



Youth Participation Case Studies

A collection of six case studies highlighting the benefits of youth participation to organisations across sectors.

By Cathy McGachie and Kirsten Smith

August 2003



Published by
Ministry of Youth Affairs
PO Box 10-300
Wellington
New Zealand

Ph (04) 471 2158, **Fax** (04) 4712233

Email: info@youthaffairs.govt.nz

Website: www.youthaffairs.govt.nz

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the organisations that participated in this project - Health Sponsorship Council, Nelson City Council, Otago University Student Association, Rainbow Youth, *TEARAWAY Magazine*, and Turanga Health. Each of these organisations is making a significant contribution to youth participation practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are grateful to them for their willingness to share their experiences with us.

Within these six organisations are some very committed people, passionate about youth development and the work they do. Our sincere thanks to each of the interview participants for their insights into youth participation, and the time and energy they gave to the project.

Thanks also to Aaron Packard, Sarah Thomson and Deryn Strange for their involvement in our initial focus group and special thanks to Teorongonui Josie Keelan for peer reviewing the report. Our appreciation goes to Sue Scouler for her time in editing this document.

Disclaimer

This report was prepared by Cathy McGachie and Kirsten Smith for the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Its purpose is to inform discussion on youth development and assist future policy, programme and service development. Therefore the opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

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*Published by
Ministry of Youth Affairs
PO Box 10 300, Wellington
New Zealand
Ph: 04 471 2158, Fax: 04 471 2233
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Website: www.youthaffairs.govt.nz*

This report can be downloaded from the Youth Affairs website.

ISBN 0-478-25015-0

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Executive Summary

This is the report of a youth participation case study project undertaken in May and June 2003 for the Ministry of Youth Affairs (Youth Affairs). This project is one of a number of current Youth Affairs projects aimed at increasing and enhancing youth participation in Aotearoa New Zealand. The project contributes to Goals Three and Four of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*:

Goal Three: Youth Participation: Creating opportunities for young people to actively participate and engage.

Goal Four: An Informed Approach: Building knowledge on youth development through information and research (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002:8).

For Youth Affairs to effectively promote the value of youth participation, information needs to be gathered and disseminated regarding the benefits of youth participation. This report provides Youth Affairs with information regarding the benefits of youth participation to organisations. Youth Affairs can use this information to help create further opportunities for young people to participate.

Six youth participatory organisations were selected to reflect a diverse range of interests. They were: Health Sponsorship Council (Wellington, national), Nelson City Council (Nelson), Otago University Student Association (Dunedin), Rainbow Youth (Auckland), *TEARAWAY Magazine* (Wanganui, national) and Turanga Health (Gisborne). Key people from each organisation participated in an interview or interviews and provided background information for the case studies. A youth perspective was gathered from four of the six organisations.

Key findings of the project related to organisational culture, youth participation types and benefits of youth participation to organisations. A summary of each of these is presented below.

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

A significant feature of the six case studies in this project is their organisational culture. They all reflect a culture that respects young people and recognises the value of youth participation. Each shows recognition of young people's ability to contribute meaningfully to decisions and issues that affect their lives. The organisations in this project showed their commitment to youth participation in the following ways:

- committed and youth-friendly adults who act as advocates for youth participation within the adult-led organisations
- power-sharing with young people
- respect for young people
- providing a supportive whānau environment for young people
- training and support for young people and for adults
- formalising youth participation through constitutions, mission statements and strategic plans
- eliminating barriers to youth participation.

Youth Participation in Action

The participation practices of each of the organisations studied differed according to the purpose of the organisation and the people involved. A key difference in organisations' participation practice was their leadership. This project found that youth-led and adult-led organisations differed significantly in the range of different participation levels and types utilised.

Benefits of Youth Participation

Analysis of the benefits reported by the organisations participating in this project found the following benefits organised into themes¹:

Youth participation enhances relationships. Youth participation:

- enhances relationships between young people and adults
- challenges negative stereotypes of young people
- breaks down barriers between adults and young people
- improves attitudes towards young people
- helps build a supportive organisational culture
- creates awareness in adults of youth issues.

Youth participation increases organisational relevance to young people. Youth participation:

- contributes to the development of services that are more responsive to young people
- improves the appropriateness of programmes, campaigns and events for young people
- encourages organisations to be more accountable to young people.

Youth participation improves organisational ability to achieve outcomes. Youth participation:

- improves the capacity within an organisation to attain organisational goals
- improves the success of campaigns, events, programmes, and services
- attracts greater numbers of young people to the organisation
- contributes to effective policy making.

Youth participation assists organisations to effectively target funds. Youth participation:

- saves time, money and resources
- improves the success of campaigns, events, programmes, resources
- increases credibility with funding sources.

Youth participation enhances organisational credibility and reputation. Youth participation:

- generates positive publicity
- improves organisations' public profiles
- increases partnerships and links with other organisations
- increases credibility with young people
- encourages a good reputation within the community
- increases credibility with funding sources.

¹ Some benefits are listed under more than one category.

Youth participation offers organisations a wider variety of perspectives. Youth participation:

- brings new perspectives to the organisation
- brings an element of creativity and innovation
- offers new and different solutions to issues.

Youth participation improves organisational systems. Youth participation:

- encourages more effective processes within the organisation
- increases commitment to, and practice of, youth participation
- strengthens democratic process
- enables a more flexible service that provides for the needs of young people
- contributes to effective policy making.

Youth participation helps build capacity and sustainability within an organisation. Youth participation:

- improves processes within the organisation
- improves the capacity within an organisation to attain organisational goals
- increases commitment to, and practices of, youth participation
- strengthens the democratic process
- increases knowledge and skills of participatory processes
- increases the likelihood of further youth participation
- reduces barriers between young people and organisations
- supports young people's positive development
- encourages young people to develop to their full potential.

While these benefits are not necessarily able to be generalised to other organisations, it is hoped that sharing their positive experiences will contribute to the creation of further opportunities for young people to participate meaningfully within other organisations.

Introduction

Background

The *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (YDSA) sets out six principles that form the basis of the youth development approach. Principle Five of the YDSA is “youth development is triggered when young people fully participate” (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002:22). This principle acknowledges the importance of providing opportunities for young people to increase their control of what happens to them and around them, through advice, participation and engagement.

In a legal context, the right of young people to participate in decision-making is endorsed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC, 1989). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi is also relevant, providing a basis for development of rangatahi from a kaupapa Māori perspective.

The YDSA and the *Youth Development Participation Guide: Keepin’ it Real* (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2003), highlight some of the youth participation benefits for young people, as well as some wider social benefits to organisations and communities. However, for Youth Affairs to effectively promote the value of youth participation, specific information is required regarding the benefits of youth participation to organisations.

This project focused on six organisations from Aotearoa New Zealand, and their approaches to youth participation. The purpose of the project was to further inform the work of Youth Affairs in the area of youth participation. A particular emphasis of the project was benefits of youth participation to organisations.

Definitions and Descriptions of Youth Participation

The definitions and descriptions of youth participation used for the purposes of this project are detailed below:

The YDSA cites a definition of youth participation incorporating ideas from Ewen (1998):

Youth participation has been described as the “involvement of young people in policy and programme development, in having a say about what is done and being involved in decisions about what is done”. A participatory approach requires an intentional process that progressively grows young people’s capacity to contribute (Ewen, 1998 cited in Ministry of Youth Affairs 2002:23).

This project recognised positive youth participation practice as the nurturing, valuing and respect of young people and their ability to contribute meaningfully to issues and decisions that affect their lives.

This project also used Hart’s (1992) *Ladder of Participation* as a tool for describing participation. Hart suggested participation occurs at eight different levels. Youth Affairs’ adapted version of *Hart’s Ladder* is set out below.

Table One: Hart's Ladder of Participation

(adapted from Hart 1992 by Ministry of Youth Affairs 2003:15)

Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults	Young people have the ideas, set up the project, and invite adults to join them in making decisions.
Youth-initiated and directed	Young people have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.
Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people	Adults have the initial idea but young people are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Their views are not only considered but they are also involved in making decisions.
Consulted and informed	The project is designed and run by adults, but young people are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.
Assigned but informed	Adults decide on the project but young people volunteer for it. Young people understand the project and know who decided they should be involved and why. Adults respect their views.
Tokenism	Young people are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of ideas they can express.
Decoration	Young people take part in an event, but they do not really understand the issues.
Manipulation	Young people do or say what adults suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issues, OR young people are asked what they think, adults use some of the ideas but do not tell them what influence they have on the final decision.

The lower three rungs - manipulation, decoration and tokenism - are described by Hart as non-participation. The case studies that follow reflect a variety of participation practices, however all are examples of meaningful participation that moves away from tokenism, manipulation and decoration.

For meaningful youth participation to take place, Youth Affairs suggests organisations need to have structures and processes in place that help the organisation become one that:

- shows commitment to youth participation
- is a youth-appropriate organisation
- provides training and support for young people
- respects young people (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2003:8).

Effective youth participation is based on principles of choice, challenge, awareness and relevance. Values and culture are acknowledged and relationships are built. Adults are committed, adequate resources are provided and contributions are valued (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2003).

Organisations also need to consider potential barriers they pose to youth participation. *Keepin' it Real* identifies some common barriers identified by young people:

- organisations that discriminate against young people
- unfriendly and overly formal environments
- high demands on young people's time
- processes and procedures that appear complicated, overly formal or unnecessary
- financial barriers - competition with work and/or expenses involved in participation
- overly academic or bureaucratic language
- expectations that are not clearly stated or are unreasonable (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2003:8).

Further general barriers identified by organisations include:

- youth participation not being seen as a priority
- not knowing how to go about it
- not knowing how to support young people to be involved
- not having connections to young people or knowing where to find them
- thinking that young people won't want to be involved
- not having the time, energy or resources
- not knowing how to discuss some issues with young people
- language barriers
- cultural barriers (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2003:8).

The six case studies are presented in the following section of this report. Each case study provides some background to the organisation, and to their youth participation practice, then identifies the benefits of youth participation to the organisation. An analysis section examining some of the themes arising from the project follows the six individual case studies.

Methodology

Participating Organisations

The organisations involved in this project were purposefully selected to provide good representation on a number of criteria. These criteria were developed to reflect a diverse range of organisations and interests. The criteria were entered into a matrix and each suggested organisation was assessed using this matrix (Appendix One). The criteria were:

- inclusion of at least one kaupapa Māori organisation
- a range of types of organisations (central government, local government, business, education, health, not-for-profit sector; small and large organisations)
- a range of youth participation practices and levels of participation (reflecting *Hart's Ladder of Participation*)
- a range of geographical locations including small towns and large cities
- a diverse age range of young people participating in the organisation².

Practical criteria such as researcher access to the organisation and short timeframes for the research were also considered.

The selected organisations were initially contacted by telephone and invited to participate. A written invitation to participate followed, providing organisations with further information about the project (Appendix Two). All those invited to participate accepted, and each gave their written consent for involvement.

The six organisations selected are presented below:

Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) is a Wellington-based central government organisation funded by, and accountable to, the Ministry of Health. HSC aims to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles. HSC employs a Teen Programme Coordinator to market healthy lifestyle messages to young people aged 12 to 17 years.

Nelson City Council established Nelson Youth Council to give secondary school aged young people a voice in local government.

Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) is the elected student body of the University of Otago. OUSA provides advocacy and representation of students, and is one of New Zealand's oldest forms of youth participation.

Rainbow Youth is an Auckland-based not-for-profit organisation providing support, contact, information, advocacy and education for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine youth up to the age of 27. Rainbow Youth is fully directed by young people.

² For the purpose of this research, young people were defined as aged between 12 and 24 years, however some of the participating organisations specified a broader age range.

TEARAWAY Magazine is a national youth publication (based in Wanganui). The magazine targets 13 to 19 year-olds, and is distributed through secondary schools. *TEARAWAY Magazine* is a profit-making business.

Turanga Health is a Gisborne-based Māori health service provider owned and run by three local iwi. Turanga Health is a limited liability company with charitable trust status. The Rangatahi Health Centre for 13 to 18 year-olds is one provision of Turanga Health.

Data Collection

Data for each case study was collected from up to three sources: in-depth interviews conducted with up to three people from each organisation, analysis of documentation from the organisations and an additional youth perspective. At least two different sources of information were gathered for each case study.

Interviews

Representatives of each organisation participated in an interview of 60 to 90 minutes. A schedule of questions guided each of the interviews (Appendix Three). These questions were developed with the assistance of three young people, and informed by literature on positive youth development and youth participation. The questions were piloted before the first interview and altered accordingly. The interview guide included questions addressing the organisations' application of youth participation (process) and questions addressing the benefits and learning points of each organisation (outcomes). Interviewees were also shown a copy of *Hart's Ladder of Participation* and asked at which level they would place their organisation.

Documentation

Each organisation was asked to provide any documentation relating to their youth participation practice. These included constitutions, induction information, publicity information and websites. They provided additional information for the case studies.

Youth Perspective

While the focus of this work was the benefits to organisations, provision was made in the methodology to include a youth perspective on participation with at least three of the case studies. As it turned out, four of the six organisations selected a young person as one of their interview participants.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Each case study was written up separately based on the information gathered for that organisation. Following this, the case studies were collectively analysed for patterns and themes around organisational benefits of youth participation. These themes are discussed in the second part of this report.

Limitations of the Project

The following limitations of this project are recognised and acknowledged:

Organisational Versus Other Benefits

The focus of this project was organisational benefits of youth participation, however attempts to see organisational benefits in isolation created some analysis difficulties.

Benefits to the organisation were often difficult to separate from benefits within the wider social context. As a result, some youth and community development benefits are included in this report as organisational benefits. Where this has occurred, the argument can be made that the organisation benefits from a stronger community.

Self-Reporting of Benefits

Key informant interviews were used as the primary source of information for this project. Each of these interviewees came from within the organisation being studied. This allowed deep and rich information to be collected for the case studies, however it also limited the objectivity and scope of the results. Further research with external sources would have broadened the scope and additional benefits may have been discovered.

Timeframes

The project had a two-month timeframe imposed by Youth Affairs that necessitated a limited methodology. In particular, the limiting of data collection to within the organisation could have been addressed had more time been available.

Lack of Evaluation of Benefits

This report presents benefits of youth participation to organisations. What it does not do is make any attempt to evaluate these benefits. There is little evidence that these benefits are indeed benefits, particularly in the long term. Future evaluation research of this nature is required to add further weight to the findings of this project.

Organisation-Specific Benefits

The analysis section of this report presents several common themes of benefits arising from this project. It should be noted however, that these benefits are specific to the organisations in this project, and are not necessarily able to be generalised to other organisations.

Researcher Values and Bias

The researchers acknowledge that this work was guided by our own experiences of youth participation and our bias towards a positive youth development approach. Our analysis in this project reflects the value we place on positive youth development.

Part One: Case Studies

- Health Sponsorship Council
- Nelson City Council
- Otago University Student Association
- Rainbow Youth
- *TEARAWAY Magazine*
- Turanga Health

Case Study

Health Sponsorship Council

It is really important to involve young people for the success of what you are doing especially if it is for young people... You are actually getting it right for a particular percentage of young people and you are going to get it much closer than you would have done if you hadn't involved youth... We involve youth in all our decision-making so that we know it is appropriate and applicable for youth. Otherwise it is pointless. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

About Health Sponsorship Council

The Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) was created in 1990 to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles of New Zealanders. HSC is funded by, and directly accountable to, the Ministry of Health.

The role of HSC is to market social messages encouraging healthy lifestyles and well-being. "Social marketing influences attitudes and behaviours on social and personal issues by promoting desirable attitudes and encouraging positive behavioural change" (Health Sponsorship Council, undated). HSC uses a number of methods to communicate social change messages. These include sponsorship of events and activities, promotions, education programmes, merchandise displaying marketing messages and print resources such as posters, stickers and books.

HSC promotes four health brands: Smokefree, Auahi Kore, SunSmart and Bike Wise. The Smokefree and Auahi Kore brands encourage Smokefree lifestyles among the general population and Māori respectively. The SunSmart brand aims to encourage New Zealanders to adopt smart behaviours in the sun to prevent skin damage. Bike Wise is a cycle and safety brand focused on eight to 12 year olds.

Marketing to Young People

According to HSC, research shows that people who smoke generally start before the age of 18 years. For this reason, young people are a key target of HSC's messages about smoking. Recognising the importance of the youth market, HSC employs a Teen Programme Manager to promote health messages to secondary school aged young people (12 to 17 years). For young people, sponsorship of events is a major way these messages are communicated. HSC-sponsored events include Smokefree Rock Quest, Smokefree Pacifica Beats, Smokefree Stage Challenge (sponsored in the past) and new events Smokefree WearArt and Toi Purakau. These events are a 'battle of the bands' competition, emerging Pacifica sounds event, secondary school singing and drama contest, fashion-art competition, and arts performance, respectively.

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

HSC employs a Teen Programme Manager to support the involvement of young people within the organisation and eliminate barriers to youth participation. A dedicated youth position within the organisation suggests to young people that their involvement is valued. This suggestion is endorsed by an attitude of respect for young people:

An organisation needs somebody who can see through all the bureaucracy and who wants to work with young people. It doesn't have to be a young person in

this role but must be someone who has respect for young people's opinions and has the right attitude toward young people. They must understand the importance of young people's opinions in decision-making. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

Within HSC, there is a belief that youth participation is valuable and rewarding:

Youth participation is really important and rewarding even if you are not going to get it exactly right. Having interaction with young people is really exciting and fulfilling. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

There is also recognition of the role young people play in the success of campaigns. Youth are viewed as partners in developing a campaign and not viewed as accessories to the process:

I can't take the credit for anything as I am not the one who makes the decisions on the campaign...young people are. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

Youth Participation in Action

HSC involves young people in the organisation in a number of ways:

Young People's Involvement in Events

Young people participate in HSC-sponsored events in many different ways, ranging from performance or audience to consultation and decision-making about the event. A primary aim for HSC is to involve young people in their communities through sponsored events. This allows HSC to communicate their message - Smokefree - in a youth-friendly environment.

An Example of Youth Participation in Action: Smokefree Rock Quest

The Smokefree Rock Quest is an annual 'battle of the bands' competition for secondary school students. The event allows young people to perform on stage and to be themselves in a youth-friendly environment. Approximately 100,000 young people take part in the Smokefree Rock Quest throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Rock Quest is a very important event for us because it is youth in their own environment...we support that kind of thing. It is about trying to integrate our message into their culture. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

The Rock Quest is run by a separate organisation, while HSC provides sponsorship and direction. The sponsorship fee helps to resource the event, while HSC also helps out with promotion to ensure appropriate communication of the Smokefree message. HSC is clear that their sponsorship is a partnership relationship. They see themselves as more than a funder, in that they are actively involved in the event, and have some control over direction. This level of involvement reflects their concern for youth participation:

We do a lot of research seeking youth direction on the way the event is run so we like to make sure those comments are integrated in the way it is run. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

HSC conducts research on one of their sponsored events each year. This research aims to find out what young people thought of the event (Rock Quest, Pacifica Beats or Wear

Art), and what can be done to improve it from a youth perspective. In 2002 this research focused on the Rock Quest. Feedback from young people included having a bigger venue and a higher profile guest band. Both these suggestions were incorporated in this year's Rock Quest.

Youth consultation on the Rock Quest was also responsible for initiating the Pacifica Beats event. Pacific Island young people suggested a separate event focused on Pacific music and performance. As a result of these comments, Pacifica Beats began, focusing on emerging sounds of Aotearoa and the Pacific.

Feedback through the Website

HSC's youth website is another way young people participate. The website - www.lungfish.co.nz - is run by young people for young people, with the exception of the editor. The website is based on a spokes-character called "Lungfish" whose task is to communicate the Smokefree message to young people without being dictatorial. The website gives young people the opportunity to provide feedback to HSC regarding promotion of their messages.

From the website young people can join the "sub-patrol" club. Membership provides weekly, regional updates on events, and opportunities to win merchandise and tickets to events. Sub-patrol currently has 3000 members. Young people can provide feedback at any time, however HSC also invites their participation in organised focus groups and research.

Young People as Decision-Makers

In addition to event sponsorship, HSC develops specific campaigns to market the Smokefree message to young people. A current campaign in development, "This is Real", is another example of youth participation in action at HSC.

An Example of Youth Participation in Action: "This is Real"

HSC's "This is Real" campaign was instigated from feedback received via the website. One young person wrote that all her friends smoked and she thought the promotion HSC was doing was too subtle. She thought that young people would react more if HSC was more "straight up" and said what they were trying to say without "fluffing up the edges". With further investigation, other young people endorsed this idea, saying they knew what HSC was trying to say anyway, so "they may as well say it". As a result of this feedback, HSC is now focusing on an image-based campaign with factual information about smoking and young people.

From its initiation by a young person, to decisions about design, young people are participating in the campaign in many ways. HSC held focus groups with young people recruited from the website. They presented the initial design concept and sought feedback to develop it further.

So we take their ideas and get it to a concept stage and get a group of young people in to say 'like this', 'don't like this', 'think you should be doing it this way', and then we work it from there. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

HSC provides food, merchandise and travel costs in return for youth involvement in the focus groups. The groups are usually gender specific as HSC has found this encourages better feedback than with a mixed group.

The process of youth participation will continue throughout the development of the campaign to ensure the concept is appropriate to young people. The launch of the print campaign will also involve young people. This is an important aspect because, according to HSC's Teen Programme Manager, "it gets other people to accept it". School students around the country will be asked to help promote the message within their school.

Youth Lifestyles Survey

HSC also receives feedback from young people through their bi-annual Youth Lifestyles Survey. Young people participating in the survey give information about themselves and the lifestyles they lead, providing HSC with a good picture of youth lifestyles. The aim of the research is to better understand young people in order to market health messages to them appropriately.

Youth Participation Benefits

Making the Message More Relevant to Young People / Youth "Buy-In"

Involving young people in the decision-making and development of campaigns and events ensures the message is communicated in the most appropriate and applicable way for youth. Having young people involved also helps HSC to create campaigns, events and resources that are more acceptable to young people and more likely to hold their interest. HSC benefits from a greater degree of youth "buy-in" as young people recognise the message because it is youth appropriate.

It is important that our message is applicable to young people because if it is not then they are not going to take any notice of it. The way we get that is by getting young people's opinions... The things we do are accepted more by young people because it is more meaningful for them even if they haven't been involved in the situation. It makes our message more acceptable and real to young people if it is driven by young people and including young people. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

The Youth Lifestyles Survey provides HSC with evidence that young people are hearing the Smokefree message. Specifically, when asked about the messages presented to young people, Smokefree is one that is consistently identified.

HSC will launch "This is Real" later in 2003. While it is too early to evaluate the success of the campaign, the Teen Programme Manager is confident that the process of youth participation undertaken will make the campaign more captivating for the youth audience than if young people had not been involved in its development.

It would be easy for us to sit here and put together a campaign that would have no effect whatsoever. Involving youth ensures we have the message appropriate for young people. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

Effective Campaigns

One arguable consequence of marketing more appropriate messages to young people is the success of campaigns. For HSC, one measure of campaign success is a reduction in the number of young people smoking. The latest statistics from the Ministry of Health show that smoking for the 12 to 17 year age group is decreasing. While there may be many reasons for this decrease, HSC considers the Smokefree message has had some impact on the reduction of smoking in young people.

Efficient Use of Time, Resources and Money

HSC has found that marketing their messages in a way that is appropriate and relevant to young people makes the exercise more cost effective:

Youth participation makes it easier because there is none of the worry of, "Are we doing this right?" We are told beforehand if it is right. We are getting it right before we spend a lot of money on campaigns, events, etc. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

Sometimes there is a lot of bureaucracy with [youth participation], such as, "it will be too hard to get young people" or "it would take too much time and money". However...it actually makes the time quicker as you get it [right] first time and so you are saving money. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

Increased Opportunity for Further Youth Participation

HSC has found that involving young people and taking their opinions seriously has contributed to the success of their events. More and more young people are participating in HSC-sponsored events, and HSC are able to promote their messages to a larger audience. In addition to marketing Smokefree, HSC also promotes the Lungfish website. From the website, young people joining "sub-patrol" provide HSC with a database for future youth participation. The cycle described above continues, maximising opportunities to involve young people.

Case Study

Nelson City Council and Nelson Youth Council

If we don't have a means by which [young people] can participate, they're invisible. Who stands up and speaks on behalf of youth at a Council meeting if the Youth Council doesn't? The Youth Council is a forum in which youth can legitimately participate and be represented in local government. (Nelson City Councillor)

About Nelson Youth Council

Nelson City Council first began discussion about a youth council or forum for young people in 1992. Four years later, a youth forum was established to give young people a voice. Following the forum, Nelson Youth Council was established in 1998. Together, young people and the city council developed a constitution that states the aims and objectives of the Nelson Youth Council:

- to give Nelson youth a real voice, so that young people can be heard and taken more seriously on issues affecting youth
- to promote the Nelson Youth Council and the activities it undertakes, and to inform the Nelson City Council, Nelson youth and the general public of issues being dealt with
- to bring the needs and concerns of young people to the attention of local and central government and to encourage consideration of such issues at a local, regional and national level
- to assist the Nelson City Council's planning processes, in relation to the provision of services and facilities with potential impact on young people
- to identify local youth needs and resources
- to provide experience of representation processes and local government to youth (Nelson Youth Council 2003).

Since 1998 membership of the Youth Council has grown to 18 members, with a number of associate members. Membership is drawn from local secondary schools, tertiary institutions and youth organisations. Representation is at the discretion of each group, however, the Youth Council encourages and supports democratic election of representatives. In some local schools Youth Council positions are elected along with School Council positions. The Youth Council membership also includes one Nelson City councillor who acts as an advocate for the Youth Council.

City Council staff provide community development, administrative and democratic services support to the Youth Council, however these staff are not considered Youth Council members and do not have voting rights.

Each year Nelson Youth Council's agenda has grown in size and importance as it gains support from the community and from the City Council. The Youth Council has been involved in organising youth events, distributing youth information packs, attending and presenting at youth development conferences and supporting local youth organisations in many different ways. Two major achievements to date are the highly successful Youth Event Support - Underwriting Fund, which won a Commonwealth Youth Award in 2001, and the development of a youth park currently under construction.

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

A common concern within youth participation is the avoidance of tokenism and manipulating young people for the organisation's benefit. Nelson City Council has addressed these issues by empowering the Youth Council with a certain status and formal recognition. The Youth Council sits underneath Nelson City Council's Community Facilities and Services Committee, with the Deputy Chair of that Committee sitting on Youth Council. Youth Council meetings are formal Council meetings, and follow Council's democratic processes as a working group of the Council. Thus, issues of tokenism, decoration and manipulation are avoided by ensuring the Youth Council has a level of autonomy and power.

However, within an adult-led organisation such as a city council, this level of autonomy is difficult to achieve without the support of key adult staff and councillors. While the Business and Community Development Unit at Nelson City Council is small (two full-time staff), it is a committed and strong voice for youth participation and the Youth Council. Having a youth-friendly City Councillor on side has also helped the Youth Council to feel valued and supported. These people have helped smooth the way for the Youth Council to become a valued part of Nelson City Council. Their commitment to and understanding of youth participation has helped remove many of the common barriers that local and central government and other adult-led organisations often face in regard to youth participation:

One of the main reasons the Youth Council has been so successful is because we have had that support there [of specific city council staff and councillors]. They are advocates for the young people. They're prepared to stand up for everything the young people do and say and are prepared to take things that step further and try and find ways those young people can get their voices heard even more. (Nelson Youth Councillor)

This advocacy for good youth participation throughout the Council is demonstrated by the following comment from an adult staff member:

We don't want the Youth Council to become a 'rent-a-youth' mob, so some discretion is required with how much we ask of them, and how we encourage council staff to work with them. We don't want them to become just a rubber-stamping group. (Nelson City Council staff member)

The city council also supports the Youth Council in practical ways such as the provision of an induction pack for new youth councillors, transport to and from events, regular phone and email contact, providing food at meetings and assistance with training and conferences wherever possible.

Youth Participation in Action

An Example of Youth Participation in Action: Pioneers Park

Pioneers Park is one example of youth participation in action at Nelson City Council. The project was youth initiated and young people were involved in planning and implementation. Adults (council staff) provided technical input and supported the project, and adults and young people shared decision-making.

In 2001 a Youth Council survey found young people wanted more youth facilities, and also found that the general population supported an increase in facilities for young people. A youth park was suggested by the Youth Council and other young people endorsed the idea.

A steering group comprising youth councillors and relevant council staff was established, and has met regularly throughout the process. From the beginning, much of the work has been done by youth councillors supported by council staff. The Youth Council carried out consultation, first with young people, then with the wider community. This involved identifying and surveying key stakeholders, facilitating workshops to discuss the project, and addressing any concerns in conjunction with council staff. From this consultation a concept plan was drafted and presented again to the community.

The Youth Council did an amazing job of consulting on the concept plan. After they were done, we asked anyone with any concerns to attend a meeting about the park, and only two people turned up. [The Youth Council] had consulted so well that everyone's issues had been addressed. A lot of work went into this and they did an amazing job. (Nelson City Council staff member)

The concept plan - incorporating a skating area, half basketball court, volleyball court, clustered seating for socialising, events area and addressing safety issues such as lighting - was approved by young people, other stakeholders, and council's Parks and Recreation Committee. As a result, Pioneers Park youth park is currently under construction.

Youth Council's involvement with Pioneers Park turned it into something really great. The park they are getting now would have been very different if the Youth Council hadn't been involved. They would have got a standard playground, a nice big mowed lawn and some hydrangeas. And the consultation wouldn't have been nearly so good. Instead, what they have got is something really awesome that the residents and the young people have said they're really happy with. (Nelson City Council staff member)

The Pioneers Park project demonstrates how youth participation can have positive outcomes not only young people, but for the whole community.

Youth Participation Benefits

Increasing Organisational Capacity

A major outcome and achievement of Nelson Youth Council's participation in projects like Pioneers Park, has been the change in staff and councillor attitudes towards youth participation and youth consultation.

Nelson City Council is a small council with a relatively tight budget, traditionally heavily focused on infrastructure. As the Youth Council has gathered momentum with successes and outside recognition, the city council has become increasingly aware of the value Youth Council adds to the organisation and to the community:

Staff support is very strong now. Each year it just gets stronger because more and more people know about the Youth Council, and they ask us to consult on more and more things. (Nelson Youth Councillor)

There is more commitment to youth participation because the Youth Council has done a good job. More staff and Councillors now want young people further involved... There has been a significant change in the past 18 months. Youth went from being a fairly low priority to being seen as an important part of Council business. (Nelson City Councillor)

Recognition of the Youth Council's positive contribution to the council organisation and the council's public image has made youth participation an increasing priority for the city council. One indication of this is the current restructuring of the Business and Community Development Unit. In the future the unit will have a stronger focus on youth and community development. While there are a number of reasons for this move, Youth Council's successes have played their part in this change to the city council's organisational design.

Innovation and Increased Effectiveness

The Youth Council has provided the city council with opportunities to improve council processes. Consultation on the Pioneers Park project is one example of this.

We can learn a lot from the way Youth Council did their consultation. They took the time and did it properly, gathering all the information, but then also in the processing of it – really listening to what everyone had said. There is a change in the attitude and approach of some staff at Council. We are starting to do things differently and the Youth Council's approach is responsible for some of that. (Nelson City Council staff member)

The Youth Council's approach to Pioneers Park provided the city council with the opportunity to increase the effectiveness of their consultation process.

While processes are improving, outcomes are too. Youth participation in the Pioneers Park project ensured that the product is relevant to young people, and will be used by them, thus avoiding costly mistakes.

However, young people are not the only ones to benefit from the new and different solutions being proposed and implemented. Youth participation in the Pioneers Park project ensured that the product is relevant to young people, but it also added a creative element to the park. Youth participation brought a fresh perspective to an old idea, so the park is now more interesting to the wider community. Pioneers Park is a new concept in parks, and a new resource for the council to be proud of. Largely as a result of youth participation, Pioneers Park allows the city council to be seen as innovative, creative, and responsive to the community.

Positive Organisational Profile

This innovation and responsiveness leads to a further benefit for the city council through an increase in positive publicity. Many of the Youth Council's projects are contributing to a raised profile for the city council and an improved public image:

We've had lots of great recognition from the community through the submissions saying it's great what we're doing for youth. People are recognising that there is some good stuff happening and are telling us they like it. It's good for the Council to see how much positive recognition the Youth Council generates. (Nelson City Councillor)

The Council logo is associated with all the things that Youth Council is doing, and so the visibility of the Council is really increasing. Before, you wouldn't have seen the Council logo in a music store, but it's there now because of a Youth Council project. The Council also got good recognition when we were awarded the Commonwealth Youth Award. The publicity that the Council gets from the Youth Council is good publicity. (Nelson Youth Councillor)

Achieving a Positive, Democratic Organisation

The city council's image is further enhanced (both externally and internally) by acting on its commitment to work in partnership with the community and to be a fair and democratic organisation.

Nelson City Council is committed to working in partnership with the community to ensure that Council's priorities reflect those of the community. Business is therefore conducted in an open, informed and democratic manner and relevant information is readily available so that everyone can make an informed contribution to the decision-making process. (www.ncc.govt.nz/thecouncil)

The Youth Council is one way the city council involves a wider range of people in decision-making, helping the council to achieve its aim of an open, informed and democratic organisation.

Adults have the opportunity to have their voice heard through elections, but young people don't have that, yet they live in the community, they're part of the community, they should be able to contribute to it too. (Nelson Youth Councillor)

Young people don't have control over so many things, and as a Council we need to work to minimize those disadvantages at a community level. The Youth Council is a way that they can have a say and get representation, and we have to encourage that. (Nelson City Councillor)

It has been argued that "young people are young citizens. They live in the same areas, they use and receive the same services, and they have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of local communities...Young people have the right to express their views and to be heard" (Lawton and Stevenson 2001). It follows that the active participation of young people in local and central government affairs helps to strengthen democracy by ensuring this large section of society is heard. For Nelson City Council, the Youth Council has provided a means by which the council is able to work towards a fairer and more democratic organisation and local community. Youth Council helps the city council to achieve this by ensuring young voices are heard at a decision-making level.

The city council benefits still further from its commitment to democracy and participation, by being able to attract young people to the organisation and keep them involved:

When I first joined the Youth Council, I worried that it would be a token youth involvement. Now, people know that it is not like that at all. I always get the impression from the Chief Executive and the Mayor that they're interested in what we're doing and they have stood up for us on more than one occasion. (Nelson Youth Councillor)

In turn, this contributes to a sustainable Youth Council that young people want to be involved with. Participation is by choice, it is enjoyable and challenging, young people's awareness of real issues is raised and their contributions are valued.

Case Study

Otago University Students' Association

The benefit of having students involved in an organisation governed by and for students, is that they are empowered to do things, they achieve things for other students, and learn skills that can be used for the rest of their lives. (OUSA President)

About Otago University Students' Association

Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) is a political organisation, providing advocacy, representation of students at a decision-making level and a range of cultural, sporting and social activities that reflect the diverse requirements and interests of students at the University of Otago.

OUSA was established in 1890 by a group of students who organised common social events through the sporting arena. Today, OUSA is a large and robust organisation with a political focus. The main source of income for the organisation is an annual levy on enrolled students. In return for this fee, OUSA ensures representation on all academic boards within the university, provides the umbrella to various clubs and societies, and organises or coordinates a number of activities, functions and events through a social, sports, cultural and/or arts platform. Additionally, OUSA provides grants for the general membership (students) to use for funding events or activities they organise themselves.

In addition to the services provided by OUSA, the organisation owns media companies: Radio One and Critical Publications Limited. Radio One is the student radio station and operates 24 hours a day with an emphasis on local music.

Critical Publications Limited produces a variety of resources and magazines with the most well-known publication being the university newspaper, *Critic*. During semesters, this weekly magazine offers a mix of news, columns, editorial, features, reviews, letters and humorous anecdotes. The 75-year-old newspaper is the longest serving media publication within OUSA.

Critic and Radio One have a number of employees who provide management and coordination of the companies. Student volunteers fill the roles of reporters, DJs and other day-to-day roles. All volunteers are trained and supervised by their editor or production manager. The President and Administrative Vice President of OUSA are on the Board of Directors for both companies to ensure they remain student focused.

OUSA has a legal status as an incorporated society. The constitutional objectives of OUSA are:

- to represent democratically the interests of the members of the association
- to foster cultural, sporting and social life within the university environment
- to advocate for and protect its members
- to support and represent members of the association in attaining their educational goals
- to actively promote tertiary educational opportunities within New Zealand

- to promote the interests of the association and its future members
- to work in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi (OUSA Constitution, revised version, January 2003:6).

The executive committee of OUSA comprises 15 Executive Officers: president, administrative vice president, education and welfare vice-president, treasurer, divisional representatives (four), general executive officers (two), women's rights officers (two), international students' officer, clubs and societies officer and postgraduate officer. Each position is responsible for their specific area, with each general executive officer responsible for three portfolios each, and the divisional representatives responsible for their interest areas: health science, science, commerce and humanities. The hours and honorariums for each position vary.

The executive officers are generally under 25 years of age although the age range of the student membership varies (OUSA's current membership is approximately 16,400 students. It is estimated by OUSA that 80% of its membership is under 25 years).

Approximately 25,000 to 30,000 tertiary students populate Dunedin, making students' needs important in the city (Dunedin City's population is approximately 120,000). Part of the role of the executive committee is to advocate and lobby for students within the wider community. One example is the recent submission to the annual plan of the Dunedin City Council that ensured students' views were considered in the council's future actions.

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

As a youth-led organisation, OUSA is instinctively youth-friendly and youth-appropriate. The organisational culture at the governance level is similar to the organisational culture of the members it serves.

Without young people running the association the whole culture of the organisation would be lost. (OUSA President)

As students themselves, the OUSA executive officers provide a supportive and respectful environment for other students. The consistency of both cultures at a governance level and at the general membership level, contributes to a connected organisation where students are free to express their opinions, to have their voice and others' respected and heard and to make decisions that affect their lives. As such, many of the common barriers to youth participation do not exist.

Youth Participation in Action

OUSA is a youth-initiated and youth-directed organisation and is the oldest example of youth participation in New Zealand history. As a youth-led organisation, youth participation at OUSA occurs on two levels: governance and membership.

Young People in a Governance Role

Nomination of Officers

The students of the University of Otago have an opportunity to participate in OUSA through the nomination of Officers to the Executive. Each year, any student can be nominated for a position on the executive committee giving him or her the opportunity to

be involved at a governance level. In doing so, they are putting themselves forward for further participation in the organisation at a fully accountable level. The officers' term takes effect from the beginning of the following university year.

Managing the Organisation

OUSA is an organisation run by students. According to the constitution, all executive officers must be members of the association, which means they are students who pay the compulsory levy. The executive officers control the business and activities of the association in accordance with the defined objectives. They are responsible for the running of the association with particular interest in the areas they have been elected to.

Young People in a Membership Role

Election of Officers

The students are able to elect their executive officers at the end of each university year thus having a say in who represents them. Every member has the right to vote, and in doing so, participate in the democratic and political process of the organisation.

Participation by Feedback

The general members are able to provide feedback to their executive committee in many ways:

- unrestricted admission to executive committee meetings
- provision for student general meetings which any member can call an issue to motion (in accordance with the constitution). This occurred recently with the stance on the Iraq war and the stance on the sewage upgrade for Dunedin City
- focus groups on certain issues
- all executive officers e-mail addresses are readily available
- open office hours where students can drop in to talk to executive officers
- opportunity to vote to put people in office
- the use of avenues such as the student media to provide feedback.

The executive officers encourage feedback from the membership to keep them in touch with the students and also maintain a check on the service they provide:

Student involvement is fundamental to OUSA. So feel free to get involved. It can be as little as suggestions on what OUSA could do better, to really getting involved and working alongside the Executive, playing an active part in turning your ideas into reality. Involvement could be in a number of areas from debating academic matters at students senate, acting in the Capping show, involvement in political activism or joining an affiliated club or society (www.ousa.org.nz).

Youth Participation Benefits

More Responsive Services

Students working for students, as in the case of OUSA, is an ideal situation for being “in touch” with student needs and interests. The staff of OUSA has a closer understanding of other students because the majority are students themselves. The advantage of young people working for and with other young people is that they can be more in tune with what is going on for their own population and provide more relevant and appropriate services. An indicator of relevant services is the fact that the social, cultural and sporting events and political campaigns usually have good attendance. One specific example is the anti-war march through Dunedin streets that was supported by large numbers of students.

The OUSA president is well aware of the benefits of applicable services for students:

*We aim to provide for students so it is essential the direction is dictated by students and reflective of what students want...It confirms stakeholder buy in.
(OUSA President)*

Having more relevant services means students are more likely to support the organisation. This is somewhat cyclical in nature. If services are appropriate and applicable to students’ needs, then the students are more likely to support the organisation by an increase in participation. The involvement of students in the organisation gives more opportunity for feedback and communication between members and the executive committee, and the cycle continues.

Reputation of OUSA

OUSA is committed to providing quality representation of students at the University of Otago. Through this commitment, OUSA has become a highly regarded organisation. Local awareness of students representing, lobbying and advocating for other students through democratic processes contributes to OUSA’s reputation as a dynamic and credible organisation. The Mayor of Dunedin, Sukhi Turner described OUSA as “well-known” for the services it provide to other students. From the perspective of the Dunedin City Council:

It is important to get their point of view in how the City is run as they represent a part of the population of the City and they have the option to live here for the rest of their lives. (Mayor of Dunedin)

Fosters Growth and Development of Young People

After the election of executive officers, the New Zealand University Student Association

conducts a week-long training in Wellington for the presidents of each university students' association. The executive officers also receive training on a local basis and are invited to national conferences held throughout the university year.

The training available to the executive members provides opportunities to develop skills and experience in budgeting, event management, decision-making, issues affecting students, lobbying, governance roles, media liaison, advocacy, politics and more. These skills are put to use for the benefit of other students, but at the same time contribute to the individual development of executive officers.

There are also personal benefits to being part of OUSA. One executive officer considered the experience at the level of governance gave an opportunity to meet great people, gave an insight into how the university works and made him feel more involved in youth issues.

For the general membership, it is empowering to have services that mirror the wants and needs of the student population:

To know that [there are] proactive young people to help [other students] and can raise issues and get things done for them is empowering for all. (OUSA Executive Officer)

Builds a Positive Democratic Organisation

The experience of voting and being voted for is generally a new experience for most students. The active involvement of young people in this way encourages a respect for democratic principles. Likewise the provision to have a say in the processes and events of OUSA gives students experience in democratic processes that are mirrored in society.

A democratic election process also ensures good representation and allows OUSA to be accountable to its members, and work to its constitutional objectives. The policies of the executive encourage other students to have their say. As a result, OUSA is provided with numerous opportunities to demonstrate its responsibility to its members.

The democratic processes of OUSA ensure young people have the opportunity to have a voice, influence the direction of services, to explore their own potential and learn about democracy, politics and society.

Sustainability of OUSA

The enthusiasm of students to undertake a role on the executive committee helps to sustain the organisation. Every year students willingly volunteer their time to take the positions of executive officers and serve the student community. For some, it is about giving back to a community that they have been a part of for many years thus increasing the sustainability of the organisation.

In the last elections, every position on the executive committee had at least one person standing for it. Although, according to the President, it could have been better, the willingness of the 15 students to be involved at a governance level benefits the organisation by sustaining its ability to provide effective services year after year.

The Executive Officers do not all leave the governance role at once. They are often re-elected to other positions within the executive committee thus retaining organisational knowledge while learning new skills and expertise in the area they have been elected for.

In addition to the executive officers, there is a team of student volunteers that support the organisation and the executive committee. These students are often future executive officers who learn the operations of the executive committee from a distance. These students are important to the sustainability of the organisation.

Without students willing to be volunteers in these roles the organisation would not survive. (OUSA President)

Community Awareness of Student Issues

OUSA is an organisation that enables students to participate in their own destiny, to retain the responsibility to provide quality services and activities that benefit not only students, but also the wider community.

OUSA ensures student issues are heard and recognised within the wider community. As students are a significant part of the Dunedin population they are considered to be an important group to consult with. The student advocacy role of the executive committee ensures a critical appraisal of matters pertaining to students in the city. This contributes to a raised consciousness of students' issues. An example of this would be the submission to the Dunedin City Council Annual Plan.

The various events organised for the members of OUSA have spin-offs for the whole community. One example of this is the anti-war (Iraq) march. This was organised by OUSA and unintentionally involved the whole community, because those on the march were not all students.

Reduced Barriers to Youth Participation

One benefit of a youth-led organisation is the automatic reduction in barriers to young people. In an organisation run by and for students, there is a shared culture between governance and membership that helps to eliminate some barriers and reduce others. Most of the barriers identified in *Keepin' it Real* have been automatically reduced due to the very nature of the organisation, that is, students working with students.

For example, there are limited language barriers as students participate on both levels of the organisation. Another example is the strong connections of those in governance and those in the general membership giving easier access to their involvement within the organisation. OUSA Executive members would be more likely to know how to approach and work with students since they are students themselves.

The Otago University Students' Association has evolved to become a vocal and highly profiled organisation within the student population. Each year the executive officers' achievements help anchor the fact that youth participation is fundamental to the success of the organisation.

Case Study Rainbow Youth

Youth participation is the backbone of our organisation. It's about inclusiveness; it's about young people meeting the needs of young people because we strongly believe that [young people] are the ones that have the best ability to do that for themselves. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

About Rainbow Youth

Rainbow Youth is an Auckland-based organisation providing support, contact, information, advocacy and education for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine youth.

In 1989 a group of young people wanting to provide a network of support and contact for queer youth established Auckland Lesbian and Gay Youth (ALGY). ALGY aimed to reduce discrimination and homophobia, and provide a point of contact, information and support for lesbian and gay youth. Primarily this involved the organisation of events and social groups for other lesbian and gay youth. ALGY also began an education programme, presenting workshops in schools with the same aim.

In 1995 ALGY became an incorporated society and was renamed Rainbow Youth. The constitution provided for an organisation run solely by gay, lesbian and bisexual young people under the age of 27.³ Rainbow Youth continued to provide support and social groups, along with educational workshops. Over this period Rainbow Youth employed part-time coordinators, one male and one female, to deliver core services. Workshops in schools about homophobia and sexual orientation increased, and the social groups flourished.

Today Rainbow Youth facilitates regular groups where gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine youth can meet, socialise and gain support from others experiencing similar issues. These groups are a safe place to find answers to questions and supportive friends. Rainbow Youth also continues to facilitate workshops in schools to increase awareness of sexual identity and orientation, and share experiences of "coming out". Workshops are designed to fit with the *Health and Physical Education in New Zealand Curriculum 1999* and continue to aim to decrease homophobia and create safe, supportive learning and working environments for everyone. Currently Rainbow Youth is expanding its work in schools by setting up support groups and providing schools with the means to support their students.

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

*Rainbow Youth Vision: A society in which all Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Takataapui and Fa'afafine youth feel cherished and supported.
(www.rainbowyouth.org.nz)*

Rainbow Youth is an organisation based on support. This support is carried well beyond supporting young people's issues with gender and sexual identity. While they admit

³ The constitution was later amended to include transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine young people.

there is more that could be done, such as paying facilitators and relying less on voluntary contributions, Rainbow Youth does much to support young people involved in the organisation. Some of these things are physical or practical such as the provision of supervision and training to facilitators. However, much of it is about an understanding and a deep commitment, care and respect for the well-being of young people.

What we tend to find is the ones who do get involved on a deeper level are of a special calibre. They're amazing, passionate people who have so much to give. But they're also often involved in other organisations as well, or studying, and doing other things, and so they're spread really thinly. So we have to be careful not to exhaust them or use them, not to exploit them... Our biggest responsibility is to the young people. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

It's so important to get the right young people for some of the roles too; not setting them up for failure, but rather being able to help strengthen something in them so they can achieve their goals and not feel like they have failed in any way with an important job. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

The organisation is also not afraid to ask for support from adults and others in the community as required. The executive board adopts adult advisers who are part of the gay community or have some connection to the gay community. Their role is to give support and advice to the young people on the executive board. These advisers do not have voting rights. The executive board also gains support from each other and tries to maintain a good balance between work and fun. Celebrating successes and recognising the good work people are doing, make up an important part of their meetings. In fact, celebration is a theme running through the whole organisation as a way of providing support.

Reducing Barriers

As a youth-led organisation, Rainbow Youth strikes less barriers to youth participation than an adult-led organisation. However, the organisation is still mindful of working to reduce barriers. This includes addressing generic barriers to participation, such as a youth-friendly environment, but also more specific barriers related to supporting queer young people who may often be particularly vulnerable.

When some young people tell others that they are gay or transgender that becomes their entire identity. What we try to do as an organisation is celebrate the many other aspects of that person's personality. We celebrate their gender identity and sexual orientation as well as their unique abilities and talents such as creative ability or musical ability. It's looking at the whole person approach. That is why we have events like Honey Pot Haka which is a Talent Quest (Rainbow Youth Coordinator).

Youth Participation in Action: Youth Initiated and Directed

Right from the start Rainbow Youth (and ALGY before it) was youth-initiated and directed. Today, young people participate fully as members, facilitators, leaders, advisers, helpers, employees and decision-makers. Participation is aided by Rainbow Youth's constitution and organisational policy, and also occurs informally through the encouragement of the coordinator and others. The organisation continues to find new ways of involving and including more and more young people by listening to them and being prepared to act on what they are saying.

We are always reflecting and constantly reassessing to make sure we are being inclusive...of young people in general and of specific groups of young people. A big part of that is listening to them...what they've got to offer is really precious. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

As a youth-led organisation, youth participation at Rainbow Youth occurs on two levels: membership and governance. There are a number of ways young members participate within Rainbow Youth:

Social Groups and Facilitation

Social groups have been the basis of the organisation since its inception and continue to sustain and grow the organisation. From there, many young people become further involved in the organisation, gaining benefit from the youth development principles that Rainbow Youth upholds, and the encouragement provided by older members of the organisation.

Young people come along, they get support, and they want to support back...they recognise the importance of the group, how good it felt for them to be supported, and that they have a vital role to play in supporting others. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

Each of the social groups is facilitated by young people who are trained and supervised, not only to facilitate the groups, but also to facilitate the development of other members. Those that are interested in facilitation or helping in other ways are encouraged to take on greater roles within the groups. Training and other support follows for those that express an interest in developing this area further.

Workshops in Schools

In a similar way, those young people interested in facilitation or involvement with the educational workshops are encouraged and supported with training, to develop skills in this area. Others may wish to be involved on a more informal level, such as telling their coming out stories, or being available to help out at workshops in other ways.

Having a Say

The membership of Rainbow Youth is very fluid as young people move on, find other commitments, find other support, and new members become involved. As the membership evolves, so too does the organisation. The next generations of young people come forward and add to the way things are done. These ideas are welcomed and acted on appropriately. A current example of this is a change in wording of the constitution. The constitution currently stipulates eight board members under the age of 27 years, and the number of males and females required on the board. Note however, that specifying males and females did not include transgender young people. The wording will be changed to someone who identifies as male, and someone who identifies as female.

Employing Young People

Rainbow Youth also has a policy of using, and paying for, youth expertise from within the organisation wherever possible. So if the organisation has a need for a service, young people perform that service. Thus the computer system was built by young people, the website designed by young people and business cards were designed by young people.

It doesn't occur to the board not to employ young people because they are not hindered by concepts of what young people can or cannot do.

Executive Board

At a governance level, young people participate via the executive board. The Rainbow Youth Executive Board is made up of eight people who must be under 27 years when elected at the Annual General Meeting. Three non-voting adult advisors make up the remainder of the current executive board. Each of these positions is elected by the Rainbow Youth membership. Young people who have initially come to Rainbow Youth for social support, and who express an interest and are able to make the time commitment are encouraged and supported to be involved.

Youth Participation Benefits

A Sustainable Future for Rainbow Youth

Rainbow Youth is an organisation based on valuing and supporting young people. The organisation's purpose is to support queer young people, both individually and as a community. This means that, for Rainbow Youth, many of the organisational benefits of youth participation are tied up with benefits to young people and the wider community.

Rainbow Youth fosters positive youth development through the provision of numerous opportunities to participate within the organisation. Facilitation of groups and workshops, and membership on the executive board are just some of those opportunities. Each of these opportunities is supported by training, supervision and encouragement.

For Rainbow Youth, the development of young people is an investment in the future of the organisation. Young people seeking support from Rainbow Youth in the future, benefit from the current development of future leaders.

Rainbow Youth also benefits through growth of the organisation. New younger members are constantly coming in, while older ones are encouraged and supported into other roles within the organisation. With so many opportunities to become involved, members stay in the organisation for longer. It likely follows then, that the organisation has an improved capacity to reach its goals, and institutional knowledge is better protected, addressing a common concern of not-for-profit organisations.

The future of Rainbow Youth is also assisted at a community level. Young people involved in Rainbow Youth develop skills and understanding about queer issues and support. They leave the organisation as young adults, taking this understanding with them. Rainbow Youth continues to benefit from the involvement of many previous members who are now in a position to support them as adults in the queer community.

Rainbow Youth's youth development model also provides a strong basis for working through problems that occur. The passion within the organisation that is directly derived from a sense of belonging helps to sustain it through difficult times.

Youth participation is our success. Through their enthusiasm and passion, young people provide support to each other, and even if the social groups were all that Rainbow Youth was, that in itself would be sustainable because of the youth participation. We've had our ups and downs in the past, but the social groups have always kept going because of the involvement of young people. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

Reputation

Of further benefit, particularly for not-for-profit organisations, is the development of a good reputation in regard to positive youth development. Rainbow Youth is increasingly developing a reputation as a role model to organisations working with young people using the positive youth development approach. In turn, the profile of the organisation is raised, with many associated benefits. One great spin-off is the “free” publicity this generates.

Good Employer

A common issue for not-for-profit organisations is the support, or lack of support, that can be felt by paid employees, who are often working primarily in isolation. An organisational culture with such a strong emphasis on participation has helped to address this issue within Rainbow Youth.

I personally gain inspiration from the young people. They are the ones that I get my most positive feedback from and as social workers we need to hear that good things are happening as well. And young people so often seem to be so much more prepared to share the positive stuff and to positively reinforce others. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

Relevant and Responsive Services

As an organisation fully governed by young people, Rainbow Youth is able to eliminate many of the common barriers to youth participation.

If [Rainbow Youth] was adult-run, adult-focused, there would be lots more barriers that we don't really even realize aren't there any more. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

I think we would miss out on stuff if it was done differently. We'd become too much like other organisations that do amazing stuff but in an adult model. Being youth-focussed keeps us aware of what the youth issues are. They feel comfortable to keep it real and we stay on track with what young people need, rather than what adults think they need. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

This elimination of barriers allows the organisation to be responsive to its members and to provide relevant services. Rainbow Youth's strong youth development model ensures an ability to keep things real and applicable to young people. Their publicity information is a good example. The poster “Not str8? Or not sure?” was designed to appeal to other young people. Adults not familiar with text language may not understand what the poster says, but young people will, and they will know that the poster is aimed at them.

Youth participation is our success. Rainbow Youth wouldn't be Rainbow Youth without the youth participation, and we wouldn't be the success that we are without it. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

Case Study

TEARAWAY Magazine

Young people are an essential part of what [TEARAWAY] magazine is; what the company is as a whole; what our vision is; what our philosophy is. It's all about young people – so we just wouldn't even contemplate not involving young people in that – it's just how it is. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

About TEARAWAY Magazine

TEARAWAY Magazine is a national youth publication targeting young people 13 to 19 years, with a monthly readership of 257,000. Tearaway Press Ltd (TEARAWAY) produces the magazine plus a teacher resource with each magazine, a new publication, *Glue*, for 17 to 19 year-olds, and *Tearaway Online*. The magazine is distributed through secondary schools (at a nominal cost to the school of 31 cents per copy) and is ordered by 95 percent of schools around New Zealand.

TEARAWAY was set up 16 years ago in the Wanganui home of award-winning educational journalist John Francis and his wife Vicki. Parents themselves, John and Vicki saw a need for a magazine that took young people seriously and encouraged respect for self and others. The catch-phrase was, and still is, “The Voice of New Zealand Youth”.

TEARAWAY aims to inform, enrich, enthuse and empower young people; to encourage full, productive, enjoyable lives, with respect and care for selves, and others (www.tearaway.co.nz).

The whole vision behind TEARAWAY was to provide a magazine that was credible to young people; that gave young people credit for having a brain. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

It's all about young people speaking to young people and that's why our philosophy is the voice of New Zealand youth...It's a vehicle for young people to use, for them to have a forum to discuss their ideas and opinions on things that matter to them. It's all about offering young people credible information and advice. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Youth Participation in Action: “It just sort of evolved”

While there was never any intention of excluding young people, neither was there a conscious decision to actively involve them with the new publication.

John and Vicki produced [TEARAWAY Magazine] at a real grass roots level, using their spare room as their office and then young people just started to come on board. Young people came in to help them from the community, their older son and daughter wrote and worked for them, other young people started to write in with ideas and send articles – it just sort of evolved. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

While *TEARAWAY Magazine* was adult-initiated, the level of youth involvement and participation quickly increased to the point where today *TEARAWAY Magazine*'s core team of six people are aged between 17 and 25, and the magazine has an enormous

network of young writers, photographers and other contributors from around the country. Content for the magazine is almost exclusively driven by young people, and primarily produced by them too.

We get a tremendous amount of feedback from our readers – hundreds of emails and feedback via the website. The letters really are our treasure trove. It's not like we have to brainstorm ideas... We know what the topic is at the time just from the feedback we get from readers... It's not like we sit back and think, "Okay, what shall we write about for these young people?" The ideas come from them. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

We've got a full time writer on the team who is only 22, our graphic designer is 19, and we're just about to take on a young salesperson which is quite unusual. A few years ago I wouldn't have considered employing a 17 year-old in sales, but the more we thought about it, we thought it would work. The key is, just like with adults, finding the right person for the job, and we found the right person. I guess with TEARAWAY, because we are a youth brand, people expect the team to be young too. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Knowing that we are there to provide something for young people and we're speaking to young people... we can't do that without young people's involvement. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Ongoing Commitment to Youth Participation

While youth participation has been firmly entrenched in TEARAWAY culture for a long time, it has only recently begun to be formalised. This has come about as a result of having the time and space to do it, but also from seeing the benefits of having formal policies around participation. Now, TEARAWAY's business plan has a goal that TEARAWAY becomes synonymous with youth culture in Aotearoa, and one of the objectives to that goal is that 90 percent of the content of *TEARAWAY Magazine* is written by young people.

Currently there is also discussion of bringing young people on to the board to help with decision-making, and ongoing discussion of other ways to reach the goal of truly reflecting youth in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We don't believe that we're "there" by any stretch of the imagination. We've got a long way to go before we truly do reflect the voice of New Zealand youth, but I think we're on the way to really achieving that. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

TEARAWAY supports young people to participate through attitudes like those demonstrated by the comments above, and also more tangibly, through mentoring and coaching. This mentoring role involves balancing an enabling role with a learning role, and at the same time always ensuring that the magazine deals responsibly and ethically with any controversial issues.

We believe very much in allowing our young writers to express themselves in the way that they wish to, so that they really are the voice of New Zealand youth. That includes the way they speak – the abbreviations, the text speak, the lingo, whatever. At the end of the day it's all about communication and making sure

that whoever's reading it at the other end is going to understand it. Probably we're not as strict as other publications on diction and grammar, and our editing process would be quite different to other publications. When we do need to make changes to a young person's work, we're in that mentoring role, showing them why and how they can learn from it. We're very aware of the importance of nurturing and fostering our young writers... It's also really important that they are paid and paid well for the work they do for us. (Tearaway Magazine Managing Editor)

Youth Participation Benefits

Innovation and Creativity

One of the major benefits of youth participation for TEARAWAY is the freshness that young people bring to the magazine. Having the content primarily driven by young people keeps it relevant and adds innovation, creativity and clarity.

Adults can learn a lot from young people and young people can certainly bring fresh ideas to an organisation. Life experience is really good but it can also create barriers and stop you from taking risks that you might otherwise have taken. Whereas young people can contribute with so many fresh and innovative ideas, without inhibitions, and organisations can really benefit from this. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Youth participation provides TEARAWAY with the opportunity to refine and improve their product, and the courage to take risks. Employing a 17 year-old salesperson is one example of this risk-taking. For TEARAWAY, these risks are paying off with the development of a reputation as an exciting and innovative publication. This was recognised by the New Zealand Magazine Awards last year when *TEARAWAY Magazine* was nominated as a finalist in three categories including Magazine of the Year.

Attaining Organisational Goals – “The Voice of New Zealand Youth”

TEARAWAY aims to be “the voice of New Zealand youth”. The reputation of the magazine - with readers and advertisers - depends on TEARAWAY's ability to be representative of young people. Letters from young people provide a key means by which *TEARAWAY Magazine* is able to be representative.

Over the years, [letters] have been by far the most consistent, significant way in which we've been able to tap into the thinking - the needs, desires, frustrations, fears, joys, philosophies and suggestions - of our target group... With letters people put their heart and soul out there for all to see. They're not worried about what their mates might think, 'cause they're probably using a pseudonym; they've got time to think about what they want to say, and the very fact that they're writing to us shows they feel strongly about the subject, even passionate. For some of the people who've written to us over the years the letter we get might be the only one they ever write in their lives. It's not just the literate people who write to us - it's people of all kinds...many of the writers are Māori and an increasing number are from migrant groups, especially Asian groups. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Letters are one form of youth participation that provide TEARAWAY with an improved capacity to reach its goal of being “the voice of New Zealand youth”. Editorial from young writers is another. *TEARAWAY Magazine’s* Managing Editor believes that without youth participation, they would not reach this goal at all:

We cannot truly say that we represent the youth of New Zealand if we haven’t got a large amount of youth input. If we weren’t involving young people I don’t think we’d get the mix. I don’t think it would work – at all. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

For TEARAWAY, youth participation is not just important, it’s crucial. I truly believe anyone marketing to young people or providing a good or a service to young people should have some form of youth participation within their organisation. I don’t know how people can do it otherwise. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Targeted Marketing

TEARAWAY’s ability to reflect and represent a diverse range of young people (through youth participation) is also what allows the organisation to be responsive to the young people who are their target market, and to continue to grow this market. With their willingness to listen to the feedback they receive from young people TEARAWAY is able to develop a comprehensive understanding of young people’s issues, interests and concerns. This provides the organisation with opportunities to improve their product. In TEARAWAY’s case, this has included the development of their website, and new publications, as well as changes to TEARAWAY.

Independent statistical analysis shows that *TEARAWAY Magazine’s* market share is consistently higher than that of other youth magazines (Nielsen Media Research, 2003, cited in *TEARAWAY Magazine*, 2003). *TEARAWAY Magazine’s* Managing Editor suggests that this is largely because of the credibility of TEARAWAY with young people, and that this credibility is largely due to reflecting “the voice of New Zealand youth” through youth participation:

Credibility, personality and consistency build market share more solidly than any marketing campaign. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Attracting Resources

TEARAWAY’s strong connection to the youth market helps the organisation to be seen as a credible youth brand:

TEARAWAY is a business. We have to run as a business and make a profit otherwise there wouldn’t be a magazine, and we rely on advertising to do that. For advertisers to see us as desirable we have to have that connection to the youth market that [advertisers] are targeting. We do that through youth participation. Because of our level of youth participation TEARAWAY is successful, the brand is successful, so advertisers and people marketing to youth audiences know who we are. TEARAWAY wouldn’t be the success it is without that level of participation. We wouldn’t have that credibility with the advertisers. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

That credibility is what sells TEARAWAY to advertisers and helps the organisation to attract financial resources. It allows *TEARAWAY Magazine* to make claims like the following to attract advertising:

TEARAWAY has a market presence that no other youth magazine can match. With over 257,000 readers viewing your advertisement throughout New Zealand, Tearaway is the best way to reach your target market. (TEARAWAY Sales Booklet, 2003)

Youth participation also provides an opportunity for *TEARAWAY Magazine* to attract funding in other ways such as sponsorship⁴. Like any shared philosophy, youth participation as a way of working allows organisations to form connections and partnerships with other like-minded organisations or those with similar goals. TEARAWAY has benefited from this when it comes to seeking sponsorship for features within the magazine.

Youth participation has been fundamental in helping us secure funding. Government departments are now starting to recognise and acknowledge the value of young people being involved. A couple of years ago this wasn't seen as important, but now we're increasingly being asked what level of youth participation we have in the organisation, so we're getting great benefit from being able to show that we are all about involving young people...More and more funders are clicking onto youth participation, and want to fund organisations that work to a youth development model. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Youth Affairs suggests that organisations need to provide adequate resourcing for youth participation, including time, space, transport, funding, information and feedback (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2003:14). *TEARAWAY Magazine's* experience in sourcing funding suggests that while youth participation does take organisational resources, these resources are an investment in growing the organisation.

⁴ *TEARAWAY Magazine* is a profit-making business that is funded primarily through advertising, however special features are often sponsored through government and community funding.

Case Study

Te Hauora o Turanganui-a-Kiwa (Turanga Health)

If you are prepared to open your doors and get youth in then be prepared to listen to their issues. (Turanga Health General Manager)

About Turanga Health

Turanga Health was set up to provide health services in Turanganui-a-Kiwa (Gisborne district). The organisation is a Māori service provider owned by three iwi groups, Rongowhakaata, Ngai Tamanuhiri, Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki. Turanga Health is a limited liability health company with charitable trust status, and is governed by five directors - one from each iwi shareholder and two selected independent directors.

The picture of iwi and Māori health in Turanganui-a-Kiwa poses significant challenges. The considerable task of Turanga Health is to improve the health status of iwi and Māori in Turanganui-a-Kiwa.

Improving the general health status of our Iwi and Māori regionally, is a small but valued contribution nationally in terms of all Iwi and Māori. (www.turangahealth.co.nz)

Turanga Health's mission is "to provide the best health service available to the community of Turanganui-a-Kiwa" (www.turangahealth.co.nz). The organisation is committed to practices that give the best to the community and are in keeping with the tikanga of Turanganui-a-Kiwa. The vision of Turanga Health, "Building Wellness for Iwi into the Millennium" (www.turangahealth.co.nz) reflects the direction of health for iwi and Māori. It wants iwi and Māori to be part of the healthiest community in the world. The development of that vision encapsulates the following themes:

- meeting our people wherever it might be necessary to meet them, ie home-based, marae-based services delivery, or on the rugby field
- assisting people to be the best they can be
- increasing the wellness of our people
- AAA – accessible, appropriate and affordable
- whānau/hapū/iwi – in order to achieve wellness for iwi, whānau and hapū must first be treated, katahi ka ora ai te iwi
- working with and building healthy whānau
- aroha
- healthy lifestyles.

There are over 20 active marae within the rohe of Turanganui-a-Kiwa. Each plays a key role in the development and provision of health services in the region.

Turanga Health provides a number of primary health services including those relating to diabetes, oral hygiene, heart disease, asthma, smoking, alcohol, drugs and mental health.

This case study focuses on the Rangatahi Health Centre of Turanga Health, however, it

is important to understand that rangatahi (young people) do not stand alone. Turanga Health is a whānau of services⁵ for Māori (their first priority) and all ages are respected - one service for one age group or group of people does not stand out over another.

You can't have one without the other. It is recognised they are all integral and everyone is unique so long as we are all respected and appreciated. It is a blanket approach, we are all under one blanket. (Turanga Health General Manager)

As an organisation, Turanga Health views rangatahi as an important part of their whānau of services. Without rangatahi the services for Māori would not be complete.

The Rangatahi Health Centre

The kaupapa of the Rangatahi Health Centre is “to provide a range of general health education and promotion, advisory, liaison and coordination of activities specifically targeted to rangatahi. The [Rangatahi Health Centre] is committed to assisting young people to be the best they can be.” (www.turangahealth.co.nz/rangatahi)

The Rangatahi Health Centre is a first-point contact centre with a health focus. The positive outcomes sought are:

- health planning
- decision-making
- provision of counselling services
- increase in self esteem and confidence to self-manage health care
- encouraging smoking cessation
- promotion of healthy lifestyles
- promotion of mental-health and well-being
- preventing self harm (suicide)
- sexual health and promoting well-being
- promotion of safe alcohol and drug use
- management of asthma.

The Rangatahi Health Centre is open Monday to Thursday after school and Friday until midnight for those aged 13 to 18 years. Up to 150 rangatahi participate in the Friday night programme and transport is provided home at the end of the night.

The centre has an auditorium where events are organised and games and computers are available. The entertainment and resources are used as a platform for involving rangatahi in health education programmes. The centre also operates as a referral service with follow-up procedures.

There is a balance of what they want and what the service is funded for, we need to make sure both happen. (Turanga Health General Manager)

⁵ For information on Turanga Health's whānau of services please see www.turangahealth.co.nz

A significant feature of the centre is that it provides options for rangatahi who may have had their options limited:

The Health Centre provides the opportunity for education services, sporting activities, cultural development and other options in life... It is all about providing choices for rangatahi and choices around a youth lifestyle. (Turanga Health General Manager)

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

The Rangatahi Health Centre is supported by a number of volunteer whānau, who alongside staff, support and care for young people coming to the centre. At times, the Rangatahi Health Centre acts as whānau for the young people involved, working to connect rangatahi with their whānau, hapū and iwi.

Rangatahi are valued within the organisation as contributors towards a healthy Māori community. The idea is that if rangatahi are not healthy then the Māori community is not healthy.

Turanga Health proudly describes itself as a “pro-Māori organisation” thus placing importance and focus on addressing Māori needs. Meeting Māori health needs is a serious outcome for Turanga Health and is inherent in the philosophies and actions of the organisation.

Youth Participation in Action

The Rangatahi Health Centre is directed by young people “with adults as back seat drivers”. Rangatahi are involved in processes and decision-making at the centre in a number of different ways:

The Development of the Centre

The large youth population, and in particular the large Māori youth population in Turanganui-a-Kiwa, was the impetus for Turanga Health to do something around catering to rangatahi health needs. In setting up the centre, Turanga Health realised they had to find out what would encourage young people to become involved:

We had to look at settings where rangatahi participated such as the skateboard park, rugby, netball, Friday nights on the streets, rural, and go out to talk with young people there. (Turanga Health General Manager)

From initial interactions with young people in 1998, three hui were organised with young people, and discussions led to the establishment of a health centre. The centre officially opened in 2001 with minimal resources. Once funding from the Ministry of Health was secured, the centre expanded, bringing on board two paid staff members and an increase in the services provided. The staff members were employed in mutual agreement with the employers and rangatahi. Some young people from the original focus group and hui in 1998 are now working for the centre.

The centre is located in the main road of Gisborne City and was strategically placed for accessibility. The building has a youth-friendly physical appearance helped by the fact

that young people painted the building.

Open Communication with Rangatahi

On a regular basis rangatahi are gathered together and asked about the development of the centre and what can be done to improve it or what needs to happen there. This regular line of communication helps the centre provide better services for rangatahi.

If you are prepared to open your doors and get youth in then be prepared to listen to their issues. Listening to them goes miles with youth. (Turanga Health General Manager)

Programme Development

The centre develops programmes for rangatahi in conjunction with rangatahi:

The programme meets every groups needs. It is not a "one programme fits all". (Turanga Health centre staff)

Whether it is for the rangatahi who use the centre or whether it is for external groups, all courses are developed with young people. For example, the young people at the local polytechnic designed their own health programme. The educators discussed the health components that were compulsory and the young people designed it to suit their needs.

Youth Participation at the Disciplinary Level

Any issue that arises in the centre is normally brought back to the young people to discuss. An example of this happened in the first two months of opening where the centre staff found the doors had been kicked in. In this incident, the young people were sat down and asked how they were going to manage the outcome. The perpetrator was identified in the first five minutes and the group decided on the course of action for the person to be made accountable.

Youth Participation Benefits

Increasing Participation with Relevant Services

According to one of the interviewees, an organisation needs to keep in touch with what rangatahi want, or are interested in. Keeping up-to-date with young people ensures the centre and its programmes are relevant to young people. This in turn, attracts young people to the centre as demonstrated by the large number of young people who attend the centre, particularly on Friday nights.

It is not the same with older people trying to be romantic about what young people should be doing. They go ahead and do what they think and then wonder why they have only three kids there. (Turanga Health General Manager)

Including young people in the development of a programme ensures the programme meets the group's needs. This is done on a case-by-case basis where centre staff support the young people to develop their own programmes.

Having young people involved in the development of the course makes sure it is interesting and appropriate to them. (Turanga Health centre staff)

Not surprisingly, the young people turn up eager to participate in the programmes they have developed. Rarely has there been a case when young people have not turned up for a course they have developed.

Organisational Goals Achieved

The result of better participation within the centre and programmes is that there is more of an opportunity for youth health needs to be addressed. In doing so, Turanga Health are achieving their goals of “improving the health status of iwi and Māori in Turanganui-a-Kiwa”.

The Rangatahi Centre’s commitment to youth participation has assisted in “making youth visible who would usually be invisible”. The benefits in this for the young people are numerous, however, the rewards are not only for the young people, but also for the organisation:

It makes our service flexible and able to make a difference in young people’s lives. (Turanga Health General Manager)

Supporting rangatahi to develop as healthy, connected, participating young people also has wider implications for whānau, hapū and iwi. The development of healthy young people is important for the development of a healthy community.

Raised Profile of Rangatahi Needs

Through youth participation, the organisation is more aware of the specific needs of rangatahi. The recognition of these needs has ensured a balanced approach to providing services for Māori and highlights the areas that need to be addressed for rangatahi. Turanga Health is therefore better informed and can better provide for the younger people in its whānau.

Reducing Stereotypes and Building a Positive Youth Image

Turanga Health has a reputation for the good work it does for Māori and with young people. The Rangatahi Health Centre has contributed to this reputation, and this has helped raise the profile of young people in Turanganui-a-Kiwa. In the process of doing so, it has become fully aware of the stereotypes and stigma associated with youth.

There needs to be a lot more public relations around changing the stereotypes of youth, particularly Māori youth. The attitude towards young people needs to change so that they are not the first target of a pointed finger when trouble occurs. (Turanga Health General Manager)

The positive participation of rangatahi helps to address some of these stereotypes. Turanga Health is willing to work with the challenge of changing the attitudes adults have towards young people and are prepared to advocate for young Māori ensuring they are rightfully respected. While this is recognised as an ongoing process, Turanga Health is committed to rangatahi and ensuring their well-being and holistic health needs are met.

The services the centre provides to young people and the advocacy role it takes for young people has given Turanga Health a good reputation within the youth population it serves, within the Māori community, and within Turanganui-a-Kiwa.

Youth Development and Connectedness Within Their Community

Involving young people with the painting of the centre also provides an element of ownership of the space – “they call it a place of their own”. Not only is there a sense of belonging to the physical space but also to the programmes and activities they helped develop. According to one centre staff member:

...the young people have a sense of ownership of the Centre as they regularly come here and contribute to its activities. By doing this they are contributing to their own lives. (Turanga Health centre staff)

The Rangatahi Health Centre provides an opportunity for young people to be connected to their community. The caring and supportive environment the staff and whānau provide encourages a culture where young people feel connected to others. Active participation in decision-making, providing feedback on the centre, and developing programmes helps to raise the aspirations of young people and supports them to reach their potential (Wade, Lawton and Stevenson 2001).

The positive development of young people has implications for the community as a whole. The development of young people helps prepare young people for active and productive involvement within the community (Wade et al 2001). One outcome of this is building capacity within the community, and specifically within the Māori community.

The strengthening of relationships between young people and their peers, and with the centre staff, ideally leads to strengthened relationships with the community. Another positive outcome for the community is that young people are accepted as part of the community and valued for their contribution, thus encouraging a more cohesive and inclusive community.

The connectedness of young people within the Māori culture is something the Rangatahi Health Centre and particularly Turanga Health tries to nurture.

The biggest challenge for Māori is that the essence of Māori culture is being lost. (Turanga Health General Manger)

Turanga Health strives to provide more connectedness to tikanga Māori for their young people. Importance is placed on incorporating the cultural aspects of Māori for rangatahi so that they have an opportunity to explore tikanga Māori in a safe and nurturing environment and have the opportunity to connect to their Māori culture.

Part Two: Analysis and Discussion

- Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture
- Youth Participation in Action
- Youth Participation Benefits

Analysis and Discussion

This analysis and discussion of data collected for the case studies is organised into three sections:

- organisational culture, or how organisations support youth participation
- the different applications of youth participation within organisations
- benefits of youth participation to organisations

Supporting Participation: Organisational Culture

A significant feature of the six organisations studied for this project is their culture. They all reflect a culture that respects young people and recognises the value of youth participation. Each shows recognition of young people's ability to contribute meaningfully to decisions and issues that affect their lives, albeit at different levels⁶. They have all addressed, and continue to address, barriers to youth participation within their organisations.

Each of the organisations studied was committed to youth participation. A clear picture of the value and priority of youth participation was presented by Nelson City Council:

There is more commitment to youth participation because the Youth Council has done a good job... There has been a significant change in the past 18 months. Youth went from being a fairly low priority to being seen as an important part of Council business. (Nelson City Councillor)

Commitment within the organisations was demonstrated in different ways:

Committed and Youth-Friendly Adults

For adult-led organisations such as Turanga Health, TEARAWAY, Health Sponsorship Council and Nelson City Council, a significant factor contributing to organisational commitment was the presence of one or more staff dedicated to youth projects. The Health Sponsorship Council explains:

An organisation needs somebody who can see through all the bureaucracy and who wants to work with young people. It doesn't have to be a young person in this role but must be someone who has respect for young people's opinions and has the right attitude toward young people. They must understand the importance of young people's opinions in decision-making. (Smokefree Teen Programme Manager)

A Nelson City Youth Councillor explains this point from the perspective of a young person participating:

[Some city council staff and councillors] are advocates for the young people. They're prepared to stand up for everything the young people do and say and are prepared to take things that step further and try and find ways those young people can get their voices heard even more. (Nelson Youth Councillor)

⁶ These levels are discussed in the next section of the report.

Power-Sharing with Young People

History presents many barriers to youth participation and overcoming these ingrained practices can be difficult. Organisations can argue that young people wouldn't be interested, or that they should be "protected" from serious issues. In some cases adults may also feel threatened by youth participation and a perceived loss of power.

The reality of youth participation in adult-led organisations is that adults generally have a higher level of power than young people. While the four adult-led organisations in this study employed different levels of power-sharing, a significant factor in their youth participation practice was their willingness to share power with young people.

Health Sponsorship Council's "This is Real" campaign and Nelson Youth Council's involvement in Pioneers Park are good examples of shared power in decision-making. In both these cases, key adults were willing to devolve a degree of power to young people.

For youth-led organisations like Rainbow Youth and OUSA, power issues are still present, but take a different form. Young people within these organisations are elected and supported to be in power by their members. These young people become decision-makers on behalf of others, and as such have a responsibility to ensure the decisions they make are representative of the young people they work with and for. Rainbow Youth and OUSA address power-sharing through open-door policies, encouraging ongoing feedback and reflection, and through formal democratic processes such as elections.

Respect for Young People

In all the organisations studied there was a strong theme of respect for young people. Respect was evident in the organisations' recognition of what young people are capable of, as well as in their desire to be open and honest with young people. TEARAWAY, on what young people can do:

Adults can learn a lot from young people and young people can certainly bring fresh ideas to an organisation. Life experience is really good but it can also create barriers and stop you from taking risks that you might otherwise have taken. Whereas young people can contribute with so many fresh and innovative ideas, without inhibitions, and organisations can really benefit from this. (TEARAWAY Magazine Managing Editor)

Nelson City Council also found young people were capable of making a valuable contribution. Their respect for the Youth Council's work is evident:

The Youth Council did an amazing job of consulting on the concept plan... Youth Council's involvement with Pioneers Park turned it into something really great... We can learn a lot from the way Youth Council did their consultation... There is a change in the attitude and approach of some staff at council. We are starting to do things differently and the Youth Council's approach is responsible for some of that. (Nelson City Council staff member)

Rainbow Youth verbalised another aspect of respect for young people:

[Young people] are also often involved in other organisations as well, or studying, and doing other things, and so they're spread really thinly. So we have to be careful not to exhaust them or use them, not to exploit them...Our biggest responsibility is to the young people. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

The organisations studied also showed their respect for young people by being open and treating them equally and honestly.

We are always reflecting and constantly reassessing to make sure we are being inclusive...of young people in general and of specific groups of young people. A big part of that is listening to them...what they've got to offer is really precious. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

All of the organisations showed their respect for young people by acting on their advice and suggestions, and by acknowledging that young people played a valuable role in their organisations.

Whānau

Turanga Health and Rainbow Youth demonstrated further commitment to young people by providing a particularly caring and supportive environment. Both these organisations act as whānau for the young people they are involved with who may have become disconnected from their families. Both organisations provide an environment where young people have the opportunity to connect with others.

Additionally, Turanga Health encourages and supports young people's interest in their culture and fosters their development as Māori. Turanga Health emphasises that it provides a whānau of services of which the Rangatahi Health Centre is an integral part.

Training and Support

Training and support for young people was a theme echoed throughout the case studies. Training centred on the provision of information necessary for specific roles, and skill-based training. For example, OUSA provided training for new executive members, Rainbow Youth provided training to new facilitators of programmes and groups, and Nelson City Council provided an induction pack for new youth councillors. Other support of a developmental nature included TEARAWAY's mentoring and coaching of young writers, and Rainbow Youth's provision of supervision for facilitators.

Within adult-led organisations training and support helps break down barriers between young people and adults. Young people are better informed about their role, and organisations are more likely to involve young people who are better equipped to participate. TEARAWAY, Rainbow Youth and Nelson City Council also acknowledged the importance of training for youth development:

...not setting [young people] up for failure, but rather being able to help strengthen something in them so they can achieve their goals and not feel like they have failed in any way with an important job. (Rainbow Youth Coordinator)

The *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* also emphasises training for adults and ensuring adults are skilled in working with young people. Information gathered for this project did not indicate training was provided for adults working with young people, although there was an awareness of the importance of this. Nelson City Council staff talked about encouraging other staff to be respectful of young people and to learn about youth development.

Each of the organisations also provided other types of support for young people. These included transport or paying transport costs, providing food at meetings, approaching young people on their territory, setting appropriate meeting times and making the environment comfortable for young people.

Formalising Youth Participation

Rainbow Youth, OUSA, Nelson City Council and TEARAWAY have formalised youth participation in their organisations by including it in their constitutions, mission statements and strategic plans. In Rainbow Youth, Nelson City Council and OUSA young people are allocated positions or elected to positions that only young people (or students) may hold. TEARAWAY has formalised its commitment to youth participation through planning, so a strategic goal is that 90 percent of *TEARAWAY Magazine* content is written by young people. These formal acknowledgements of youth participation are further evidence of organisations' commitments to youth participation.

Each of these aspects of commitment to youth participation enables organisations to eliminate barriers and ensure young people are participating meaningfully.

Youth Participation in Action

This project studied a diverse range of organisations, each with quite different purposes, people and participation. Hart's (1992) levels of participation acted as one guide for selection of the organisations participating in this project. The organisations chosen were at varying levels on the ladder, however, they all promoted meaningful participation within their organisations. That is, their levels of participation were above level four on *Hart's Ladder*, avoiding tokenism, decoration and manipulation.

Hart's fourth level of participation involves young people volunteering to participate and being informed by adults. At the eighth level young people initiate and drive the entire project, and adults are invited to share decision-making. The progression from level four to six reflects a gradual increase in the power of young people. At levels seven and eight, young people have the ultimate power with adults sharing in decision-making at level eight, but not at level seven. These top two forms of participation have created some debate over whether participation at level seven or eight is most meaningful. According to Herbert (2000), many believe shared decision-making is beneficial to both young people and adults. "This may be true in its purest form where adults and young people are equal and where power struggles rarely occur." Others believe that young people are most empowered when they are making decisions without the influence of adults. This does not necessarily exclude adults but reduces their role to one of support (Herbert 2000:5).

Youth Affairs suggests that “different levels of participation are appropriate for different projects, various stages of the same project and different groups of young people” (2003:14). This project can add that different components of participation are appropriate for different types of organisations and different organisational structures.

A key difference in organisations’ participation practice was their leadership. This project found that youth-led and adult-led organisations differed significantly in the range of different participation levels utilised. The table below shows that the adult-led organisations in this study - Health Sponsorship Council, Nelson City Council, TEARAWAY and Turanga Health - utilised a wide range of youth participation practices from assigning, consulting and informing, to shared decision-making on both adult-initiated and youth-initiated projects. Levels four, five, six and eight of *Hart’s Ladder* are all covered by different projects, or even within the same project of an organisation.

Health Sponsorship Council’s “This is Real” campaign is an example of this use of a wide range of youth participation practices. “This is Real” was initiated after consultation with young people (level five). Young people were then recruited to provide further feedback (level four), and another group of young people has helped with decision-making regarding design (level six). Young people will also be asked to help launch the campaign (back to levels four and five).

The table below shows the range of different participation practices used by the organisations studied.

Table Two: Range of Participation Within Each Organisation

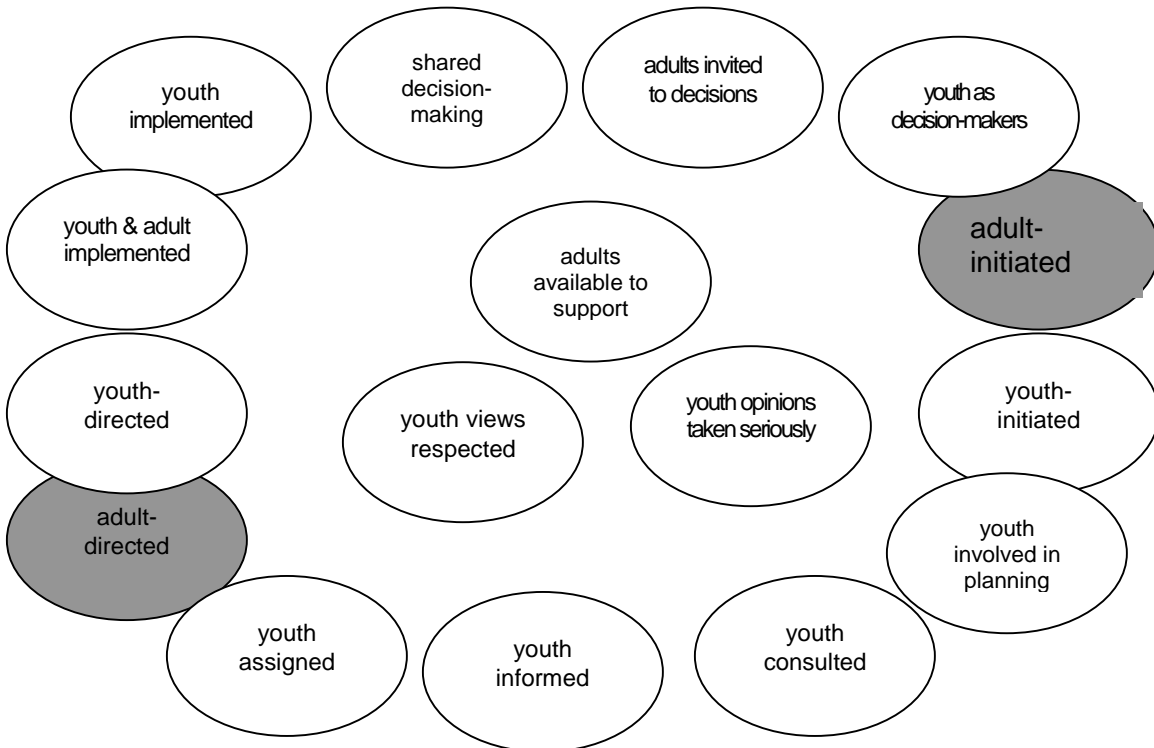
Level		HSC	NCC	OUSA	Rainbow Youth	TEARAWAY	Turanga Health
8	Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults	✓	✓			✓	✓
7	Youth-initiated and directed			✓	✓		
6	Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people	✓	✓			✓	✓
5	Consulted and informed	✓	✓			✓	✓
4	Assigned but informed	✓	✓			✓	✓
3	Tokenism						
2	Decoration						
1	Manipulation						

While the adult-led organisations used a range of youth participation types, the youth-led organisations in this project did not. Neither Rainbow Youth nor OUSA designated power of decision-making to adults, although Rainbow Youth does have adult support people available. Thus, both organisations’ youth participation practice was confined to level seven.

Hart's Ladder is a useful way for organisations to identify “non-participation” within their organisation and to move away from tokenism, decoration and manipulation. The table above shows that none of the organisations in this project were practicing “non-participation”. However, the ladder only partially reflects youth participation for the adult-led organisations in this project. Assigning a level of participation does not allow for the fluctuations that were the reality for these case studies.

What *Hart's Ladder* does provide is a good picture of the wide range of participatory behaviours these organisations use. These behaviours, or elements of youth participation, can be represented in a form that does not involve levels (Diagram One).

Diagram One: Elements of Youth Participation



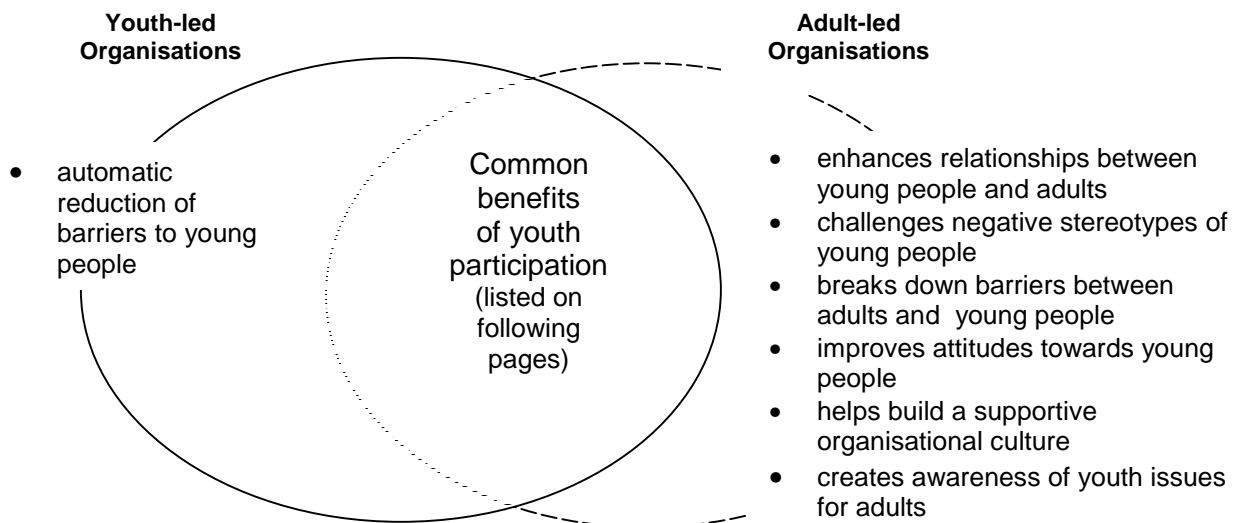
Shaded elements must be teamed with non-shaded elements for meaningful youth participation.

The reality of participation for the adult-led organisations in this project was an open and fluid approach to participation. Diagram One is not conclusive of the elements to participation, however, it has been included here as an example of how participation can be better described and represented for the adult-led organisations in this project. It provides a way for organisations to use a process of participation that is meaningful to young people and appropriate to the organisation. This may be useful to adult-led organisations whose participation requires a flexible approach. Removing the aspect of levels from *Hart's Ladder* allows organisations the freedom to use a variety of youth participatory practices to suit the organisation and/or project.

Benefits of Youth Participation

The participation of young people has had significant benefits for the six organisations described in this report. Analysis of these benefits unfolded similarities and differences again in youth-led and adult-led organisations. The analysis found benefits specific to youth-led organisations, benefits specific to adult-led organisations, and benefits common to both. Diagram Two below provides a visual representation of these differences and commonalities. The unique benefits of youth-led and adult-led organisations are discussed here, followed by discussion of the large number of common benefits to both types of organisations.

Diagram Two: The Benefits of Youth Participation to Organisations



Benefits for Youth-Led Organisations

As Diagram Two shows, youth-led organisations benefited from an ‘automatic’ reduction of barriers to youth participation. For Rainbow Youth and OUSA, having young people (or students) in a governance role and also in the roles of membership and service delivery meant there were less barriers to overcome. The involvement of young people on two levels of the organisation establishes a common culture of youth development thus eliminating many of the barriers that occur in adult-led organisations. All the barriers to youth participation outlined in *Keepin’ it Real*, and in the introduction to this report, were significantly reduced for both OUSA and Rainbow Youth.

Benefits for Adult-Led Organisations

Enhanced Relationships

Youth participation:

- enhances relationships between young people and adults
- challenges negative stereotypes of young people
- breaks down barriers between adults and young people
- improves attitudes towards young people
- helps build a supportive organisational culture
- creates awareness in adults of youth issues.

The unique benefits of youth participation for adult-led organisations relate primarily to relationships between adults and young people, and within organisations. In some cases, youth participation contributed to a more supportive organisational culture. Turanga Health’s whānau concept is one example of this. Each of the adult participants in the study reported that they were inspired by young people’s involvement, and that young people had a positive impact on them personally, as well as on many other adult staff within the organisation. Involving young people in the organisation was seen to help break down barriers between adults and young people and contribute to changing stereotypes about young people and youth participation.

Common Benefits for Organisations

The common benefits for organisations can be categorised under the following themes. These themes were developed through cross-analysis of the benefits reported in the case studies:

- increased relevance to young people
- improved ability to achieve organisational goals
- effective targeting of funds
- enhanced credibility and reputation
- a wider variety of perspectives offered
- improved organisational processes
- building capacity and sustainability within an organisation.

The benefits of youth participation described in each of the case studies are presented below according to these themes. Some benefits may be listed under more than one heading.

Increased Relevance to Young People

Youth participation:

- contributes to services that are more responsive to young people
- improves the appropriateness of programmes, campaigns and events for young people
- encourages an organisation to be more accountable to young people.

Each of the six organisations studied agreed that youth participation enabled them to provide more appropriate and relevant services. The youth development principle of working *with* young people rather than *for* them helps to assure the appropriateness of services the organisation provides. Involving young people in the design, planning and implementation of services, programmes and events helps to reflect what young people want, and are interested in.

Health Sponsorship Council credits its youth-appropriate and relevant campaigns with a reduction in smoking for this age group. The relevance of their events to young people has also ensured that young people are aware of the Smokefree message.

Improved Ability to Achieve Organisational Goals

Youth participation:

- improves the capacity within an organisation to attain organisational goals
- improves the success of campaigns, events, programmes and services
- attracts greater numbers of young people to the organisation
- contributes to effective policy making.

Successful campaigns, events and programmes in which young people have been involved can provide a tangible measure for organisations to check their performance and evaluate whether their targeted outcomes have been achieved. In three of the case studies there was notable impact on attaining the organisation's goals.

TEARAWAY noted that without youth input into *TEARAWAY Magazine*, it had no chance of achieving its goal to be "the voice of New Zealand youth". By formalising youth participation with a commitment to have 90 percent of magazine content written by young people, the goal has become achievable.

All of the organisations indicated that youth participation contributed to the success of the services or activities they provided.

As Nelson City Council found, relevant and youth-appropriate practices helped them to attract young people to the Youth Council. And Turanga Health believes that meeting young people "where they are at" contributes to the large numbers of young people coming to the Rangatahi Health Centre.

Effective Targeting of Funds

Youth participation:

- saves time, money and resources
- improves the success of campaigns, events, programmes, resources
- increases credibility with funding sources.

By having more focused and relevant services, and avoiding having to re-work mistakes, organisations in this study saved time, money and resources. Involving young people in the development of their events has proved to be cost-effective for Health Sponsorship Council. The Smokefree teen programme manager attributes the great success of Smokefree Rock Quests to having young people involved in its design.

Enhanced Credibility and Reputation

Youth participation:

- generates positive publicity
- improves an organisation's public profile
- increases partnerships and links with other organisations
- increases credibility with young people
- encourages a good reputation within the community
- increases credibility with funding sources.

Having young people involved in the youth-focused organisation improves relationships of the organisation with funders, other organisations, young people and the community.

The organisation becomes more credible with funders when they are committed to involving young people. This is particularly relevant with the recent and ongoing focus on the positive youth development approach by government and community funding sources. Four of the six organisations have benefited from increased credibility with funders, while one organisation directly attributes its youth participation to the securing of government funding.

Organisations committed to youth participation also benefit from the ability to establish partnerships and strong networks with other like-minded organisations. Networking is vital for most organisations, and the principles of the positive youth development approach, including youth participation, can provide a focus for organisations working together. Two of the organisations in this research reported that they had developed mutually beneficial links with other youth-participatory organisations.

An organisation's credibility with young people is enhanced when it shows a willingness and commitment to involve young people in its organisation. Young people are more likely to take notice of what the organisation has to offer when they know young people have been involved in the process. Each of the six organisations studied reflected this benefit.

The reputation within the community is heightened by the fact that an organisation encourages and undertakes youth participation. Four of the organisations in this

research reported that their general reputation was enhanced as a result of positive publicity around their youth participation practise.

A Wider Variety of Perspectives Offered

Youth participation:

- brings new perspectives to the organisation
- brings an element of creativity and innovation
- offers new and different solutions to issues.

Youth participation provides an opportunity for organisations to improve their processes when the organisation is willing to learn from the way young people work. Young people can bring new perspectives and a fresh way of doing things into an organisation, thus affecting internal processes in positive ways. Each of the six organisations studied reported that young people brought enthusiasm, innovation and creativity to the organisation.

Improved Organisational Systems

Youth participation:

- encourages more effective processes within the organisation
- increases commitment to, and practices of, youth participation
- strengthens the democratic process
- enables a more flexible service that provides for the needs of young people
- contributes to effective policy making.

Youth participation allows an organisation to be more responsive and accountable to young people and participatory processes. For those organisations that value democracy, youth participation strengthens the democratic process by challenging points of view that may not have been challenged in this way before. Four of the six organisations mentioned an element of fairness, democracy or justice that had been added to their organisation as a result of involving young people in their work.

A common factor in the six case studies was the value placed on youth participation. The incorporation of youth participation in the organisations has had positive impact on staff attitudes towards youth participation. One organisation noted an increase in staff commitment to youth participation as a result of positive results from previous participation projects.

Building Capacity and Sustainability Within an Organisation

Youth participation:

- improves processes within the organisation
- improves the capacity within an organisation to attain organisational goals
- increases commitment to, and practices of, youth participation
- strengthens the democratic process
- increases knowledge and skills of participatory processes
- increases the likelihood of further youth participation
- reduces barriers between young people and organisations
- supports young people's positive development
- encourages young people to develop to their full potential.

Building capacity within the organisation is an overriding benefit of youth participation for the organisations in this study. While young people participating in the organisation are learning new skills, or building on existing skills, the skills within the organisation are expanded and consolidated so that viability of the organisation continues. This also ensures sustainability of the organisation in that young people help to maintain the knowledge within the organisation as well as being committed to the ongoing involvement of young people in the organisation. Capacity building and sustainability were identified as a benefit by four of the six organisations.

Working with young people also increases the knowledge and skills of participatory processes and provides valuable learning for the future. It appears that there is an increase in commitment to, and practice of, young people's participation within an organisation where youth participation occurs. For the organisations taking part in these case studies, youth participation has been a cumulative process. As skills and processes of youth participation have been established, the likelihood of further youth participation has increased, and continues to do so.

Recommendations

This report was informed by a literature review on youth participation within organisations. While numerous articles focused on youth participation in adult-led organisations, very few articles that focused on youth participation in youth-led organisations were found. Analysis of the organisational culture, participation types, and benefits to the organisations in this study found many differences between adult-led and youth-led organisations. These differences may be of further significance to youth participation literature, and as such, further research on youth-led organisations is recommended.

A focus of this project was participation practices within different organisations. Hart's (1992) *Ladder of Participation* was initially used to help identify participation levels within each organisation. During analysis of these participation practices, it became clear that youth participation for these organisations could not easily be defined in levels as suggested by Hart. Instead, youth participation can be described in elements that collectively lead to participatory processes. With this in mind, it is recommended that a tool indicating a flexible approach to participation be developed. Describing participation as a collection of practices specific to an organisation and/or project is one way to address this issue.

A lack of evaluation of the reported benefits of youth participation to organisations was identified as a limitation of this project. It is recommended that evaluation research of this nature be undertaken to add further credibility to the benefits presented in this report.

Conclusion

The fifth principle of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* is “youth development is triggered when young people fully participate” (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2002:22). This principle acknowledges the intrinsic importance of youth participation to the positive youth development approach. In line with this principle, one of the goals of the strategy is to create opportunities for young people to actively participate and engage. A further goal is to build knowledge of the positive youth development approach through information and research (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2002).

This project has contributed to these goals by providing an insight into six youth-participatory organisations. The project aimed to provide Youth Affairs with a better understanding of the benefits of youth participation to organisations. This understanding will contribute to Youth Affairs’ knowledge of the processes and conditions that encourage and sustain youth participation, and the value these practices have to organisations. With this knowledge Youth Affairs is better able to encourage organisations to create opportunities for young people to actively participate and engage.

This project found that organisations benefit from youth participation in many ways. For some organisations, youth development and community development benefits are also organisational benefits. Analysis of the benefits reported by the organisations participating in this project unfolded the following themes:

- increased relevance to young people
- improved ability to achieve organisational goals/outcomes
- more efficient application of funds
- enhanced credibility and reputation
- a wider variety of perspectives offered
- capacity-building within an organisation
- improved organisational processes
- reduced barriers to youth involvement
- enhanced relationships.

Organisational culture and commitment to participation had a significant impact on youth participation. Organisations must be prepared to address barriers to participation, and to respect young people’s ability to contribute meaningfully to issues that affect them.

This project highlighted six of the many organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand that are committed to youth participation and youth development. It is hoped that sharing their positive experiences will contribute to the creation of further opportunities for young people to participate meaningfully within other organisations.

Appendices

- Appendix One: Participant Selection Criteria
- Appendix Two: Participant Information Sheet
- Appendix Three: Interview Schedule

Appendix One: Participant Selection Criteria

Name of Organisation	Māori	Central Government	Local Government	Non-Government Organisation	Business Sector	Education Sector	Health Sector	Support Sector	8 (youth initiated, adult shared)	7 (youth initiated, adult available)	6 (adult initiated, shared with youth)	5 (youth consulted and informed)	4 (youth assigned but informed)	Location	Age of Youth (yrs)	Process (P) or Project (J)	Small(S), Medium(M), Large(L) organisation
Health Sponsorship Council		✓					✓				✓	✓		National	12 to 17	PJ	S
Nelson City Council			✓								✓	✓	✓	Nelson	13 to 18	PJ	L
Otago University Students Association				✓		✓			✓	✓				Dunedin	> 17	P	L
Rainbow Youth				✓				✓	✓	✓				Auckland	< 27	P	M
TEARAWAY				✓	✓						✓			National	13 to 19	PJ	S
Turanga Health	✓			✓			✓	✓			✓	✓		Gisborne	13 to 18	PJ	L

Appendix Two: Participant Information Sheet

The Ministry of Youth Affairs (Youth Affairs) is collecting information to prepare written case studies of examples of organisations that can demonstrate significant benefits from youth participation in practice. Young people benefit from youth participation in many ways, and these are well documented, however the focus of this study is on benefits to organisations rather than to young people. The case studies are primarily for the use of Youth Affairs, but may also be used in website and printed publications.

Kirsten Smith and Cathy McGachie have been contracted by Youth Affairs to undertake this research. Kirsten and Cathy have both worked for several years in the youth sector, and have experience in youth development in local government, community organisations, and educational institutions.

We are seeking six organisations to profile in terms of their positive youth participation, and would like to invite [organisation inserted] to be one of these six case studies.

Involvement in the research will or may mean the following:

One interview with the person(s) at your organisation that is most familiar with the youth participation project or process being profiled. The interview will be held at a location convenient for that person sometime before 21 May. The interview will be audio-taped.

Where appropriate, we would appreciate that documentation relating to the project be made available for inclusion in the written case study.

Where we do not have a youth perspective already (through the first interview), we would like to invite a young person involved in the project or process to be interviewed also. The interview will be held at a location convenient for that person sometime before 21 May. The interview will be audio-taped.

During the period 4 to 11 June a draft of the written case study will be returned to your organisation for comment. We ask that someone will be available during this time to provide feedback for inclusion in the final report.

We also ask that someone will be available by telephone or email for any extra questions the researchers may have.

Please note that you are under no obligation to take part in the research. Should you agree to participate you have the right to ask any questions about the study, and to comment on a draft of your case study before printing.

Our emphasis for this research is on the benefits and positive outcomes of youth participation. As such, we expect that involvement with the project will be beneficial to [organisation inserted], and hope that you will be able to participate. However we acknowledge that our timeframes are tight, and understand if you do not feel able to participate. Kirsten or Cathy will contact you in the next few days to discuss this further. Should you wish to contact us in the meantime, our contact details are below.

We hope to be working with you on this exciting project soon.

Appendix Three: Interview Schedule

About the Organisation

Tell me about your organisation?

Where and how in your organisation does youth participation occur?

Why is youth participation important in your organisation?

About the Project and/or Process

Tell me more about the project/process including:

- history
- how did it start, where at now (has it, and how has it evolved)
- what it does
- funding sources
- aims/objectives
- no. of young people involved
- how young people are involved – training, where did they come from (representation etc.), how did young people get involved, what roles do young people have in the organisation
- how young people are supported to be involved
- awards, achievements, highlights, etc

Youth Participation and the organisation/project

How did youth participation in the project/organisation come about?

What are your reasons for involving young people in the organisation?

Where would you place this project on Harts Ladder? (take copy) Explain.

If adult initiated - when deciding to involve young people, did you consciously expect that there would be benefits for the organisation? What were they?

In what ways has youth participation been related to the success of your organisation?

What actions have been taken to make the project/organisation youth-friendly?

How do you make it easy for young people to be involved?

- environment
- casual vs formal
- expenses paid
- meeting times
- transport

How have the staff been with young people involved in the organisation/project?

- staff training
- staff experience with young people
- staff attitudes

How is it ensured that young people's voices are heard?

Is youth participation a priority in your organisation? Explain.

Is youth participation formalised in your organisation in any way, or in process to get formalised (eg. Constitution, mission, policy, etc)?

If project based – is there an ongoing programme of youth participation in place?

Do you use the same processes to involve young people as you do adults, or a different one? Explain.

How do young people and adults work together in your organisation

The Impact of Youth Participation

What have been the benefits and positive outcomes of youth participation to the project/organisation?

What have been the challenges of the project/process? Past and ongoing. How have you overcome them?

In your view, what impact does young people's involvement have:

- for them?
- for the organisation?
- for the community?

Additional Questions asked of Young People

How were you involved in the organisation? How did you get involved? (asked, invited, put yourself forward...)

What were some of the major outcomes of being involved?

What have been the challenges of the project/process? (past, ongoing) How have you overcome them?

What level of support did you receive, or is necessary in a project/org involving youth?

What impact being involved had on you personally?

Reflection

If you were to do it again is there anything you would do differently?

What advice would you have for other young people looking to undertake youth participation?

What advice would you have for other organisations looking to undertake youth participation?

Any other comments you would like to add?

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Websites

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McCreary Centre - www.mcs.bc.ca

Ministry of Youth Affairs - www.youthaffairs.govt.nz

Nelson City Council - www.ncc.govt.nz

Otago University Student Association - www.ousa.org.nz

Rainbow Youth - www.rainbowyouth.org.nz

TEARAWAY Online - www.tearaway.co.nz

Turanga Health - www.turangahealth.org.nz