Stepping Along the Track

Report on Sport and Recreation Training Pathways for Young People

A Pilot Project
Stepping Along the Track

Building pathways from non-accredited to accredited training, using sport and recreation activities, for young people who have left school early.

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Further Information from:

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The project was managed by the NSW Sport and Recreation Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB). Ms Sue-Ann Stanford, a consultant to the NSW Sport and Recreation ITAB, co-ordinated the project and compiled the final project report. Ms Nicole Johnston from the NSW Sport and Recreation ITAB researched and wrote the literature review and sourced the case studies.

The Recreation Industry Training Company (RITC) assisted the Project by providing funding for a postcard about working in the sport and recreation industry to be distribution nationally to young people.

Special thanks must also go to the following for their invaluable assistance in the execution of the project:

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From the Helping Early Leavers Program (HELP) Projects
   Mr Steve Hodges, Manager, Mission Employment, Campbelltown
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   Ms Kay Davies, Manager, Northumberland Network, Cessnock
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From TAFE NSW
   Ms Carole Holbeck, Senior Teacher, Loftus TAFE
   Ms Megan Cremer, Teacher, Loftus TAFE

From the RITC
   Mr Rudi Scheider, CEO, Recreation Industry Training Company, ACT
   Mr Tim Ferguson, Recreation Industry Training Company, ACT

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Executive Summary

The Youth Assistance Strategies Section (YASS) of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) administers a suite of community based programs under the Links to Learning Community Grants Program. The Helping Early Leavers Program, Circuit Breaker, Koori Youth and Time Out Programs target particular groups of young people who are at risk of leaving school early or who left school early and are unemployed. The programs aim to assist these young people remain in or access education and training.

In mid 1999, the NSW Sport and Recreation Industry Training Advisory Body (SRITAB) was commissioned by DET to pilot a project assisting ‘youth at risk’ into accredited training.

The project ‘Sport and Recreation Pathways for Young People’ was developed out of the understanding that a number of sport and recreation activities being delivered by Helping Early Leavers Program (HELP) providers mirrored units of competence in accredited sport and recreation training. The project was piloted with two HELP projects providing sport and recreation components in their courses for early school leavers from the south western Sydney and Hunter regions.

The project was designed to give educationally disadvantaged young people a lead into a growth industry by creating an opportunity to participate in accredited training in sport and recreation whilst doing the literacy and numeracy course activities at the HELP project.

A literature review conducted under the Sport and Recreation Pathways found that very little work had been done in this area, therefore highlighting the innovative nature of this pilot project. Similarly, a collection of case studies compiled by the SRITAB, or ‘stories from the field’, suggested that pairing the delivery of sport and recreation activities with accredited training was also as yet untried.

The two organisations selected to deliver the accredited training did so in different ways. Although both organisations were, as it transpired, registered training organisations, one delivered the training in-house, the other negotiated a partnership with a TAFE college.

For the organisation that delivered in-house, the project gave them an opportunity to modify how they delivered the literacy and numeracy components of their HELP course into a more holistic approach.
The organisation that negotiated a partnership with TAFE gave the young people opportunities not normally available to them, hence expanding their understanding of what they could do and pathways they could follow.

All the young people attempting the accredited sport and recreation training received their Statement of Attainment in their chosen unit of competency.

The project had a number of key features:

- this was a rare opportunity to trial an innovative idea
- it gave an industry organisation and a government agency the opportunity to work together on a project benefiting youth at risk
- it demonstrated to those organisations delivering the HELP course that recruitment could be improved by focussing on sport and recreation activities
- it demonstrated that the delivery of the various components of a HELP course could be modified into a more holistic approach
- it demonstrated that young people can successfully attempt accredited training at AQF Level 2
- flexible partnership arrangements with training organisations expanded the scope of the community providers and the horizons of the young people moving on from a HELP course.

Upon reading this report, there may be some projects from ‘Links to Learning’ that would like to offer accredited training to some of their clients. The Industry Training Services Centres of the Department of Education and Training in your region can provide advice about the planning and implementation of that process.
Introduction to the Project “Sport and Recreation Pathways for Young People”

**Background to the Project**

The reformation of Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) system has been in train for more than a decade. The impact of its innovations - training packages, flexible delivery and assessment against industry agreed competency standards - are now impacting on the delivery of VET.

The Helping Early Leavers Program, Circuit Breaker, Time Out and the Koori Youth Program are literacy, numeracy and self-esteem programs targeting “youth at risk” and have been in operation also for the last decade.

The Youth Assistance Strategies Section (YASS) of the NSW Department of Education and Training manages the Links to Learning Programs and the programs are administered by 11 Industry Training Services Centres (ITSC) located around the State. Around 70 community based organisations provide 103 projects assisting over 6,500 young people each year.

As a means of addressing the client groups’ disengagement from formal learning institutions, ‘Links to Learning’ programs have concentrated on re-involving young people into non-threatening learning environments in community based settings through innovative and flexible activities focussing on the specific needs of the groups of participants.

The literacy and numeracy components of the Programs have been delivered in various ways from horse management to video production and hospitality courses. From previous experience trialing Arts Industry partnerships and pathways with a HELP project under an ANTA grant, YASS found that some further features of the new VET system could be utilised to the benefit of the programs’ clients. YASS recognised that the flexible delivery principle and the scope for self-paced learning and the ability to attempt single units of competency were ‘user-friendly’ and achievable for particular client groups.

In consultation with the Executive Officer of the NSW Sport and Recreation ITAB, YASS negotiated the project ‘Sport and Recreation Pathways for Young People’ in mid 1999.

The project was developed on the understanding that sport and recreation activities have a proven track record of attracting and maintaining particular groups of young people’s
interest and participation in a project. Generally, sport and recreation programs were offered with the aim of minimising anti-social behaviour. SRITAB considered the activities young people were undertaking as part of their participation in a HELP project were parallel to competencies in accredited sport and recreation training at the Australian Qualifications Framework Level 2.

With increasing professionalism within the sport and recreation industry in Australia, affirmed by the industry’s growing demand for accredited training to underpin career paths, SRITAB supported the development of opportunities to give young people an entry point into the industry. In addition, by giving young people formal recognition of their achievements, their education standard could, perhaps for the first time, be established at industry entry level.

**Project Components**

The ‘Sport and Recreation Pathways for Young People’ project commenced in July 1999 and was completed in early 2000. It comprised a number of components:

- **Literature Review and collection of case studies.**
  YASS and the SRITAB were very interested in determining what other pre-vocational programs had used sport and recreation activities for the purposes of delivering accredited vocational education and training. YASS commissioned SRITAB to undertake a literature search and to collect case studies from the field.

- **Two Pilot Projects**
  Two organisations currently delivering a ‘Links to Learning’ program were to be selected by a project steering committee to take part in the delivery of accredited sport and recreation training. They were to model different partnership arrangements with registered training organisations and different modes of training delivery.
Each organisation was to recruit clients to a HELP project that focussed on delivering skills in a sport and recreation context. Accredited training in sport and recreation was also to be offered to the young people as part of the package of activities.

The DET Industry Training Services Centres provide advice and information on accredited training as a possible next step for project clients. For each pilot project, contact was made with the Senior Programs Field Officer in the local Industry Training Services Centre to ascertain the availability of funding from one of their programs.

- **Resources**
  - Guide for People working with Young People
  
  Information collected during the project was to be prepared as “a guide for people working with young people to pathways into accredited training using sport and recreation activities”. The guide was to include three or four case studies.

Information for Young People on accredited training in Sport and Recreation

Midway through the project, support was obtained from the Recreation Industry Training Company (RITC) to give the project a national focus. The project steering committee decided that the funds would be used to produce a postcard for young people telling them about accredited training in sport and recreation. The postcard would be distributed nationally through New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs). The postcard would also introduce the Links to Learning website where the Guide for People working with Young People would be posted.

- **Final Project Report**
  
  A final project report (this document) incorporating:
  - Executive Summary
  - Introduction
  - Literature Review
  - Case Studies from the Field
  - Project report on participating organisations
  - Conclusion
The Project Steering Committee

A project steering committee was convened to assist in the selection of organisations to participate in the project; provide advice on details of case studies from the field, and to provide other advice as required. The Committee also reviewed written material and provided feedback. Meetings of the Project Steering Committee were hosted by YASS. The project steering committee members were:

Members
Sue-Ann Stanford, Project Manager for the NSW Sport and Recreation ITAB
Nicole Johnston, Researcher, NSW Sport and Recreation ITAB
Christine Ellis, Manager, YASS
Gillian Thacker, Senior Co-ordinator, YASS
Sandi Westbrook, Senior Program Field Officer, ITSC, South Western Sydney, DET

Advisors
Richard Arranz, Development Consultant, Community Development Unit, NSW Department of Sport and Recreation
The Literature Review

Background

As part of the ‘Sport and Recreation Pathways for Young People’ project, the ITAB was asked to prepare a literature review focusing on learning pathways that use sport and recreation activities as a vehicle for formally recognising skills development. An initial scan of the literature determined that there was no material on this subject.

Instead, available literature discussed the use of sport and recreation activities as harm minimisation/intervention strategies for youth at risk. By default, this became the topic for this literature review. The lack of literature on sport and recreation activities as a mode for delivering accredited training and as steps on “learning pathways” may simply be indicative of a lag of documentation in the system.

“Life long learning” and “learning pathways” are terms used in the new vocational education and training (VET) system in Australia. The work that the ITAB and YASS initiated recognised the skills development and skills recognition capacity of HELP, underpinned by the notion of lifelong learning.

Introduction

Given what was available, the researcher collected a representative sample of literature that explored the use of sport and recreation activities/programs as intervention strategies for youth at risk, especially in relation to youth crime. ‘There has been strong theoretical support suggesting that participating in sport and recreation is able to deter young people from delinquent behaviour’. (Mason & Wilson, in Colthart, 1996:32)

The literature was surveyed to determine:

- what impact access to appropriate sport and recreation activities has on youth at risk
- what are some of the barriers to participating in sport and recreation activities and
- what were the critical success factors in programs that used sport and recreation activities.
Youth Crime & Sport and Recreation

Consultations with young people in NSW in 1995 revealed that a lack of recreation, entertainment, sporting and cultural options promoted boredom and can lead to participation in a range of alternative activities, including graffiti, vandalism, shoplifting and break and enters. (Paterson, NSW Office of Youth Affairs, 1995)

The NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues 1992 Inquiry into Juvenile Justice found that some young people who have limited access to adequate leisure, recreation and entertainment programs or facilities may, in conjunction with other factors, including unemployment, be vulnerable to involvement in the juvenile justice system.’ (Paterson, 1995:20)

Furthermore, evidence presented to the Western Australian Select Committee on Youth Affairs in 1992 suggested that lack of opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation was a causal factor in some young people’s involvement in juvenile crime. (Western Australia Legislative Assembly in Paterson, 1995:20)

Subsequently, a 1996 Perth study found that young people not at school had less opportunity to participate in sport and recreation activities compared to their school-attending peers (Colthart 1996). This compounds their position as ‘youth at risk’ by potentially exposing them to situations where boredom and disenfranchisement could lead them into risk taking, ie, criminal behaviour.

Young people can also be perceived as being involved in criminal activity. The Standing Committee on Social Issues Legislative Council, Parliament of NSW, 1995, looked at a submission from Newcastle Community Youth Development Project. The submission suggested that young people who congregate in places such as shopping centres are perceived as troublemakers by security guards and can experience a considerable level of harassment. As a result, those young people learn to resent authority figures. (Submission 49 in Social Issues Legislative Council, 1995:141)

The literature suggests that to minimise the harm they might do to themselves, youth at risk need access to sport and recreation activities.
Aboriginal Young People & Sport and Recreation

Young Aboriginal people are overly represented in the juvenile justice system in Australia. Two major studies on Aboriginal young people and their participation in sport and recreation have been conducted. They suggest that involvement in sport and recreation activities have a beneficial impact on the lives of the young Aboriginal people participating.

Participation in sporting activities has been associated with a reduction in assaults committed by Aboriginal young people. There are methodological limitations in providing statistics, but interview evidence and a comparison of crime in towns with adequate sporting facilities and crime in more isolated reserves support the notion of sport reducing delinquency. (Tatz in Social Issues Legislative Council, 1995:149)

One factor relating to young Aboriginal people’s involvement in the juvenile justice system was a lack of access to appropriate, including culturally appropriate leisure activities. Young Aboriginal people who attended an Indigenous Youth Meeting in 1993 said they often commit crimes “because they have nothing to do” (Paterson, 1995:20). A Queensland study also found that some Aboriginal young people said that they sometimes engaged in crime as a recreational pursuit because “there was nothing else to do”. (Ray in Paterson, 1995:20)

For this particular group of young people, participation in culturally appropriate sport and recreation activities is a crucial part of their maintaining a life outside of the juvenile justice system.

Tatz concluded that:
“Sport in Aboriginal communities:
- provides some purpose and meaning in life
- enhances diminishing social cohesion and togetherness
- emphasises ritual and attract loyalties
- demonstrates Aboriginal organisational skills
- enables a few moments of total empowerment and sovereignty
- acts on occasion to offset alcohol abuse
- occupies time in the absence of real employment
- helps overcome, chronic ill heath
- reduces serious internal violence and juvenile delinquency
- provides an avenue for successful competition against mainstream society.”

(Tatz in Social Issues Legislative Council, 1995:149)
Barriers to Participation by Youth at risk In Sport and Recreation Activities

Social Equity Issues for Young People

Specific groups of young people experienced different levels and types of disadvantage when it came to accessing recreational facilities and sport and recreation opportunities.

‘Racial discrimination has been identified as a barrier to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders participating in sport and recreational activities.’ (Youth Council of Victoria, 1976, Youth Affairs Council of Australia, Brady, Ray in Paterson, 1995:14)

Young people from NESB backgrounds are also disadvantaged due to lack of parental support, lack of knowledge of available services and language difficulties. (Paterson, 1995)

‘Any strategy to increase the participation of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands people and young people from NESB in recreation needs to address racial discrimination. Recreation opportunities need to be designed, implemented and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands and ethnic communities to ensure that they are culturally appropriate.’ (Paterson, 1995:34)

Young people with disabilities face barriers to participating in recreational activities offered by existing facilities due to lack of physical access to recreational facilities. A report commissioned by the Australian Sports Commission found that one of the critical issues concerning the participation of people with disabilities in sport is the ‘ability and willingness of mainstream sporting organisations to integrate people with disabilities.’ (Paterson, 1995:14)

Young women’s participation in sport and recreation also tends to decline during adolescence for a number of reasons, including:

• the social perception of sport being a male domain
• lack of childcare facilities for teenage mothers
• the perception of the female role in society
• young women’s perception of their own body image.
(Butcher 1985 & Dyer 1986)
Several studies conducted in rural Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland (Green & McDonald, 1996, Jones, 1992, Bone, Cheers & Hill, 1993) have concluded that access for young people to suitable entertainment and sport and recreation facilities is severely restricted in rural Australia. (Paterson & Pegg, 1996)

A study of 276 young people conducted in rural Victoria in 1996 (Green & McDonald, 1996) found that the cost of travel in rural areas and the lack of public transport options were a deterrent to participating in recreational activities. (Paterson & Pegg, 1996)

Barriers to participating in sport and recreation are both cultural and structural. In designing spaces for sport and recreation activities attention must be paid to the specific needs of each group. In promoting those services, once again attention must be paid to the cultural mores of each of those groups and could be done in conjunction with a much wider community campaign that addresses prejudices.

**Youth at risk & the Outdoor Recreation Experience**

Many claims have been made regarding the value of recreation programs, especially wilderness programs in alleviating problems associated with juvenile crime. (Lynch & Veal, 1996)

‘The rationale behind wilderness programs for offending young people or youth at risk is that there will be some personal change which results from participation and that this will carry over into the home environment.’ (Mason and Wilson, in Lynch & Veal, 1996:334)

Wilderness/survival programs for young offenders can have a positive impact by enabling participants to learn new ways of dealing with themselves, with others and the environment, opportunities for psychological development as well as skills development, reinforcement of self-esteem, confidence, ability and trust. (Paterson, 1995; McKay, 1993 & Crompton, 1994 in Colthart, 1996). It has been shown these programs have the best results on those young people that have had little contact with the criminal justice system. (Paterson, 1995).

Between 1988 and 1990 an outdoor recreation program in New Zealand called the Wilderness ACCESS Course was observed and assessed by researchers and documented in an article by Sikking, Gidlow & Perkins in 1993.
The Wilderness ACCESS course was developed by the Hamilton YMCA in conjunction with the Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Turangi and consisted of the ‘Wilderness Challenge’, a fifteen day outdoor expedition and the ‘City Challenge’, a six week employment readiness program.

Sikking et al., found the Wilderness ACCESS Course was successful because it removed participants from the youth at risk sub-culture for a block of time and because the course utilised a follow up program that involved strong support from the community. (Sikking, Gidlow, Perkins in Veal & Weiler, 1993)

A study conducted in 1991 by Durgin and McEwan looked at follow up approaches to outdoor recreation programs and has argued that it is inappropriate for any organisation to run an adventure program for troubled young people without a very strong community follow up program. (Sikking, Gidlow, Perkins in Veal & Weiler, 1993).

**Examples of Sport and Recreation Projects for Youth at risk**

**The Hurstville Youth and Town Project, Hurstville, NSW**
Young people congregating around Hurstville’s shopping centre were involved in a number of violent incidences, graffiti and were having verbal altercations with security staff. The Hurstville Youth and Town Project prepared a report which resolved to investigate options for a multi-purpose youth facility that would include a basketball court, pool tables, music facilities etc, to provide a recreational outlet for young people. The Hurstville City Council is currently doing a feasibility study into building a youth centre in the Hurstville Central Business District.

**Police & Citizens Youth Clubs, NSW**
Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) have expanded their services beyond that of the traditional sporting and recreational activities, but these services still play a key role in the organisation and are considered a valuable component to preventing youth crime. The PCYCs throughout NSW provide recreational services such as: coaching clinics, camps and outdoor adventure programs, vacation activities, after school care, rock concerts, drama and arts and crafts. (Madden in Social Issues Legislative Council, 1995:145). ‘The Ministerial Advisory Committee, which conducted a review of PCYCs in 1988 found that, in many cases, the relations developed between PCYC staff and young offenders had led to a lower recidivism rate.’ (Paterson, 1995:21)
Cobham Youth Remand Centre, Sydney
In the early 1980’s, a survival program for young offenders was run from Cobham Youth Remand Centre in Sydney. The program ran for three months, beginning with skills development (map reading, camping, first aid), then an expedition which included skiing, horse riding and caving, followed by a community re-integration phase which was a bridge between the survival program and the community. (Lynch & Veal, 1996)

There were indications upon assessment of the program that the program may have resulted in some improvement in self-concept and the program was highly valued by the young people involved.

On the negative side, the young people return to the same social conditions and although these programs are beneficial, it is asking the impossible to expect them to overcome such conditions as social, educational and economic deprivation and violence. (Lynch & Veal, 1996)

Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory
Groote Eylandt Aborigines established a recreation program for boys who were considered by their communities to have problems with delinquent behaviour. The program was a bush camp, run by Aboriginal people, where the boys were engaged in physical and cultural activities in the context of Aboriginal culture and family life.

The program was successful because it focused on Aboriginal cultural ideals and was run by Aboriginal people. In this program recreation activities became a medium through which rehabilitation and cultural learning can occur. (Lynch & Veal, 1996)

Youth Assistance Strategies Section and NSW Sport and Recreation ITAB
The NSW Sport and Recreation ITAB and the Youth Assistance Strategies Section of DET have conducted two pilot projects exploring vocational education and training pathways that use sport and recreation activities as the vehicles for skills development and recognition. This approach recognises the benefit for young people in participating in sport and recreation activities and capitalises on this by using it as an opportunity to formally recognise skills gained. For many young people, this formal recognition of skills could be the first step on their further education and training pathway.
Conclusion

The literature review has provided evidence that sport and recreation activity-based programs provide youth at risk with opportunities to minimise their criminal behaviour. It provides them with opportunities to increase their self-esteem and develop leadership qualities as well as exposing them to life outside their social sub-culture. Access to sport and recreation activities is limited by significant barriers to young people’s involvement. Where these barriers are overcome – even if only for a short time during the life of a program – the impact on the young people participating in sport and recreation activities has been positive.

References


The Case Studies

These case studies have been collected from a number of different organisations throughout Australia. For the purposes of this report, they have been divided into three sections, representing the different aims of the programs:

- Programs that use sport and recreation activities as vehicles for skills development and recognition in youth at risk
- Programs that offer accredited training to youth at risk
- Programs that are interventionist and use sport and recreation activities as a basis for modifying ‘at-risk’ behaviour.

Programs that use sport and recreation activities as a vehicle for skills development and recognition for youth at risk

YETI Project
Recreation Training Queensland (RTQ) and Recreation Industry Training Company (RITC)

Background
Department of Emergency Services, Office of Sport and Recreation contracted RTQ and RITC to place young people at risk in sport and recreation traineeships throughout Queensland. The government subsidises the full cost of the traineeship.

Recruitment
Participants are recruited through youth support services, such as:

- the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care
- Young Offenders and
- Employment National.

The project managers conduct information sessions for potential participants and employers for the program and potential participants are screened and interviewed before being placed with an employer.
The participants are only allowed to take part in the project if they are interested and committed to their chosen area. Participants from the program range from ex-offenders, the long term unemployed, young participants with a disability and victims of abuse.

Program/Training
The young people participate in a one-year traineeship that involves being employed in the sport and recreation industry.

The employers of the trainees have an understanding that they will employ the trainee for two years, the first year being the traineeship and the second year being employment. The consultant does extensive research into the employer’s commitment to the project.

The project consultant does follow-up sessions with the trainees and employers to see how the traineeship is progressing.

Thirty-nine trainees participated in the first phase of the project.

Problems
In the first phase of the project there was no counsellor available to provide pastoral care and support to the trainees. A counsellor has been hired for the second phase that will allow the trainees to have more support while they are participating in the traineeship.

Achievements
In the first year of the program the program was fully funded and had a 97% success rate.

In the first phase there was only one case where the trainee did not take up employment after the traineeship.

The program is now in its second year of the funding arrangement, and has changed to instalments over two years to ensure the commitment of the employers in the program.

Contact details
Stewart Cooke
Recreation Industry Training Company
Phone: 07 3359 1993
Youth at Risk:

VET in Schools Project in the Building and Construction Industry
Claremont College, Tasmania

Background
Young people still at school but at risk of leaving early train in the Certificate I in Construction in a program conducted by Claremont College in Tasmania.

Recruitment
Four avenues were used for recruitment of participants for the program:

- the College visited high schools in Tasmania and talked to young people who were at risk of dropping out
- street kids were recruited through contact with Centrelink
- advertisements for the program went out to relevant agencies and a workshop was conducted to talk about the program
- an Aboriginal liaison officer was used to make contact with Aboriginal young people.

Program/Training
The young people at risk participated in the Certificate I in Construction qualification through the Vocational Education and Training system. The training took one year to complete and was delivered at three sites:

- Claremont College
- the workplace
- TAFE.

The participants received career support and advice in the second half of the year and received literacy and numeracy support if it was needed.
Problems
The young people needed a high level of support to participate in the program. Many resources were therefore required to give them the support they required.

Achievements
There were few drop-outs from the program and other young people replaced those who had dropped out. Nine out of the fourteen participants in 1999 will receive the qualification and some of those remaining will complete some modules in the next year.

Critical Success Factor
It was important to provide most of the training out of the classroom for the training to be successful.

Contact details
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Claremont College
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Taree Adult Career Education

Background
The Taree Adult Career Education (or Taree ACE) offers vocational training opportunities to young people at risk.

Recruitment
The participants were recruited from youth centres in Taree and surrounding areas.

Program/Training
Four groups of Koori young people were given training in short courses and units at Certificate II level in July to September 1999.

The participants were issued a Statement of Attainment if they satisfactorily completed the training. The areas of training included: Hospitality, Horticulture, Computing and Career Development. Two youth centres in the area worked with the program and provided their facilities for the training.
Critical success factors

- The participants needed to be guided in the training but still believed that they had ownership of the program.
- An extremely dedicated Koori person supporting the program and its participants.
- Good time management qualities with the program manager making sure the participants are on time and are committed to the program.
- A suitably qualified teacher who was trained in welfare and social work to manage the program.

Problems

Administration of the program was difficult. The program had a VET coordinator and a social coordinator to enhance the program’s success. An issue to be addressed was the matter of worker’s compensation to protect project staff.

Achievements

- One participant is going back to school
- One participant has got a job at the local abattoir
- One participant is working for a builder and
- One participant will be taking up a mechanics apprenticeship
- The participants also have more control over their lives through the program, have a higher sense of self-responsibility and increased self-esteem.

Contact details

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Project Officer, Equity,
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Phone: 02 9266 8175
**Youth In Sport Program**  
**NSW Department of Sport and Recreation**

**Background**
The Youth in Sport (YIS) program aims to give young people at risk of coming into contact with the justice system a chance to develop self-esteem and skills that will assist them in keeping on the right side of the law.

Strategies focus around sporting and recreational program opportunities in NSW. The Sub-Committee Promoting Opportunity, Recreation and Talent (SPORT) was established in February 1997 to oversee the YIS program.

The Committee consists of representatives from the:

- Office of the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Fair Trading
- Office of the Minister for Police
- Attorney General’s Department
- The Cabinet Office
- Department of Education and Training
- Police and Community Youth Club State office (PCYC)
- NSW Youth Advisory Council and,
- community.

**Recruitment**
Young people as such were not recruited into this project. Rather, the program is delivered in areas of NSW where it has been identified that high populations of young people at risk reside.

In 1997/98 the YIS program was piloted in five areas throughout NSW: Redfern, Shoalhaven, Fairfield/Villawood, Wagga Wagga and Bathurst. They were selected as suitable areas due to their distinct demographic composition (high indigenous or non-English speaking backgrounds).
Due to the success of this pilot, the program was expanded in 1998/99 to involve 12 target areas. For the period 1999/00 15 target areas were established: These are in:

Metropolitan Sydney:
- South Sydney
- Fairfield/Cabramatta
- Bidwell
- Burwood
- Mt Druitt
- Blacktown and
- Bankstown.

Regional NSW:
- Moree
- Lake Macquarie
- Dubbo
- Shoalhaven
- Wagga Wagga
- Maitland & Newcastle
- Wellington

**Program/Trainer**
The Youth In Sport program is a partnership between NSW Police and Community Youth Club’s (PCYC) and the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR). Activities are primarily based within the relevant PCYC branches with PCYC and DSR officers co-ordinating the programs.

Examples of programs include:
- State wide programs involving high profile Sports Stars and role models in: 3x3 Slam Cup Basketball competition; Swans Australian Football clinics & NSW Cricket clinics
- Regular programmed sport and recreational opportunities ie: basketball, volleyball, martial arts, outdoor sports, swimming lessons and athletics
- Intensive juvenile truant programs closely linked to schools ie: Sports Opportunities program, Kids on Health Kicks program, the Helping Early Leavers Program.

**Achievements**
Over 60 different sporting and recreational programs were delivered in 1998/99, providing over 6,000 participation opportunities for young people from Anglo, Aboriginal and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Participants have exhibited:
- improved social behaviour
- increased school attendance
- improved relations with police and
- decreased tendencies towards criminal behaviour.
Contact details
Richard Arranz
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Phone: (02) 9923 4252

**Operation Flinders - South Australia**
Operation Flinders Foundation

**Background**
Operation Flinders Foundation provides young men and women who have either breached the law, or who are at risk of breaching the law, with demanding outdoor challenges and support in a wilderness setting, to help them develop their personal attitudes and values of self esteem, motivation, team work and responsibility.

**Recruitment**
Most of the participants come via the education system. Other referrals come from:
- Family and Community Services
- The Youth Court
- Aboriginal Support Groups
- Centrelink and
- Community groups.

**Program/Training**
Teams are formed of between eight and 10 young people, aged between 13 and 18. Team leaders are generally selected from a pool of serving or retired Army personnel and serving Police Officers. Operation Flinders management handpicks Team Leaders on the basis of their bush survival and navigation skills and their ability to work with this target group.
The teams walk a circuit of approximately 100km over eight days. Team members are each issued with a diary, which they complete as a record of their participation.

**Problems**
Each team undergoes a ‘storming period’ early in the exercise when they object and complain about the physical aspects of the camp, object to the discipline, are fractious and difficult to control.
They generally take three or four days to settle to their circumstances, come to terms with their surroundings, develop relationships with other team members, and form a team. Team members are not sent home unless their behaviour is so disruptive that it is affecting the rest of the team on a continuing basis.

Experience has shown that it is essential that the lessons learned in the Flinders Ranges be reinforced once participants return to their normal environment to ensure that the changes bought about are sustained. Follow-up support programs are being developed in SA with the assistance from the Clinical Evaluation Committee of the Foundation. Operation Flinders has found that the administration and coordination of the follow up programs stretches their limited resources.

**Achievements**

Since 1993 Operation Flinders has had approximately 250 young people participate annually. Operation Flinders has developed links with the Naval Sail Training Vessel ‘Young Endeavour’ and every year two young participants who have completed the bush exercise are selected to sail on an all expenses paid 10 day voyage.

A relationship has also been developed with the ‘One and All’, a sail-training vessel located at Port Adelaide, to provide follow on training for successful participants.

**Contact details**

John Shepherd
Operation Flinders
Phone: 08 8242 3244

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1 Since Operation Flinders commenced in 1991 only 29 participants have been sent home.
The Pilot Projects

Selecting the HELP projects

An Expression of Interest form was forwarded to all community organisations currently receiving funds under the Helping Early Leavers Program and the Koori Youth Program. A letter accompanying the form detailed the project.

The Expression of Interest form asked:

• What are your reasons for wanting to participate in the project?
• What sport and recreation focus does your HELP project have?
• What resources would you be able to commit to the project?

The responses were considered by the Project Steering Committee and two organisations were selected - Northumberland Network, Cessnock and Mission Employment, Campbelltown.

The SRITAB project manager and YASS Senior Co-ordinator visited the two organisations to discuss the project and the nature of each organisation’s involvement. At that initial meeting, each organisation and the project manager agreed on a model for delivering the accredited training.

Project A: Northumberland Network

The Organisation’s Profile

Northumberland Network is situated in Cessnock, about two hours drive north of Sydney, and is a gateway to the Hunter Valley Wine Region.

Northumberland Network is a registered training organisation and provides a number of services including; recruitment, training and functions and conference facilities. The Network is also part of the JOB futures network.

Unemployment rates in Cessnock are consistently higher than those recorded elsewhere in NSW but the region is experiencing significant employment increases in the services based industries, including sport and recreation, business services, education, tourism/hospitality, accommodation, restaurant, transport and storage.
The Project

Background

The organisation decided that it would be possible to deliver two units of accredited training from a relevant ‘course’. One unit would be First Aid. The funding for the delivery of this course would be sourced through the Department of Education and Training. A second unit of accredited training would be also delivered as part of the HELP course, for which the Network would take responsibility.

When the project commenced, Northumberland Network was in the process of increasing its scope* to include delivery of qualifications in the forthcoming Sports Industry Training Package. At the time, the Sports Industry Training Package was not available for purchase, though it had been endorsed by ANTA; and the Network had not yet received permission to deliver qualifications from the Package. Consequently, the Network had to look at other sport and recreation courses to source a suitable unit for delivery.

Selecting the Unit

The organisation scanned available units until one was found that incorporated a number of competencies addressed by the HELP project. The unit Activity Event Planning from a Certificate II in Sport and Recreation was selected.

Recruiting the Young People

Posters, advertisements in local newspapers and direct approaches to Centrelink and the local PCYC were used to recruit young people to the course.

The HELP Course

The HELP course was conducted three days per week over ten weeks. The days were divided into: one day work experience; half a day sport activity (yoga, boxing, gymnastics); and the remaining time was dedicated to Planning an Activity or Event and/or job search skills, resume preparation; letter writing; drug and alcohol and sexual health etc.

Managing the Training for the Unit

The Network took a holistic view for the delivery and assessment of the unit. The young people were divided into three groups and given the challenge to organise a sport/recreation activity for the entire group. Each group was given a budget of $200 and were required to explore options, facilities, cost of the activity including catering, transport, special equipment requirements, value for money and what could be done at no cost, etc.
A final report was prepared by each group on the computer and presented to the HELP tutor. Each group presented their idea in a creative manner to the other two groups. On the basis of the presentation the group was required to select the activity they would most like to do. The tutor provided assistance and advice to each group in the preparation of the presentations.

**Formally recognising competencies**

As an RTO, the Northumberland Network was in the process of expanding their scope to include qualifications from the forthcoming Sports Industry and Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Packages. At the time of the project, the expansion of their scope had not yet been approved by VETAB. Approval has since been given, and when the new Training Packages are available, the Network will ‘recognise the prior learning’ of those HELP clients and provide them with a Statement of Attainment.

**The Pathway**

The Northumberland Network are anticipating an expansion of their training delivery to include traineeships in hospitality and sport and recreation. Young people who come to the organisation’s attention through HELP as being suitable candidates for a traineeship will be so referred. The Network has recently entered into a partnership with a popular local bowling club to provide catering services. This site will be the off-the-job training delivery site for their trainees.

**Future plans**

The Network will continue to focus HELP towards sport and recreation, so pleased is it with the way those activities engage the young people and introduces them to new experiences.

**Outcomes**

**For the organisation**

- a way of engaging young people in learning that encompasses all the streams of HELP in a complex activity
- a new recruitment strategy. By focussing HELP as a program that incorporates sport and recreation activities, young people believe they will participate in something that is fun, not just good for them. The Northumberland Network believes the strategy is so successful that they have continued to use it.
**For the Young People**
- a real opportunity to have a measure of control over their learning experiences
- the opportunity to undertake accredited training
- to be involved in something that was fun.

* [To be eligible to apply for public funds to deliver accredited training, training organisations must register with the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board. This process is designed to ensure the quality of training delivery. Part of the process requires the training organisation to indicate their ‘scope’ of training, ie what they plan to deliver. Each qualification has different requirements and organisations usually chose to specialise in a particular field. Once an organisation has passed its ‘audit’ it becomes a Registered Training Organisation, or RTO. An RTO can apply to increase its scope when new training products become available, for example a new Training Package.]

**Project B: Mission Employment**

**The Organisation’s Profile**
Mission Employment at Campbelltown works with unemployed people to get sustainable employment through case programs and supported job search. They conduct a number of other courses including Assistant in Nursing, computer and horticulture courses, courses funded by the Department of Housing and JPET for Disadvantaged Youth. Their HELP program consists of four activity programs over a twelve month period, assisting approximately 56 people per year.

**The Proposed Project**
The original idea for the project was to conduct a camp at which the accredited modules would be delivered. It was planned to deliver two core modules from the Certificate II in Sport and Recreation, namely Working in Teams and First Aid. However, the actual timing of the project as a whole, and the developmental work required to get a camp organised, eventually worked against the idea. This position was only realised after much work done by the HELP tutor towards organising the camp. At the beginning of November, a second pathway was negotiated with the Tutor.
Loftus TAFE is a primary provider of the Certificate II in Sport and Recreation. The Head Teacher, Health and Recreation, was approached and asked if she was in a position to deliver Working in Teams to the young people participating in the HELP project.

This was possible, on the condition that the training be delivered after the completion of TAFE’s term four. The Head Teacher suggested that the module be delivered at Loftus TAFE using the facilities there and on a low ropes course, over the course of two days. (The module is a general core unit of the Certificate II in Sport and Recreation. See Appendix for a full description.)

After consultation, the HELP Co-ordinator and Tutor were able to confirm which HELP participants (who were not involved in work experience) could participate in a two day course at Loftus. The HELP Co-ordinator would take the young people to Loftus and provide what ‘pastoral care’ the young people might require.

**Recruiting the Young People**

Two weeks prior to the commencement of the project, an advertisement was placed in the local paper. In addition, HELP is the focus of referrals from Mission Employment Client Managers, the Juvenile Justice system and local schools. Their advertisement for this project was:

FREE HELP COURSE

Unemployed? Did you leave school early? Are you 15-24? Do you want to increase your chance of success? Do you like outdoor activities? For future employment we have a FREE 10 week part time course which commences 6th October, 1999.

PLEASE CALL DI AT MISSION EMPLOYMENT CAMPBELLTOWN ON (02) 4626 3833

This programme is jointly funded by the Dept of Education and Training and Mission Australia.

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2 It had been negotiated at the commencement of the project that funds for the delivery of this training would be made available from an Industry Training Services Centre of DET through one of their funding programs.
The HELP course

The HELP course was conducted three days per week (Wednesday to Friday from 9am to 1pm) over ten weeks. That time also includes two weeks work experience. Topics that are covered during that time include:

- Personal development
- Self esteem
- Confidence building
- Employment skills
- Letters of Application
- Telephone techniques
- Mock interview
- Outdoor based activities

Managing the Training for the Unit

A total of five young people attended the accredited training in ‘Working in Teams’. The other young people in the HELP course were either on work experience, or had already moved onto further education and training or employment. The young people were:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Highest level of education</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Income Source</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Yr 10</td>
<td>U/E</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Yr 9</td>
<td>U/E</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yr 10</td>
<td>U/E</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yr 10</td>
<td>U/E</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yr 12</td>
<td>U/E</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The program for the accredited training was as follows:

**DAY ONE**
Enrolment
Tour of facilities at Loftus TAFE
Experience of various apparatus in the gymnasium
Team Building Activity 1 (murder mystery game)
Workout in the Gymnasium

Team Building Activity 2* and assessment
Debriefing

**DAY TWO (at Stanwell Tops)**
Low Ropes Course
Archery Course
Team Building Activities on the beach
Debriefing
Assessment
The Co-ordinator was able to obtain Mission Employment’s minibus and drive the young people the one and a half-hours trip to Loftus TAFE and Stanwell Tops. The Co-ordinator was present for the delivery of all the activities, except for Team Building Activity 2 on Monday afternoon.

A simulation activity was explained to the young people. As a committee the group was to plan a recreation program for a community centre. The TAFE tutor demonstrated the process for the Monday and handed over the activity to the young people to complete a timetable for the remainder of the week.

From the TAFE tutor’s perspective:
- subject area was suitable for this group
- experiential learning incorporating outdoor activities, games and the presentation of theory through scenarios on recreation programming is an innovative and effective way to introduce young people to the recreation industry
- more young people in the group would have meant more opportunities for interaction
- two days was sufficient to develop a relationship with the group
- roles and relationship of TAFE tutor and HELP tutor needed to be discussed and defined prior to the activity
- the young people demonstrated their growth in understanding of “teams” in the two debriefing sessions that were held at the end of each day. The discussion on the first day ‘spotlighted’ each individual’s behaviour; discussion during the second debriefing session focussed on the each individuals behaviour as a member of a team and the group’s behaviour as a team
- the young people were very vocal and readily and openly shared their experiences
- the group dynamic changed when the HELP tutor was present.

From a partnership development perspective:
- a structured framework for approaching prospective partners is required
- an assessment of the prior knowledge of participants is recommended before activities commence
- assessment expectations of the different partners needs to be determined
- guidelines for support of the target group during the training period should be established
discussion with participants over their expectations of the training provisions is needed
extensive discussion over the content as well as the context of the training is necessary
it is important to match the tutor’s experience and qualifications to the delivery of training
with this specific target group.

From the HELP tutors perspective:
• there should have been more discussion at the outset between the HELP and TAFE
tutors about what the HELP participants had already done as part of HELP (this was in
reference to the Monday morning game – the murder mystery – which some of the
young people had already done)
• the afternoon session on Monday was “confusing”. Couldn’t get the team activity going”
• the young people loved the low ropes course and the archery lesson.

Outcomes
For the organisation
• Young people had increased interest to participate in a HELP course that focussed on
sport and recreation activities
• opportunity to do more with the sport and recreation activities than they normally do
• increased profile with their local Industry Training Services Centre
• a number of young people will move onto pre-vocational training in horticulture and be
offered the opportunity to take up a traineeship later next year where possible.

For the Young People
• Opportunity to attend a TAFE college and see what is on offer; an expansion of their
horizons: and to participate in accredited training
• having an opportunity to participate in something they would not normally access, eg
being taken out of the classroom and involved in outdoor activities – so far from home!
(Some of the clients had never been to the beach before)
• gained “great self esteem and confidence”
• one client will go to Loftus TAFE next year and do a sport and recreation course.
For the project

- Each organisation needs to be fully briefed about the varying roles and responsibilities of the other, keeping in mind what is in the best interests of the young people
- the module to be delivered, and the training and assessment method, need to be discussed in full with the HELP tutor, if the HELP tutor is not the person delivering the accredited training
- concluding that HELP clients are capable of managing difficult situations, given an opportunity
- concluding that HELP clients are capable of managing accredited training at AQF Level II.
Conclusion

The Youth Assistance Strategies Section’s project ‘Stepping along the Track - Sport and Recreation Pathways for Young People’ set out to determine how accredited training in sport and recreation could assist young people who are participants in a HELP program.

The project discovered the following:

- attracting young people to participate in a literacy and numeracy program, focusing on sport and recreation activities is a successful and innovative approach
- young people are attracted to programs that promote the involvement in sport and recreation activities therefore improving an organisation’s recruitment strategy
- young people can obtain qualifications (in this case a Statement of Attainment) whilst participating in activities that they not only enjoy, but which challenge them
- the delivery of units of competence from the AQF Level Two from a sport and recreation qualification is not beyond the scope of an organisation that delivers HELP
- partnerships increase the ability of organisations to offer more to their young people.

The project also demonstrated that:

- The roles and responsibilities of each organisation involved in the partnership need to be clearly stated.

The real success of the project lay in its formalisation of the knowledge that youth at risk like to participate in activities that are fun, and learn well when they learn inadvertently. Also, generic competencies can be delivered in sport and recreation activities, signalling to future employers the employability of the young person. Receiving the Statement of Attainment will also establish the abilities of the young people at industry entry-level standard – a vital consideration for young people with low education levels.
Appendix

Working in Teams - (Module Summary)

Australian Qualifications
Framework level 2

Module Purpose: To provide the learner with the skills to organise their own work schedule and participate as a team member

Summary of Learning
Outcomes The focus should be on the learning outcomes and not the content.
1. Identify individual responsibilities as part of a team
2. Contribute to the development of an effective work team
3. Organise own schedule in a workplace related context to meet designated group goals
4. Participate as a team member to complete a series of work related tasks within designated timelines
5. Respond to conflict in the work team.