Using Grass Roots Community Programs as an Anti-Extremism Strategy

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In recent times the Australian Government has become increasingly concerned with the challenge to the dominant culture by humanitarian immigrants entering the country. As a part of a complex strategy, emerging from the events of 9/11 and the perceived changing face of multiculturalism in Australia, the Attorney-General Robert McClelland announced in 2011 more than $1.1 million in funding for projects to mentor and support young people to stay disengaged from intolerant and radical ideologies. The grants have been awarded under the Building Community Resilience – Youth Mentoring Grants Program (2010) *and are designed to promote a tolerant, safe and inclusive society.*

As a result of that funding a northern suburbs Council Youth Services in Victoria established a project to work with young people 12 – 17 years who have been identified by Victoria Police, the education sector, and welfare agencies as individuals who have or are exhibiting signs of fostering hatred and intolerance either

through the spoken word, written messages, graffiti, the media or the internet that live within this local government area.

This paper discusses the results of the evaluation of a multicultural leadership program that was delivered using an adult learning framework in which 16 young people attended and how such programs can continue to build the capacity of communities to build scaffolds of support that ensure the inclusion of young people and not their marginalization.

Keywords*: Young people, extremism, racism, community program*

Anti Violence Extremism Youth Project

The Australian Government has become increasingly concerned with the challenge to the dominant culture by humanitarian immigrants entering the country. These themes are picked up time and again by government ministers, in what Poynting and Mason (2008) referred to as the 'New Integrationism' took shape. Poynting and Mason would refer to it as a moral panic that was fuelled by a series of incidents including from 9/11 to the London transport bombings of July 2005. Regardless of the catalyst the Australian Government believed that there was reason to be concerned about the radicalisation of young Muslims in Australia. Whether, as Poynting suggests, that these concerns are a part of a moral panic that is not necessarily grounded in evidence, however, there is research that suggests the social fabric is tearing. A recent report by Robinson and Lamb (2012) on the state of young people suggests that too many young people who are not in work, education and training are from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those from low SES families (Robinson and Lamb, 2012).

In August 2007, researchers at Edith Cowan University released preliminary results from a National Fear Survey funded by an Australian Research Council (ARC) 'Safeguarding Australia' grant. One of the major findings of this survey was that fear is isolating many Muslim Australians. Where non-Muslim Australians reported

generalised fears of such things as travelling in planes, Muslim Australians reported specific fears for their personal safety in public places and a mistrust of our society. Muslim Australians are highly likely to experience discrimination along the following three main themes:

- that Muslim Australians are potential terrorists
- that there is no place in Australia for Muslims
- that Muslims should abandon their cultural practices and 'assimilate', (Aly, et al, 2012)

The research would suggest that for young people this combination of fear and discrimination and being a part of a group that is experiencing poor economic, education and social outcomes is a toxic mixture. Falk et al (2011) suggests that young people's experience of socio-economic disadvantage as they are growing up is a predictor of possible engagement in right-wing extremist crime or REC's as they are referred to in Germany. The research using the German police crime statistics of extremist crimes committed by young people found that when the overall unemployment rate of offenders and their families was collated it was highly significant. The results suggest that the way unemployment affects crime is unlikely to be through young individuals' own unemployment experiences. The more plausible mechanism is that overall unemployment leads to an erosion of values in society, which induces young individuals to commit RECs. On that basis a strategy that strives to build social inclusion is welcomed.

As a part of a strategy to respond to the perceived changing face of multiculturalism in Australia, the Attorney-General Robert McClelland announced in 2011 more than $1.1 million in funding for projects to mentor and support young people to stay disengaged from intolerant and radical ideologies. The grants have been awarded under the *Building Community Resilience – Youth Mentoring Grants Program*, and are designed to promote a tolerant, safe and inclusive society.

The *Building Community Resilience - Youth Mentoring Grants Program* is a key part of the Government's $9.7 million investment in counter radicalisation initiatives. McClelland outlined that the

program was established to support activities that guide young people away from intolerant and radical ideologies and encourage positive participation in the community. The Government, it would seem, was convinced that effective community engagement was pivotal to building a stronger and more resilient communities that can resist violent extremism (McClelland, 2011).

The initiative was focussed on the Muslim community and aimed to provide them with extra resources to support young people who are at risk of engaging in extreme anti-social behaviour. Roy (2004) suggests that empowering specific Muslim communities and groups can help combat extremism and promote community integration, lessening the likelihood of engaging in violence and terrorism. Spalek and Lambert (2008) report that in studies undertaken by the EU Muslim youth describe themselves, often accurately, as victims of prejudice in the workplace and in society more generally. Surveys carried out in 2006 by the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, showed that minorities and immigrants in the European Union experience greater levels of unemployment are overrepresented in the least desirable jobs, and receive lower wages (Spalek and Lambert, 2008, p.267).

In Australia similar results have been found through consultations conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), Muslim Australians commonly experience discrimination, racial vilification, threats of violence and actual violence. Others reported a general insensitivity towards Muslim cultural practices such as a refusal to allow prayer breaks or negative comments about Muslim names or dress (HREOC, 2003).

As a result of the funding a northern suburbs Council Youth Services established a project to work with young people 12 – 17 years who have been identified by Victoria Police, the education sector, and welfare agencies as individuals who have or are exhibiting signs of fostering hatred and intolerance either through the spoken word, written messages, graffiti, the media or the internet that live within this local government area.

The project focus has been to engage those young people who are regarded as at risk by providing individual and group mentoring opportunities. This paper discusses the results of a multicultural leadership program in which 16 young people attended and how such programs can continue to build the capacity of communities to build scaffolds of support that ensure the inclusion of young people and not their marginalization.

About this Community

This community is located in Melbourne's north and is one of the fastest growing and largest municipalities. Young people (10 – 24 years old) constitute 23.3% of the total population; in comparison to metropolitan Melbourne. The residents are relatively young in age and young people face significant disadvantage when compared to the rest of the state. The number of young people unemployed or not attending formal education is the highest at 11.9% compared to metropolitan Melbourne at 7.4% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

There is a mix of over 140 nationalities and 125 languages other than English spoken. Just over one in three young people speak a language other than English at home, with Turkish, followed by Arabic and Assyrian being languages most commonly spoken. This contributes to a culture that is innovative and open. Such diversity can generate interaction, knowledge and understanding (which are the stepping stones to developing respect, fairness and increased tolerance for other cultures and religions) making for a more cohesive and socially inclusive community.

Underpinned by Good Practice

The project is framed by youth work practice which, in this case utilised a leadership program based on experiential adult learning principles as the primary means of engaging young people. The National Youth Association (NYA) (2006) in the UK sets out a framework for understanding youth work practice. According to NYA (2006) Youth Work helps young people learn about themselves,

others and society, through informal educational activities which combine enjoyment, challenge and learning. Their work seeks to promote young people's personal and social development and enable them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society as a whole (NYA, 2006, p.4).

Youth work, according to McKee, Oldfield and Poultney, (2010) is a special combination of three necessary elements;

- Purpose: work is predominantly focused on achieving outcomes related to young people's personal and social development (as distinct from academic or vocational learning).
- Methods: the extensive use of experiential learning and group work (as distinct from a prescribed curriculum and whole-class teaching or individual casework).
- Values: include the voluntary engagement of young people with skilled adults. This relationship transforms what is possible for young people.

Good youth work is planned and purposeful to equip young people with a range of personal and life skills as well as developing structure and direction for themselves. Youth workers are skilled professionals who can help empower young people to use information and their judgment to make informed decisions. (Mckee, Oldfield and Poultney, 2010, pp.9-10)

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, (YACVIC) in the Code of Ethical Practice, (2007) identified at least three factors that make youth work unique firstly that Youth Work is the only profession with a discrete focus on the 12-25 age group. Secondly, that Youth Work considers young people in the context of broader issues and is not narrowly problem focused and thirdly that Youth Work is holistic; it considers the development of the whole person. (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2007)

Youth workers are skilled professionals who can help empower young people to use information and their judgment to make informed decisions for themselves (Unite the Union, 2010). In the UK, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

(Ofsted), (2009), have reported on their framework that has been utilised as a part of their Inspection services of Youth Work agencies. Effective youth work, according to Ofsted helps young people to develop essential personal and social skills and an understanding of their strengths and potential. It contributes to their understanding of their rights and responsibilities and how they can influence the decisions that affect their lives. Youth Workers understand the structural and systemic barriers faced by young people and recognise how they must partner with young people to overcome those barriers including participating in policy critiques that advocate the broader rights of young people in civil society (Ofsted, 2009, p.8).

Methodology

The methodology is built on valuing open inquiry. Recovering the unity among research and practice as one collaborative process shifts the expertise to a knowledge that comes from people and communities (Walter, 2006). The methodology is underpinned by a social ecological framework that focuses on the individuals social and physical environment as the focus of resources for personal growth (Unger, 2012) and in this case informed by the participants. Ultimately the goal was to develop a good understanding of what worked, how it worked, for whom it worked and in what contexts, providing a clearer picture of critical success factors that will inform how Youth Services might enhance the model.

Components of the Method

Literature Review

A range of literature on models of delivery and program implementation was reviewed to inform the program development.

Surveys

Survey data was collected post the program. The nature of the leadership program engaged young people to offer their views and therefore they were more amenable to the suggestion of completing

the surveys. The evaluation of the program was based on two main evaluation purposes; summative and learning for the future. The evaluation placed considerable value on:

- Systematic engagement with key program stakeholders
- Evidence-based determination of the value of the intended outcomes
- Learning that will help enhance program design and implementation

The limitations of this kind of methodology are that the research team do not stand apart from the program but are immersed in its development. There is always a risk because of the subjective nature of the approach however the premise is that without key stakeholders as part of the research process, outsiders are limited in their ability to build those rich and subtle understandings or implement change (Wadsworth 2011).

Participants

The project was reviewed by the Council ethics team to ensure that in the research process the processes of feedback, support and data privacy young people were respected. The Youth Service team had been working with a collaborative group of practitioners that included the police, local schools and the local community centre that was working with newly arrived unaccompanied minors. A set of protocols had been developed and referrals were accepted as reflected in the program funding guidelines.

Leadership Program

As a result sixteen young people signed up for the program. Youth Services had already decided that racism in their community is best combated by all of their programs reflecting the multicultural diversity that already exists and that fostering tolerance and providing young people who are marginalised an opportunity to undertake a more mainstream program was to be the strategy. In effect the program had 7 different languages being the first language of 10 of the participants. Of the other six three were second generation

Australians, one was indigenous and one was fourth generation Australian.

The Leadership Program was delivered by a team from Victoria University. The program material that has been utilised in the workshops was initially developed by young people in Leeds. It is titled as a leadership program but in effect asks young people to consider who they think are great leaders, role models, thinkers of our time and the qualities that they bring to a community as well as their contributions. The program, through many twists and turns, is built on a strengths based approach to working with young people. Strengths based approaches use young people's strengths as the foundation of the program and focuses on those strengths, their diversity, individuality and the interdependence of each of those traits as the very starting point. This program, in particular, reinforces each individual's personal strengths that they bring to the program and assists them in exploring what they know about themselves and what they can still learn.

The program does this while teaching a whole range of life skills such as problem solving, public speaking and team work in an environment that extends the social skills of each individual. All of this learning is undertaken in approximately twenty hours of workshops. The key to the workshops is that they are fun, hands on, active and each young person gets their turn to drive, shine, build bridges and think and walk tall.

This set of accolades of the program framework should not serve to underestimate the importance of the program delivery. The program material is an excellent framework to build the workshops upon. However, working with a diverse group of young people takes skill. What is evident in the results of the program evaluation outlined in this paper is that young people had a lot of fun and while they were participating in the program they learnt about themselves and others. They felt empowered to share their voice and were facilitated to engage with the program that then offered them the vehicle to learn new skills and insights.

Why Do Young People Want to Do a Leadership Program

Before starting the Leadership program young people were asked why they wanted to participate. Their responses are varied and provide an insight into the transition they call adolescence. Young people want to gain the skills that will allow them to be able to participate in the adult world. The term participation is used to refer to the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured. Participation is a fundamental right of citizenship (Hart; 1992). Different ideas, different cultures, different genders, indigenous people and difference in age is what makes an inclusive community and is at the essence of a tolerant, equitable and responsible society.

However, young people know that communities built on these ideals are not always the norm, particularly if you are young. They are often excluded from a distinct role in their community and as such they must watch from the sidelines waiting for their turn. This program afforded an opening to some of the participants as was detailed in their comments below.

I would want to become a leader in my community and to be a leader in the future.

I would like to improve my leadership skills as well as speaking skills. I would like to work and take on the issues in this area as a leader.

I would like to achieve and have the opportunity to connect with this community. I would like to be a part of making a safer community for my friend's family and myself.

I want to improve my leadership skills and to meet new people.

I want to be involved to improve on my team building and leaderships skills and to help people out.

I would like to be involved in the program to improve my leadership skills and promote the young people of this community.

I would like to be more confident and improve on all my skills and to show the side of young people in this community that is positive.

I want to help the wider community and be a positive role model for young people.

It is a good opportunity to have a say and be involved in what happens with youth projects in my community and to develop my leadership and community skills.

I want to learn some leadership skills and be a part of the community.

I want to help with the future.

I want to be a positive influence and to make a difference for young people and be a positive influence.

I want to learn about other cultures and how to get along in this community.

When asked about the three key issues that they would like to make a difference in their community the young people listed violence, drugs and racism. The issues themselves are complex and require a range of strategies; however, these young people want to engage in the big issues in their community that impact upon them. The program was underpinned by the principle that if, as a community, we want to change the behaviour of young people and the culture and/or context of their world we must enable them to be partners in the work ahead. No matter how complex the issue young people can be powerful change agents in their community and should not be underestimated.

This was a Leadership Program that aimed to Connect Young People to their Community

The key messages from these comments are around community and young people. Young people want to be active participants. Their comments are evidence that social capital is an essential component to a meaningful life; that is, the greater social connectedness one has to friendship groups, employment pathways, community organisations and social and cultural resources, the greater likelihood there is of maintaining good physical and mental health and being an active participant in civic life (Black & Hughes 2001; Forrest & Kearns 2001). Increasingly researchers have come to understand that the construction of healthy, dynamic and inclusive societies is largely the result of the development by individuals of strong social networks (Putnam 2000; Portes, 1998). Catalano and Hawkins (1996) also refer

to these important connections as vital protective factors for all young people to mitigate their risk factors.

For young people, social capital is a vehicle through which goals and career pathways can be created, sustained and achieved (Stokes *et al* 2003). Priest (2008:4) asserts that;

> *High levels of social capital have been linked with greater productivity, better personal health, improved child welfare, lower rates of child abuse, lower crime rates and better government. Social capital has also been linked to improved community safety, educational outcomes and general individual and community well being.*

The importance of establishing strong community connections for young people is apparent in a range of Government policy developments undertaken in the past decade. The policy constructs of communities, partnerships, young people and their transitions was the focus of the two Youth policies released during the three terms of office for the Labor-led Victorian Government. The first, called *Respect: the Government's Vision for Young People* (2002), referred to encouraging young people's contributions to building communities and increasing young people's skills and resilience (Department for Victorian Communities, 2006). It is programs such as the Leadership program which is seen to be strengthening community bonds by acting as a community facilitator and connecting young people to community networks. It is a program foundation that connected with the aspirations of these young people to be a part of the whole, a part of their community and to make a difference.

The Students of Today Leaders of Tomorrow program was revised to fit the Australian context keeping the essence of the UK program developed by young people in Leeds intact. According to Barnes and Harrison (2006) the activities aim to develop a young person's communication skills, self-esteem, confidence, and to build resilience to become leaders of their own lives, at home, school and in their community (Barnes and Harrison, 2006). They go on to discuss the following as attributes that are developed in a young person through such programs:

- Confidence: through positivity and strong self-belief knowing this provides solid assurances.
- Self-awareness: The knowledge that understanding the self and our own personal motives, needs, prejudices, fears, dreams, passions and likes believing that such leaders embrace personal growth and development in themselves and others.
- Vision: The ability to see the big picture and the value in encouraging and supporting the creative process and imagination in their own lives and the lives of those around them.
- Community Inclusiveness: Building the understanding that individuals and organisations work most effectively when everyone is involved in some way.
- Inspiration: Enthusiasm in finding the passions of others and doing their utmost to inspire and support this passion (Barnes & Harrison, 2006).

Embedding Adult Learning Principles

Researchers in the United States such as Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Resnick (1987) argue that learning should be situated within the context of practice. Billett (2010) suggests that knowledge is socially mediated and that, therefore, the process of social mediation and facilitation is much more likely to provide a favourable means for learners to access and construct conceptual knowledge. Billett goes on to discuss this construction by learners' should be seen as an ongoing interpretive process because individuals make sense of knowledge in an interpretative and constructive way rather than internalizing externally derived knowledge (Billet 2010 p.206,) Von Glasersfeld, (1987) concurs also suggesting that learners construct knowledge from the circumstances in which they experience that knowledge

In relation to young people the pedagogy of learning and knowledge construction does diverge from adults and must transcend adults ways of knowing to meet the level and particular learning needs of young people. King (2007) drawing on her work in schools talks about the construction of knowledge through story telling. She outlines how

all of us have stories to tell, writing and speaking may be difficult for students who lack self-esteem or who do not feel safe or when English is not their native language. There are many reasons why students are afraid: They worry that they do not know the "right" answer; they're afraid to ask for help because they fear ridicule from peers. They lack confidence in their ideas, or they have little experience expressing their real feelings or experiences (King, 2007 p.210).

The program has taken these underpinning principles and packaged them within a program of applied and experiential learning that provides the opportunity for young people to drive the program, create their own stories and tailor their learning. The more life experiences, community connection, personal development opportunities afforded young people the stronger their position will be to create their own personal narrative of some substance. Non formal education is essential for the personal development and life-long learning of individuals. In recent years employers are increasingly looking for people who have obtained not only academic qualifications but who can also demonstrate that they have a wider range of practical skills that are acquired in addition to skills learnt through formal education. These 'soft skills' cannot easily be 'taught' in formal education because they are learned through 'hands-on' practical experience and thus are much more effectively gained in non-formal environments (Youth Forum Jeunesse, 2003).

Applied learning provides young people with different opportunities to be successful, share expertise that they have not had the opportunity to evidence in traditional learning settings. (Broadbent, et al, 2008). In effect young people need a range of life skills to navigate the complex transitions that await them. Corney (2004) in his paper on Youth Work values highlights the importance of empowering young people and that youth workers promote the social development of young people and facilitate their ability to learn through experience from others and their environment.

Results

There were three key points of data collection. The first was in the form of a program application form that each participant filled in and

answered questions about their own motivation for the program and identified community issues. The second was a program evaluation that was available online to each young person to complete. Sixteen of the eighteen participants completed the survey. Twelve of the participants were female and four were male. Table 1 identifies the numbers in each of the age categories.

Table 1

What is your age		
	Response Percent	**Response Count**
13-14	6.3%	1
14-15	18.8%	3
15-16	12.5%	2
16-17	18.8%	3
17-18	43.8%	7

The participants were asked what they had learnt in the program within a set of prescribed answers and the opportunity to give more than one answer. Table 2 summarises their responses.

Table 2

What did you learn during the program?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
I could be a good leader	62.5%	10
How to communicate when I am working in a team	68.8%	11
What type of character and personality makes a good leader	75.0%	12
How to be a good team member	68.8%	11

The following question (Table 3) provided the participants with the opportunity to articulate what they had learnt about themselves. The responses gave some insight into how much they had enjoyed the program and how the environment of fun and experiential learning engages young people to reflect on their learning.

Table 3
In the course of the program I learnt that I was really good at ....

Making people laugh.
Communication skills.
Public speaking.
Socialising.
Communicating with in a group and getting my point across with a variety of powerful words. I also learnt how to make new friends in a safe environment which I have made many great friends in this program!!
Talking in front of people and not being shy.
Working in a team.
Listening to what others have to say.
Working with groups and thinking outside of the box.
Coming up with ideas.
Being confident and one day i will be a great leader.
In the course of the program I learnt that i was really good at public speaking and working with others from different cultures and religions.
Supporting people with the same problems that i have had trouble in the past.

The responses below set out in Table 4 summarise the skills that participants identified as a part of their own learning in the program. It is commendable that the participants could articulate their learning in this program; however, it is important to note that some young people identified both trust and accountability as key skills they had gained. They are key attributes for civic life and a bridge to community inclusion.

Table 4
What skills did you learn that you could use at school or TAFE?

Leadership qualities.
Good communication skills.
Confidence.
Leadership skills and qualities.
Accountability.

Responsibility.

Trust. To be trustworthy and to trust others will get you everywhere. Trusting people and showing it in turn earns and gains trust. It also shows people you are reliable and accountable when needed. I learnt to think on the spot and out of the square.

Talking in front of others.

Confidence.

I learnt that I can use some of these skills such as being patient to help me out in supportive friends program and SRC in school.

Always have faith no matter how many times you get put down.

Speaking up for what I believe in and make a contribution without fearing of it sounding stupid.

The skills that I learn and I will use at school is how to organise an event and also use my public speaking skills to make a speech.

To communicate with others, to work in a team and respect other people's ideas and thoughts.

Graph 1 set out below summarises the responses to a question about the actual program. Participants were asked to describe what they enjoyed about this program; again they could provide multiple answers. The young people acknowledged that the program was fun, which is one of the key engagement ingredients for any program that aims to engage young people to participate in their personal time.

Graph 1

Please tell us three things that were really good about the program?
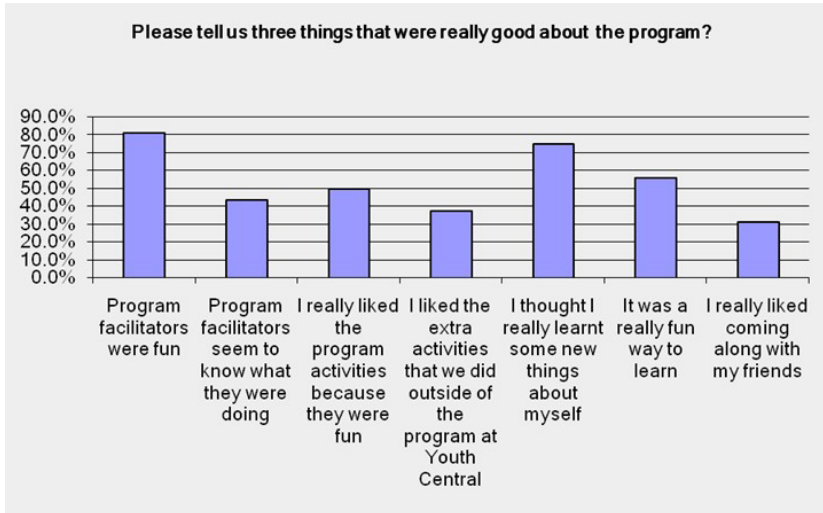
Table 5 asked the participants about what can be improved in this program to which they responded - nothing. However, one participant noted the program was timed for an early start on one of the school holiday days and that was too early.

Table 5

• Nothing. Everything was good.
• I loved everything.
• NOTHING. I know this is something you need to use to improve but if someone was to do the same program again I would advise them to repeat it exactly the same. Change nothing!!
• I liked everything.
• The one thing that i didn't like about the program was that some of the days we started at 9 in the morning, i found it too early.
• I liked everything.
• Nothing really to be honest.
• Nothing, everything was awesome!

Table 6 reports on the responses from the participants when asked about their favourite activity; note the experiential learning components of their answers.

Table 6

• Team Building Activities.
• Favourite activity would be the ball games.
• Creating the presentation on a program as a group of youth created based on what we would like to see happening in the Hume. It was informative and a real learning curve.
• The book-work and going Luna Park.
• Group activities.
• My favourite activity throughout the program was building a bridge between the two tables to hold the brick.
• Getting to know everyone.
• Debating and making new friends.
• Designing a community.
• My favourite activity throughout the program was the debating and speaking in front of people I didn't know well because I never thought I was able to do that but I was able to do so.
• Working with other people, debating and the games.

The real test is when you ask young people would you do it all again. Table 7 gives their answer as a resounding yes.

Table 7

Would you participate in another leadership program?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	100.0%	16
No	0.0%	0
answered question		*16*

Concluding Comments

This program asked young people to attend a leadership program. They responded with (as a common theme) I want to make a difference in my community or I want to connect to community life.

They have identified one of the foundations to social inclusion policy around the globe; connection to community. By offering the program this Local Government now has a greater responsibility to consider its own inclusion record and identify opportunities for offering a voice to young people through engagement and participation in their own community. Young people want to be involved in the decisions that impact on them and not limited to community beautification schemes but the range of issues that matter to them and to their peers and to their communities.

The challenge is for the lessons of this program to be shared to other Local Governments. This particular Youth Service has offered the opportunity to establish a community youth group that can identify its reasons for being and its rules for operation and to decide on resources and to lead community events as well as participate in mentoring the next group of young people that will enter the program. Though there will face limitations, there are also limitations in adult life; those limitations are a part of the process to be facilitated by the Youth Service and the young people. What is critical is that a group of young people from a range of local community cultures have come together to *draw a line in the sand* for both themselves and for their community. They want to participate, they want to make a difference and now that they have been taught some of the skills and seen some of the possibilities they are ready for action.

The United Nations Social Development committee (2005) in their work on learning for work, citizenship and sustainability reinforced the need to provide young people skills for life and for citizenship. There is a global movement that acknowledges the importance of this skill development and secondly the opportunity for young people to use those skills in participating in the decisions of their community. Every persons need to be included means that excluding young people and not equipping them with the requisite skill sets will simply move them into margins to engage with others that feel marginalised (United Nations, 2005).

In the course of the program each young person was asked to build their own tool kit that they would need to enable them to be a

change maker in their community. One young man included Justin Bieber in his tool kit because in his song Never Say Never, he says he will "Never say Never again" and he concluded by saying that this program has changed his life and he will never look back. Another young woman identified the skill set of stating her case publicly that was now in her tool kit. A skill set she never believed she could achieve but by the end of the leadership program said her confidence to speak in public had grown to the point that she was keen to lead on issues.

What was evident is that by the end of the program that this multicultural, multi age group of young people could operate as a corporate group, working through issues, identifying tasks and negotiating disagreements. To observe this group is a lesson in tolerance for us all as well as a refresher on how to plan and implement an idea; and it is all because a local youth service said, come along to a leadership program we want to partner with you to make a difference in our community.

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