the time and made her famous worldwide.

It has been her impression of casual sexual engagements among young Samoan adolescents that has been most controversial. Mead characterised Samoan society of the time as having a "casual attitude towards life [and] avoidance of conflict," which she saw as a good thing.

In 1984, Wellington-born anthropologist Derek Freeman (1916–2001) made international headlines when he published a book that exhaustively examined Mead's work. As a young student at Victoria University of Wellington, Freeman was initially a fan of Mead:

"In my early work I had, in my unquestioning acceptance of Mead's writings, tended to dismiss all evidence that ran counter to her findings... [but] many educated Samoans, especially those who had attended college in New Zealand, had become familiar with Mead's writings about their culture... [and] entreated me, as an anthropologist, to correct her mistaken depiction of the Samoan ethos... [i.e.] that adolescence in Samoan society is smooth, untroubled and unstressed."

In 1999, Freeman published another book called *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead*. It argues that the two girls who accompanied Mead around Samoa told her stories about their love lives and those of other Samoan teenagers that were based more on fantasy than reality. Faced with a young American woman asking frank and leading questions as to their intimate relationships in faltering Samoan, the girls, out of courtesy and some teasing, effectively told Mead what she wanted to hear rather than what actually existed.

This is a situation that will be familiar to many in the youth development sector, whether a youth researcher in a focus group or as the director of a structured youth development programme, asking a young person to tick a box in a survey asking if they are 'satisfied' with that programme. There is always the need to ask more searching questions of young people – otherwise, we will hear what we want to, rather than what is.

Reading both books one after the other (starting with the Mead book) is recommended for those who work specifically with Pasifika young people.

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