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Editorial

One of the lessons of the Arab Spring is that societies and regimes disenfranchise young people at their peril.

In December 2010 there were mass uprisings against the rule of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and in January 2011 a revolution to end the Mubarak regime in Egypt was initiated. Both were successful in removing the leaders of corrupt regimes.

In Libya, anti-government protests began in November 2011, ending with the killing of Gaddafi in October 2011. In Yemen protests against the government began in January 2011 and by February 2012 President Ali Abdullah Saleh had resigned from his presidency.

Uprisings subsequently occurred in Bahrain and Syria and protests also occurred in Jordan, Oman, Kuwait, Algeria and Morocco.

Young people played a crucial role in these uprisings, which is not surprising especially given that a majority of the population in these countries is under the age of 30.

But more than sheer numbers, the young people who led the revolts in these countries were also well educated and highly literate in digital technologies. They were also unemployed. In Egypt, for example, in 2010 the unemployment rate was over 9 per cent, with the vast majority of the unemployed being university graduates aged 15 to 30.

Affluent but socially unequal countries such as Australia appear to be following in similar footsteps, at least in term of the structural position of many young people in these societies.

For example, recent survey findings show that Australian workers are experiencing persistent income stagnation. This is affecting most young people, who constitute a sizeable proportion of the so-called precariat. This refers to people who are in highly unstable and volatile work situations. The term stems from a synthesis of the words “proletariat” and “precarious”.

Precarious employment encompasses a combination of low pay, employment insecurity and working-time insecurity. Even workers who are in permanent employment may be threatened by insecurity based on large-scale retrenchments in public- and private-sector workplaces, and by continual pressures on working-time security (demands to change

shifts, annual leave dates, lunch and other breaks, or to expand the spread of ordinary hours beyond the norm).

Low and insecure income, under-employment and unemployment, and work-time insecurity are all compounded by the struggle for affordable housing. Again, it is the young who are most affected by steep housing and rental prices in the capital cities (where, simultaneously, the jobs are).

For many young people, living in the present is a financial nightmare as they juggle multiple jobs while trying to find and retain suitable and secure accommodation.

Into this morass of debt and despair, the politics of social transformation provides one solution to present dilemmas. Profiles of supporters backing “alternative” candidates in the US, the UK and France, for instance, point to the “youth vote” going toward those who speak of new institutional arrangements, old social injustices, and renewed calls for equality, solidarity and hope.

The present generation of young people worldwide is the most interconnected in world history. The smartphone and the computer have revolutionised what is known and how it is known. The internet also provides a resonant sounding board for those who visualise and articulate futures radically different to the present.

As conditions deteriorate and hopes are dashed for well-educated, energetic young people, the digital natives of the twenty-first century, so the pressure for significant and rapid social transformation increases.

If this fundamental change does not come from the top, then it will eventually emerge from the bottom.

This, too, is a lesson from the Arab Spring.

Rob White

Academic Editor

Substance use, mental health and sexual behaviour of college students in Bhutan

Kezang Sherab*, John Howard**, Sherub Tshomo*** and Karma Tshering****

The Kingdom of Bhutan is often characterised as ‘the last Shangri-La’, and has adopted ‘Gross National Happiness’ (GNH) as the foundation of wellbeing and development. Exposure to other lifestyles and values have been embraced by many young Bhutanese, creating tensions with traditional culture and values; much of this associated with concerns about substance use, sexual behaviour and mental health. This study employed a self-administered survey in eight college campuses across Bhutan (N = 2471) of substance use, mental health and sexual behaviour among the college students, and is the first of its kind. The findings indicate that substance use among the college students was low, mental health concerns were identified by about 10%, and sexual risk behaviour by over 50% of sexually active students. This paper presents recommendations to relevant stakeholders to address the issues identified to progress the vision of GNH.

Key words: Bhutan, college students, substance use, sexual orientation, sexual behaviour, mental health

The Kingdom of Bhutan, situated on the southeast slopes of the Himalayas, is often characterised as “the last Shangri-La” and where “Gross National Happiness” (GNH) is the foundation of wellbeing and development. Bhutan is also a small, landlocked

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developing country, with about 80% of the estimated population of 800,000 involved in agriculture, and 45% aged under 25 years. The north of Bhutan shares a border with China (Tibet), while the east, south and west areas border the Indian states of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Bhutan moved from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1953 with the establishment of a National Assembly; and first parliamentary elections were held in 2007. Notwithstanding fears of eroding national values, the government lifted a ban on television and the internet in 1999. Since that time, and with increased tourism, Bhutan has been exposed to other lifestyles and values that have been embraced by many young Bhutanese, often creating tensions with traditional culture and values.

As in the “West”, much of this tension is associated with concerns about substance use and sexual behaviour; and early onset substance use, sexual debut and risky sexual behaviour are associated with lowered engagement with and participation in education, training and employment, reduced social cohesion, and stigma and discrimination.

These concerns were enshrined in the 2010 National Youth Policy (Department of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Education 2010), which focused on the creation of an enabling environment with young people at the centre of growth and development. It notes that many parents, teachers and health workers grew up at a very different time, one not so much influenced by globalisation, mass communication, social media, a changing global economy and increasing access to alcohol and other drugs. The youth policy suggests that there has been a mismatch between education and employment opportunities, youth aspirations and available jobs, which threatens the GNH philosophy of “development with values”.

Substance use and young people in Bhutan

The consumption of alcohol is widely accepted in Bhutanese society, and deeply rooted in customs and culture. *Ara*, a local alcohol distilled from rice, barley and maize, is the traditional form of alcohol used in Bhutan. Its use is a part of almost all social occasions, including childbirth, religious ceremonies, rituals, festivals, social gatherings and funerals. Drinking solidarity signifies emotional bonding, social solidarity and respect. It is also used to please deities and as a vital part of various religious offerings (Dorji 2012).

However, alcohol is also associated with the leading causes of mortality in Bhutan – alcohol-use-related diseases (e.g. of the liver) (Kypri et al. 2017). Bhutan has one of the highest per capita alcohol consumption in the South Asian region, and its use begins at an early age (Panda, Chowdhury et al. 2009; WHO 2006a).

Another traditional substance used in Bhutan is *doma* (areca/betel nut), which is folded in a betel leaf and then chewed (Garg, Chaturvedi & Gupta 2014; Panda, Chowdhury et al. 2009). Use of *doma* has health risks such as mouth and oesophageal cancers and cardiovascular disease. In addition, cannabis grows wild throughout Bhutan, and international studies demonstrate that its use is associated with adverse mental health outcome for those who are vulnerable (Large et al. 2011).

Concerns about young people resorting to drug use due to unemployment, poor academic performance, peer pressure, urbanisation, and migration from rural to urban areas for employment and education have been constantly raised by the Royal Government of Bhutan (Panda, Chowdhury et al. 2009).

Existing data demonstrate the significance of geographical location, with some of the districts with porous borders with India demonstrating a shift to the use of pharmaceutical medicines and away from traditional patterns of use (i.e. alcohol, cannabis, opium and betel nut) to non-traditional forms, such as cocktails of pharmaceuticals, in addition to alcohol, cannabis and betel nut (Panda, Wangdi et al. 2009).

A countrywide school student assessment was completed in 2009 (Panda, Wangdi et al. 2009). The survey of 20,757 students was undertaken in 60 schools across Bhutan. Daily tobacco use was found to be 5% for classes 7–8 and 8% for male students in classes 9–10, and less than 1% for female students. A higher prevalence was reported from classes 11–12 (13% males, 1% females). Daily solvent use was reported by 1% of male students from classes 9–10.

The recent 2016 WHO Global School-based Health Survey (GSHS) of 7,576 Bhutanese secondary school students aged 13 to 17 found that 28.3% of males and 5.3% of female respondents had used cannabis one or more times in their lifetime, and, of those reporting ever having used a drug, 42.6% of male and 34.2% of female students initiated drug use before the age of 14. A third of male students (33.4%) reported that they currently drank alcohol; 16.1% of female students. Of those reporting ever having drunk alcohol, 58% of male and 52.4% of female students initiated alcohol use before the age of 14 (WHO 2017).

These figures are much higher than those for the GSHS 2015 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2015) survey in near-neighbour Nepal, where 5.0% of males and 2.5% of females reported ever using cannabis, and 6.7% of males and 3.6% females reported current use of alcohol, despite reporting initiating alcohol use at an earlier age than the Bhutanese students, and their easy access to cannabis. Data from the 2014 GSHS

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2014) survey of Bangladeshi students also reveals lower use of alcohol and cannabis by Bangladesh students than by Bhutanese students (2.1% of males and 0.4% of females reported ever using cannabis; 2.4% of males and 0.1% females reported current use of alcohol). Unfortunately, similar data are not available for neighbours India and China.

Cannabis use data from the WHO GSHS places Bhutan among the higher lifetime use countries, such as Bulgaria,, Poland and Slovakia, but not at the level of the Czech Republic, Italy, France, Switzerland, USA, some Pacific Island countries and territories (such as Palau, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Samoa) and a number of Caribbean countries (CDC 2017; ESPAD 2016; WHO 2017).

Among patients admitted for first-time detoxification, Choki, Dorji & Choden (2014) found that the most common substance used was alcohol, followed by cannabis, Nitrazepam (an anti-anxiety medication), Dextropropoxyphene (SP) (a pain reliever), glue (inhaled) and chlorphenamine/ pseudoephedrine/ codeine-containing cough syrup. Most patients used more than one substance, often together. Males, individuals aged 15–24 years and those unemployed had higher prevalence.

There appears to have been only one study of college students in Bhutan (Schofield 2013), at only one college, and focused on use of tobacco. The self-administered survey of the 846 students found that 54% of the males and 80% of the females reported “never” using tobacco at that point in their lives, while 20% of the males and 9% of the females, reported using tobacco every day.

In relation to use of illegal drugs, Schofield (2013) reported that approximately 6% of the students (10% of the males and 3% of the females) said that they used such drugs “a couple of time a month” and 2% daily. Reported initiation of illegal drug use began in classes 11 and 12 for 41%, and for 23% in classes 9 and 10, and 23% in class 7 or before. Only 14% of the students using illegal drugs started during their college years.

Sexual and reproductive health of young people in Bhutan

Bhutan has an open approach to sex and sexuality, typical of Buddhist societies, with pre-marital sex not so taboo and a relatively early onset of sexual activity and less stringent sexual norms for both men and women as compared to other South Asian countries (Gurung & Tshomo 2015; National Youth Policy 2010). Sexual activity among young Bhutanese and early pregnancies, common in the past, had been dealt with by families and communities, and not seen as health and social problems. However, Dorji (2015) reports that early age pregnancy and childbearing are now important public policy, health

and social concerns in Bhutan. In addition, they pose a substantial challenge to young women's health and their access to education and other socioeconomic opportunities (Dorji 2015).

The National Health Survey in 2012 of 9,347 15- to 25-year-olds found that 16% of the males and 29% of the females were married. Over a third (38%) of males reported having sex (22% of 10- to 19-year-olds; 81% 20- to 24-year-olds), and 15% of females (10% of 10- to 19-year-olds; 19% of 20- to 24-year-olds). Condoms were not used by 75% of males during last sexual intercourse (Dorji 2015).

Panda, Chowdhury et al. (2009) reported that in their school sample from Phuentsholing the mean age at first sex was 14 years for male students in classes 9 and 10 and 15 years for females – younger ages than in many countries in the world and region (WHO 2006). While 31% of the male students reported having sex, only 1% of the females indicated so. Condoms were used during first sex by 41% of males and 53% of females.

There appears to be little data on college students' sexual behavior in Bhutan. A recent report by Gurung and Tshomo (2015) noted that, despite this, "... evidence suggests increasing incidences of irresponsible sexual behavior amongst young people, resulting in unplanned pregnancies, relationship conflict, STIs, emotional and psychological stress and sometimes suicide" (p.3).

In the Gurung and Tshomo (2015) study, qualitative data were gathered from 91 final-year college students. More than half the sample population (53%) had been involved in sexual activity at least once in their lifetime, with about 33% not using condoms.

The World Bank report on HIV/AIDS in Bhutan (2012) suggested that one-fifth of all married people have engaged in extramarital sex in the last year, and 14% of unmarried people had sex in the last year. Rates were considerably higher among urban males, with 43% reporting extramarital sex, and 42% of urban single men reporting premarital sex in the last year.

In addition, despite the relatively open approach to sexual behavior in Bhutan, significant stigma and discrimination exist towards those with diverse sexual identities, orientation and behaviour. The penal code of 2004 criminalises sodomy, yet there are numerous anecdotal reports of same sex sexual activity in army barracks, prisons, college hostels and monastic schools (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2013).

Likewise, surveys of sexually active men and women reveal significant same sex sexual behaviour, and the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) UNDP (2015) report documented high exposure to stigma and discrimination for men who have sex with men,

and for transgender people, which impacted on their access to necessary health services and social support.

Mental health

There is limited reported research on the mental health of young people in Bhutan. Dorji et al. (2015) reviewed the data from 14,799 young people (aged 10–24 years) from the National Health Survey of 2012. About 30% of young people surveyed “felt lonely”, and a similar number (29%) of young people felt “worried” (always, sometimes and rarely combined) to the extent that they experienced troubled sleep – more young females than young males. About 4% of young people reported suicidal ideation, and a similar proportion reported attempting suicide – again, more females than males. These rates are lower than those for some near-neighbour countries, such as India and Nepal, but higher than for China (World Health Organization (WHO) 2016). The national suicide prevention plan (Royal Government of Bhutan 2015) indicated that 90% of attempted suicide cases were youth and young adults (more females), as were about 69% of completed suicides (more males).

As in more developed countries, Dorji et al. (2015) noted that studies have revealed strong relationships between mental disorders and other health issues, community problems and development concerns for young people, especially educational achievements. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that many LGBTIQ youth experience bullying and harassment, stigma and discrimination in schools from both students and teachers (Bhutan Ministry of Health 2015).

In light of the paucity of available data, the aim of the current study was to obtain information on the substance use, sexual behaviour and mental health of college students in Bhutan. It also aimed to identify the implications of this information for educators, health workers and policymakers and provide recommendations to address relevant issues.

Methods

A self-administered survey was distributed to a representative sample of college students (N = 2471) of eight of the 11 college campuses across Bhutan (one refused to participate, one was not reachable, and the other was a very small college). This equates to approximately 25% of all college students in Bhutan.

The survey canvassed substance use, reasons for substance use, perceptions of the safety of various substances, sexual orientation, sexual behaviour and mental health using the Kessler 6 scale (Kessler et al. 2010).

Permission to carry out this study was sought from the management of all the colleges in Bhutan, and ethics approval was granted by all eight colleges that agreed to participate. Individual students were asked to voluntarily return the survey.

Descriptive statistics were computed using SPSS v. 23. Gender-related comparisons in terms of substance use, reasons for use of various substances, perceived safety of substances, sexual behaviour and mental health are provided in the following sections. There do not appear to be any significant differences between the eight colleges located across Bhutan.

Results

Demographics

Female students comprised 48.4% of those surveyed with a mean age of 20.9 years, and 50.5% were male with a mean age of 22 years. One percent identified as both male and female (0.3%), neither (0.2%) or unsure/undecided (0.5%). Over a third of the sample was in their first year of college (37.5%), with 31.5% in second, 18.6% in third and 12.4% in fourth year. The majority resided in college hostels (88.6%), and 7.9% lived away from the college with friends and 3.5% with family.

The main occupations of the students' fathers were farmer (49.9%), government worker (24.6%), and having their own business (11%). Almost half of the fathers had no schooling (45.7%), with another quarter (25.1%) leaving school with no qualification. Only 10.5% completed high school, 8.3% had a university degree, 3.7% a postgraduate qualification, 1.3% completed vocational education and 5.4% had attended monastic schools.

For the mothers, almost half were identified as housewives (44%), 40.2% as farmers, and 7.9% as having their own business. More mothers than fathers had not attended school (74.1%), 17.1% left school with no qualification, 5.4% completed high school, 1.4% had a university degree, 0.4% had a postgraduate qualification, 1% completed vocational school and 0.5% a monastic school.

Substance use

As Table 1 illustrates, low levels of drug use were reported by the college students surveyed for most substances with minimal current use, other than for doma, alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. Doma had been used by 62.1%, with 7.9% reporting current use from twice a week to daily; 57% had used alcohol, with 3.8% currently using twice a week/daily; and 17% had used tobacco, with 3% currently using twice a week/daily.

Table 1: Self-reported substance use by college students in Bhutan – % overall, and by gender (N = 2471)*

Substance		Never	Rarely/ Occasionally	Twice a week/Daily
Tobacco		83.0	5.0	3.0
	Male	71.6	8.0	4.9
	Female	94.4	2.1	1.1
Baba (Chewing tobacco)		88.2	2.3	2.4
	Male	79.1	3.7	4.4
	Female	97.6	0.8	0.3
Alcohol		43.0	38.3	3.8
	Male	31.2	44.0	5.6
	Female	55.0	31.7	1.9
Doma (betel nut)		37.9	34.8	7.9
	Male	34.4	34.5	9.2
	Female	41.3	35.3	6.3
Inhalants: (e.g. glue, petrol, etc.)		91.9	2.1	0.5
	Male	85.9	2.9	0.7
	Female	98.1	1.2	0.1
Cannabis, ganja, marijuana		88.2	3.0	0.7
	Male	78.3	5.7	1.1
	Female	98.2	0.3	0.2
Nitrazepam: N10 Sleep/anxiety medication		96.0	0.8	0.2
	Male	92.7	1.5	0.3
	Female	99.6	0.2	0.0
Diazepam: Anti-anxiety medication		99.1	0.2	0.0
	Male	98.5	0.3	0.0
	Female	99.9	0.0	0.0
Cough syrup: e.g. corex		93.2	4.2	0.4
	Male	95.0	2.6	0.1
	Female	91.9	5.9	0.5
Spasmo-proxyvon: SP Pain relief medication		97.2	0.8	0.1
	Male	95.9	1.6	0.1
	Female	99.7	0.0	0.0

Relepin: Pain relief medication		99.0	0.1	0.0
	Male	98.3	0.2	0.0
	Female	99.9	0.0	0.0
'Brown sugar': Lower grade heroin		98.8	1.4	0.1
	Male	98.4	0.4	0.0
	Female	99.4	0.4	0.1
Heroin		99.3	0.0	0.1
	Male	99.0	0.2	0.0
	Female	99.9	0.0	0.0

* The male and female percentages do not add up to the total percentage as there was an 'other' category.

Baba (chewing tobacco) had been used by 11.8%, with 2.4% using twice a week/daily, and cannabis use was reported by 11.8%, with 0.7% currently using twice a week/daily. Inhalants (e.g. glue, paint, petrol) had been used by 8.1%, with 0.5% currently using twice a week/daily, and cough syrup had been used by 6.8%, with 0.4% currently using.

Reported use of pharmaceutical medicines (anti-anxiety and sleeping medicines Nitrazepam (N10) and Diazepam, analgesics (pain relievers) Spasmoproxyvon (SP) and Relepin), and brown sugar and heroin was very low. Overall, more males had used substances, but more females reported use of cough syrup.

Reasons for use of various substances

Survey data revealed that the most popular reason for the use of various substances among the college students was *curiosity*, except for alcohol and cough syrup. For these college students, alcohol is consumed for *having fun* and cough syrup for *relieving pain*. The other most popular reasons for using various substances were the *influence of friends*, *media* and *stress*. Reasons such as *parental influence* and *boredom* played minor roles.

Perceived safety of substances

Most substances were perceived to be harmful to extremely harmful. For example, doma, despite its level of use, was viewed as harmful/extremely harmful by 58.5%, alcohol by 78.8%, *Baba* by 83.1% and tobacco by 86.1%. However, doma was reported as safe/mostly safe by 21.3% (with 20.3% not sure), and alcohol by 10.7%.

Cannabis was seen as safe/mostly safe by 4.6%, and harmful/extremely harmful by 82.5%. About 70%–80% viewed Nitrazepam, Diazepam, SP, Relepin, heroin and brown sugar as harmful/extremely harmful.

Sexual behaviour

The majority of students identified as heterosexual (92.3%), and 0.1% as gay, 0.1% lesbian, 1.2% bisexual, 4.8% as unsure and 1.1% as other. Less than half the sample (40.8%) was sexually active (33.7% male, 7.1% female), 14.5% before age 18.

Condom use was generally less than 50% overall. The main reasons offered for not using a condom were “not enjoying sex with a condom” (74.4%), “partner not wanting to use” (47.9%), and being “too drunk” (19.4%) or “forced not to use” (19.2%). About one in three males stated that they knew the risks of not using a condom, but “did not care” (male= 31%; female= 3.3%). Also of concern were the reported levels of “not knowing” if a condom had been used (10% to 19%).

In relation to the perceptions of the heterosexual students of those with non-heterosexual identification, 67.2% believed that “they were born non-heterosexual”, 7.7% that “they have a disease”, 13.4% that “they were influenced by the media or fashion” (0.7%). However, a generally tolerant attitude was evident with 78.2% saying they could have an “openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.” person as a friend.

Table 2: Mental health symptoms reported by college students in Bhutan (N = 2471) *

Symptom / % of the time	None	Little	Some	Most	Always
So sad nothing could cheer up	34.5	37.9	18.7	7.3	1.6
Male	42.3	35.0	15.1	5.9	1.7
Female	26.4	41.0	22.6	8.7	1.4
Nervous	22.8	34.5	33.6	7.6	1.4
Male	29.3	33.6	30.7	5.0	1.4
Female	15.7	35.2	37.1	10.6	1.4
Hopeless	27.9	30.4	26.3	12.3	3.1
Male	34.6	28.7	25.3	8.7	2.7
Female	20.5	32.1	27.7	16.2	3.5
Restless and fidgety	23.0	32.0	27.6	14.6	2.7
Male	27.6	30.5	26.4	13.1	2.4
Female	17.9	33.2	29.3	16.5	3.2
Everything an effort	26.0	27.7	24.4	14.2	7.7
Male	31.1	24.8	21.8	14.3	8.0
Female	20.6	31.4	27.0	14.2	6.9
Worthless	41.4	30.5	16.6	7.5	4.0
Male	48.2	28.5	14.8	5.7	2.7
Female	34.1	32.0	18.8	9.6	5.5

*The male and female percentages do not add up to the total percentage as there was an ‘other’ category.

Physical and mental health

About one in four students (41.1%) reported consulting a general practitioner, psychologist or psychiatrist in the past year.

While overall most students did not report symptoms of mental ill-health, about 10% reported experiencing some symptoms most of the time or always, for example: feeling sad (8.9%), nervous (9.0%), hopeless (15.4%) or worthless (11.5%). There were no significant differences between male and female students. Despite low reporting of current symptoms, 12.6% reported lifetime suicidal ideation, (4.2% male; 8.1% female; 0.3% others). Females were slightly more likely to report both suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. (See Table 2.)

Discussion

This survey of substance use, sexual behaviour and mental health in Bhutan was the first to specifically target college students. Overall, substance use among the college students surveyed was low, mental health concerns were identified by about 10%, and sexual risk behaviour by over 50% of sexually active students.

It is encouraging to note that the reported tobacco use in this study was lower than that found by Schofield (2013) and of secondary school students in the 2009 national survey (Panda, Wangdi et al. 2009). However, less than half of the students surveyed regarded its use as harmful/extremely harmful. Findings from this study suggest that if a majority of the college students do not consider tobacco use as harmful and/or see the potential health risks, they are likely to continue its use and/or condone its use.

The reported lifetime use of cannabis at 11.8% for male college students in the study was far lower than for the 2016 WHO student survey which found 28.3% of male secondary students had used cannabis at least once in their lifetime. This may be reflective of those gaining entry to tertiary education having lower experimental drug use during their secondary education. Use of doma appears to warrant attention, given known health risks, and despite cultural acceptance.

The extent of sexual risk-taking, consistent with other data from Bhutan, is concerning. These findings indicate that relevant stakeholders need to be proactive in educating young people about the consequences of sexual risk-taking.

It is likely that reporting of non-heterosexual identification is lower than could be expected, given anecdotal evidence and exploration of social media – e.g. LGBTIQ-themed sites and notice boards and “confessions” that include posts from Bhutan. This

may indicate that there is still fear, stigma and discrimination in the Bhutanese society as found earlier by the United Nations Development Programme (National ASIDS Control Programme (NACP) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2015).

The level of suicidal ideation reported (12.7%) and suicide attempts (3.7%), together with the data reported in the Suicide Prevention Plan (2015–2018) (Royal Government of Bhutan 2015) and reports in the media (BBS 2015) of increased incidence of death by hanging and jumping from bridges, raise concerns. They suggest the need for greater attention to college students' mental health, as well as that of the broader community.

The national suicide prevention plan (Royal Government of Bhutan 2015) notes that as students spend a significant time in school, teachers and others who interact with them daily are in a prime position to recognise the signs of depression and suicidality, and grief at the loss of peers by suicide, and to make appropriate referrals.

Thus, the role of teachers and school counsellors is important. Teachers are held in high regard in Bhutan, with a national Teachers' Day on 2 May. However, while teachers are certainly influential and role models, their knowledge and attitudes may not always be conducive to student wellbeing. The findings of this study indicate that many college students, including pre-service teachers, nurses and health workers, have a poor knowledge of drugs, and low condom use.

While the majority of college students in Bhutan will not become teachers, nurses or health or youth workers, graduates in various professions are held in high regard, and are also influential in their communities and workplaces.

Implications

The findings have implications for the pre-service education of teachers, particularly in improving knowledge in regard to life skills, health and wellbeing, no matter what subject areas/specialties, and of school counsellors. How to enhance teachers' factual knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, life skills and substance use for themselves and those they teach is a priority given the sexual risk behaviour, attitudes in relation to condom use and poor knowledge of substances used revealed in this study.

The findings also have implications for the health sector, particularly in regard to the training, attitudes and skills of primary health care workers, such as nurses, in relation to substance use, mental health and sexual and reproductive health issues of young people.

A review of curricula is required for a number of specific professional courses, particularly education and health, as their graduates are on the front line in the identification of mental

health and substance use concerns. Capacity building using evidence-informed health promotion approaches in schools, colleges and clinics is required.

It is vital that all agencies working with young people are cognisant of the health and development needs of young people, and ensure that they are met. Access to health information and services that are youth-friendly needs to be facilitated for all young people.

Integration of policies and responses and a whole-of-government approach are important, as is recognising that not all young people remain in school education. The National Youth Policy identified priority targets such as out-of-school, under-employed and unemployed youth, those engaging in risky sexual behaviour and using drugs and alcohol, young monks/nuns, girls working in drayangs (bars), and uneducated young women in urban and rural areas.

A perhaps more complex issue is how to reach parents and communities to promote healthy lifestyles, including raising awareness of substance use, mental health and sexual and reproductive health issues.

Limitations

There are several limitations that would have affected this study. The self-report survey questionnaire was lengthy and respondents took almost an hour to complete it. Some respondents may not have recognised the names of all the substances listed. Fear of identifying a sexual orientation other than heterosexual may have had an impact, and likewise for reporting drug use.

Conclusions

Although the current findings with regard to the situation of substance abuse, sexual behaviour and mental health of the surveyed college students in Bhutan are not alarming, there are enough reasons for various stakeholders such as educators, health workers and policymakers to be concerned. The problems associated with the use of substances such as doma and alcohol, risky sexual behaviour, and mental health concerns among the college students need to be addressed. In the long run, such issues have the potential to negatively impact quality of life, and thereby the national vision of Gross National Happiness. Education must remain a key policy area for the development of livelihood values, skills and attitudes.

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Do immersion tours have long-term transformative impacts on students?

A study of Australian university students in a Tibetan host community in India

Jen Couch* and Nichole Georgeou**

Immersion tours place a student in an unfamiliar context with the purpose of inducing a change in their worldview. While the literature on immersion tours indicates that, on the whole, students have a beneficial experience, the claims that such experiences are 'life changing' are untested. This article examines one cohort of Australian university students who visited the Tibetan community of Dharamsala in India in 2008 and whether the immersion was a transformative experience for them in the long term. While initially most students claimed to have been greatly changed by the experience, five years later none felt that the experience had been truly transformative. This conclusion highlights the need to be sceptical of claims that outbound mobility will transform all students' lives.

Key words: Immersion, transformation, outbound mobility, Freire

This article tests assumptions about the long-term “transformational” effects on students undertaking immersion study tours to developing countries. It explores the long-term impacts on 14 Australian Catholic University (ACU) youth work and sociology students of a short-term (one-month) immersion study tour to a Tibetan refugee community in Dharamsala, India. The article follows Freire’s (1970) understanding of “transformation” as the formation of a social consciousness, and Mezirow’s (1991) transformational

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learning theory that argues for action orientation fieldwork to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about the workings of society. Following Mezirow, critical analysis and critical reflection of educative experiences combine to assist individuals in reframing their worldview. We sought to identify whether ACU students' values, attitudes and behaviours toward issues of poverty and social justice had shifted long term in order to assess whether there had been any immediate transformation of their "social consciousness" in the short term, and to assess whether this had endured over a five-year period of time. Students were interviewed two weeks after their return to Australia in 2008 and again five years later in 2013.

We argue that for Australian students, the shift in worldview was temporary and that cultural lessons learned are not always transferable on return home; the difference between the immersion site and their usual environments is so profound that few, if any, of the lessons learned could be applied to their "normal" lives in Australia. At best, some students gained some insight into themselves and their assumptions, but others experienced little long-term impact from the immersion.

The article first discusses the aims of the immersion, the recruitment of students, the site of the study and the pedagogical framework for immersion tours and research methodology. It then details the reflections of students two weeks after their return to Australia and five years later. The third section analyses the types of transformations that took place and assesses if these were long-term. The final section presents some points for consideration for those planning immersion tours.

Part I: Background

Australia has mirrored a global trend that has seen a rapid rise of outbound student mobility programs, especially among undergraduate students. Since 2005, when the first major data collection in outbound mobility was undertaken, participation rates have more than doubled from 5% (Olsen 2008) to 13.1% in 2012 (Olsen 2013). Offering the opportunity to study or work abroad is now standard practice throughout the Australian university sector. Outbound mobility programs are becoming increasingly embedded in Australian university degrees as an opportunity for students to practice the skills learned in preparation for future employment as part of Work Integrated Learning (WIL). Outbound mobility programs have become incorporated into both postgraduate and undergraduate programs in universities worldwide (Palacios 2010; Baillie Smith & Laurie 2011; Lough 2013; Vrasti 2013) and are increasingly viewed as a way of maximising one's position in the job market (Tiessen & Huish 2013; McGloin & Georgeou 2016).

The Australian Government supports study abroad, including overseas practicums and volunteer experiences, in what it hopes will become a “Rite of Passage” (Bishop 2014) between university and full-time employment. The principle underpinning this policy follows from the 2012 White Paper *Australia in the Asian century*, which sought to have Australians become “Asia-literate and Asia-capable” so as to develop the skills required to compete in a globalising world. Australian universities have responded by further promoting outbound student mobility learning by integrating these experiences into formal curricula, and providing academic credit for these programs to develop “generic graduate qualities such as globally-oriented citizenship” and campus internationalisation more generally (Gothard, Downey & Gray 2012, p.8). Such an emphasis assumes that international experience will lead to cross-cultural understanding (Clyne & Rizvi 1998, p.7), by providing an opportunity for students to gain “inter-cultural competencies”, defined as culture-specific knowledge, tolerance and understanding toward other cultures (Davies & Pike 2009), at the same time, international experiences are touted by universities as being “transformational” for their students (Bamber 2016).

Immersion study tours are a form of experiential learning which typically involve intensive educational instruction and exposure to complex social issues, often taking students outside of their comfort zones to critically examine their own pre-conceived notions and biases (Sokol, Martle, Summers & Burke 2015). Jones et al. (2012) have examined the immediate impact of the immersion experience, but there are few studies on the long-term outcomes of short immersion experiences undertaken by university students. Bowman et al. (2010) conducted one of the few quantitative studies, demonstrating that well-structured immersion experiences can positively influence students’ attitudes and understanding of social justice issues. They suggested that short-term immersions can be as effective, and sometimes have a greater impact, than traditional semester-long courses. The impact areas that Bowman et al. (2010) and others have targeted for study are generally consistent with the intent and goals of most service-learning programs (Eyler 2002), including: instilling positive attitudes toward community engagement, deepening understanding of social issues, developing skills for community action and involvement, and enhancing a sense of personal agency and commitment. While it has been agreed that many students find these transformational in the short term, authors such as Kiely (2004), one of the few to have studied long-term impact (of 12 months), suggest that students struggle to sustain changes in their attitudes and actions after these experiences have ended.

Immersion study tours which include a component of practical engagement or volunteering with local communities is a mode of outbound “learning mobility”, where students spend a period of study in another country for academic recognition (Molony 2010). The overall aims of the immersion study tour to Dharamsala were to provide students with a “transformative” learning opportunity by living alongside Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala. The educational value of an international experience is generally understood through the lens of “experiential learning”, conceptualised as “learning by doing” and involving critical reflection (Pagano & Roselle 2009). Transformative Learning Theories (TLT) emphasise the combination of direct experience and critical reflection as central to facilitating a transformation in an individual’s perspectives, understood as a fundamental shift in one’s frame of reference for making sense of the world (Mezirow 1991; Dirkx 2008; Bell et al. 2016). While TLT argues that any experiential learning, if combined with critical reflection on the place of the self in society, can induce a change in the individual’s worldview, the question remains what length of transformational experience is required to induce lasting change. For example, can a one-week immersion be life changing in the sense of transformation and relationships of mutuality and solidarity with the host community, or is a longer experiential period of over six months required? And in a Frierean sense, must an individual come to identify with the economic and social reality of the host community for her experience to be truly transformative?

In line with Paolo Freire’s pedagogical framework, students were provided with opportunities to develop a critical consciousness through “shared austerity”, understood as opportunities to stand in solidarity with Tibetan refugees by personally participating in the lived experience of their day-to-day practical hardships (Pillard Reynolds & Gasparini 2015, p.41). Students stayed with Tibetan refugee families and engaged in community work. Facilitators initiated critical pedagogical interactions to nurture the dialectical relationship between students and their Tibetan refugee hosts through group problem-posing activities. Students also attended lectures and seminars delivered by Tibetan social workers, economists, former political prisoners, activists and community and religious leaders. It was anticipated that students would become politically engaged citizens (Freire 1970, p.90) through these mostly organic processes of human engagement and reflective interpersonal dialogue about lived experiences and history.

ACU anticipated that an international program for youth work students, involving an international immersion study experience in a developing country would assist student learning, particularly in terms of core professional values and knowledge relating to

human rights, social justice and cultural sensitivity, and to thereby encourage graduates to consolidate their commitment to these values in ongoing professional practice through opportunities to share and learn from different perspectives of social welfare policies and practices globally. The experience was also viewed as an opportunity to consider how international youth work may be incorporated into their professional knowledge base. It was also hoped that student activities while on placement would contribute in meaningful, ongoing ways to the Tibetan refugee community through engagement in social work, a key component of ACU's social justice mission.

Theoretical framework and methodological approach of the study

Freire (1970) referred the process of transformation as *conscientização* (critical consciousness raising) and theorised that such a critical awareness evolved through critical praxis involving a dialectical process with others about actual social conditions. Freire contended that social critique leads to social action as a political consciousness is developed. Our framework of analysis thus focused on participants' values, attitudes and behaviours toward issues of poverty and social justice. In particular, we aimed to assess whether participants thought more deeply about issues specific to their country and critically reflected on matters relating to their own culture, identities and privilege, whether they had acted on such critical reflections, and whether critical reflection and action had been sustained over time.

Method

Students were interviewed in 2008 around two weeks after they returned from the immersion study tour, and again five years later in 2013. Interview questions sought to gauge the impact of the overall aims of the program. In particular, we were interested in whether exposing students to life in an international refugee community helped the students to develop a greater sense of self-awareness, respect and appreciation of different cultural beliefs and practices, or if it assisted them in becoming more conscious and culturally sensitive regarding experiences of poverty and social injustice long term. Interviews in 2013 sought to explore the long-term impacts of the immersion experience and how, or whether, their values, attitudes and behaviours toward poverty and social justice had shifted long term. All students were provided with a gender appropriate pseudonym.

Dharamsala: context of the immersion site

Tibetan refugees first arrived in the Northern Indian town of Dharamsala in 1959 when they fled Tibet with the Dalai Lama due to the occupation of their homeland by China.

The then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, invited the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community to settle in McLeod Ganj (in Upper Dharamsala), a former British colonial hill station where the Tibetan government in exile, now known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), was established in 1960. From then onwards the Tibetan refugee community has re-established the key institutions central to Tibetan life, including the Tibetan Medical Centre, Tibetan Children's Village schools, the Institute of Tibetan Performing Arts, several monasteries and the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Together these institutions house over 100,000 manuscripts and written works of Tibetan culture, politics and history and are considered some of the most important institutions for Tibetan culture in the world.

India is host to around 95,000 Tibetan refugees (CTA 2010), and the population of Tibetan refugees who live in and around McLeod Ganj in Upper Dharamsala at the time of the tour was around 11,000. Tibetans have continued to build monasteries, temples and schools in the McLeod Ganj region. Tibetan refugees continue to arrive in Dharamsala with an average of 2000 to 2500 Tibetans seeking protection in India every year. Nearly half of these are young people aged 14 to 25, while 33% are adults aged 26 to 59, and 17% are young children aged 0 to 13. Only 5% of the refugees are over the age of 60 (Phuntso 2003, p.142). The settlement of adults (aged 18 and over) is an ongoing challenge as many arrive with histories of persecution and limited education. Due to the refugee influx, the town is a base for many local and international NGOs.

Recruitment and preparation for immersion

ACU's Bachelor of Youth Work required students to develop an in-depth understanding of cross-cultural and anti-oppressive practice, including an understanding the history, traditions, values and family support systems that underpin a young person's life. During the immersion it was anticipated that students would be required to use appropriate ways of counselling and support that reflected their understanding of the role of culture in the helping process. While the immersion unit was initially intended for Youth Work students only, due to a lack of numbers, it was decided that Social Science students with Youth Work and Sociology majors could apply. All students were in their second or third year of an undergraduate degree. Of the 14 students on the immersion study tour, 10 were Bachelor of Youth Work, and the other four were studying Bachelor of Social Science. Overall, the cohort travelling to India consisted of ten women and four men, all between the ages of 20 and 30. Twelve of the students had previously travelled outside of Australia, but only one of these had ever been to India. Two students had never left Australia, and one had never been outside of her home state. No student spoke Hindi

or Tibetan. The majority were of Anglo-Australian background from middle-income families.

Prior to the immersion study tour, students had little knowledge of the Tibetan refugee community in India. To address this, students participated in a weekend pre-departure preparation workshop which provided historical background information about the political, social, economic, educational, religious and cultural issues experienced by the Tibetan community in exile. The workshop also aimed to prepare students for living conditions with their host families and provided the students with the opportunity to ask questions about their fears and anxieties. It also aimed to address misinformation and assuage doubts. During the workshop, students engaged in basic group work and discussed the challenges of travelling with other people. Finally, pre-departure preparation also included providing information to students on acquiring visas, travel arrangements, vaccinations, healthcare, water and food.

The 2008 ACU immersion tour to Dharamsala

A stable on-going relationship with members of the Tibetan refugee community was needed for the immersion to be both an effective learning experience for the students and beneficial for the host community. In Dharamsala, ACU arranged and paid for a coordinator who was a social worker and welfare minister of the CTA. He and his wife were well-known community members and, at the time, ran a large community school, facilitating several social and vocational enterprises for Tibetan refugees. JC (co-author) accompanied the tour and was joined by her husband, a Tibetan activist and community worker who provided logistical assistance, such as arranging transport (mini buses to take the students from Delhi to Dharamsala), guest house accommodation, site visits, translation and also support for the host families, which included several visits during the students stays and intervening if problems arose.

Upon arrival in India, the cohort stayed in the Tibetan refugee community Majukatilla on the northern outskirts of Delhi. Before heading north, students spent two days visiting youth agencies that work with Indian street children, including the Salaam Balak Trust and Butterflies, an organisation run by working children.

After arrival in Dharamsala, students spent the first two nights in a guesthouse before moving to their host families, where they would stay for just under a month. Students were placed with host families based on an assessment of their individual needs; for example, students who had not travelled before were placed with a family who had family members of a similar age and could provide them with more intensive support. Students were made aware that Dharamsala was a refugee community and therefore

personal space was not something they could expect. Students were required to have breakfast and dinner with their host families but could eat out during the day.

The immersion program involved optional yoga classes in the morning, followed by lectures and seminars delivered by Tibetan social workers, economists, former political prisoners, activists, and community and religious leaders. For the first two weeks the afternoon activities involved visits to NGOs and the key Tibetan political, economic and cultural institutions noted above. There was also the opportunity to attend teachings by the Dalai Lama. At the end of each day, students would meet to share their learning, observations and emotional reactions to what they had seen and heard.

In week two, student community engagement placements were arranged with the aim of making some contribution to the community in meaningful, negotiated and mutually beneficial ways. The sites chosen were in line with youth work values of agencies that work with the most vulnerable populations, and where supervision was available. The initial intent was to provide students with valuable learning environments and to be of service to the agencies where the students were placed. The facilitators ran reflective workshops at the end of weeks one and two and provided extensive daily support, debriefing and consultation to students for the duration of the immersion experience.

In week three, students continued with their community engagement, undertook independent research and attended religious teachings that were being given by the Dalai Lama. Students were also in Dharamsala during the month of *Sakha Dawa* when the cohort undertook several trips away from Dharamsala to Buddhist holy sites, including visiting and donating to Tibetan nuns in meditation caves high in the Himalayan foothills.

Part II: Students' reflections on immersion – Australia 2008

All students described some form of perspective change as a result of the immersion program, however, the depth varied dramatically. When asked if they had experienced change in terms of their understanding of oppression, poverty and structural inequalities, some students said the immersion experience changed them forever and in unexpected ways, while several students noted it had not been as transformational as they had anticipated:

Things that I have learned and experienced on this trip will help me not only through my academic and working life but have far reaching effects into my own development as a person. Even after being back for two weeks I am still learning and growing as a result of my India trip. I think that perhaps this is the true value of what we have all just done.

Sam, female Youth Work student, 23

However, not all students envisioned such an in-depth change, with two saying this was because they failed to truly feel immersed during the trip:

I know that I should be saying this profoundly changed my life, especially as I am someone who believes in social justice and tries hard to live a good life. But I have been wondering what is wrong with me because I just didn't feel the depth of connection that others in the group did. I'm not sure if it is because I failed to connect with my host family – a lack of joint language was an issue, but I looked around and there were lots of travellers who seem part of the community, who spoke Tibetan and who were fully immersed. I couldn't help wondering what it took to get to that point.

Amy, female Social Science student, 19

Did I feel immersed? No, probably not. I found the living situation really hard, even though we had been prepared for what we were going in to. The lack of privacy, I felt sometimes constrained. I'm not very political and it was such a politically charged environment with all the Olympic [Beijing Olympics were held 8–24 August, 2008] stuff happening. I spent my whole time feeling like I was looking in but still so much on the outside.

Jade, female Social Science student, 21

Another student felt little change had actually occurred, which she ascribed to her motivation for participating in the immersion:

Looking back, I wish I had grasped the experience more. It was all there for the taking. I spent way too much time hanging in cafés with other students drinking chai. I should have been talking, watching and listening. Now I am in a job where I work with refugees and I wish I had just been more present. I think it's partly my motivation for going. I just wanted to complete my degree and it sounded easy.

Sarah, female Social Science student, 20

There were also differences in how the community engagement component of the immersion was experienced with respect to practising their skills. These differences appeared to be situated around preconceptions the students had rather than an actual ability to cope with the placement:

All these things we learn in class, how to give the young person self-determination, privacy and confidentiality and all the other ethical values we are used to ... were not fully observed or practised effectively as I had expected.

I left my placement after the first day because I was so shocked at the lack of professionalism shown by local staff. I was told I would feel culture shock when I got here. But I didn't. I didn't when I saw where they lived, what they ate, nothing. I didn't have cultural shock until I sat in on a session with a young drug user.

Ben, male Youth Work student, 26

Several students said that they lacked confidence in displaying their skill set:

I felt like I was really passive – just observing. I knew I had a skill set but couldn't put it out there. Even when I was encouraged to do so, I couldn't accept the challenge.

Laura, female Youth Work student, 20

Some felt their skills were not utilised:

I had to constantly remind the organisation that I had the skills of interviewing, assessment, problem-solving, group work and case management that they could tap for their daily activities. I felt that my expertise was underutilised.

Diana, female Youth Work student, 20

I initially felt frustrated and even anxious that we were spending only two hours per day giving lessons. The rest of our days were spent cooking, playing with the kids, carrying water and taking lessons. These tasks seemed less important to me than our school community engagement, and I thought we should be doing more work in the schools. I began to think the program I was working with was being ineffective, which made me even more upset.

Max, male Social Science student, 20

Differing experiences

Long term, all students noted that both the immersion and the group process provided unexpected opportunities for exploration and self-discovery. This appeared surprising to many as they had not taken the immersion unit with the intention of learning about themselves. Several students noted the importance of unearthing new personal insights and gained new perspectives:

India questions you. It challenges your core being, your knowledge of yourself, your heart, your mind and your faith. It shows you compassion, humility, love, frustration, patience and beauty. Dharamsala has broken, opened, revealed and mended my heart. How can you not be affected by these wonderful people? My host family has taught me more about my own family values than anything in my

life. I've not lived with my family for 10 years so [family] is pretty new to me, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

Abbey, female Youth Work student, 26

I could begin by reflecting on hours by hours, my experiences from morning to night, yet after meeting with my first political prisoner speaker, I can only start from this very moment. To begin with, it was such an honour to hear his story. To read is one thing, but to hear face-to-face took me into emotional shock. His devotion to his beliefs and people is one that I have never encountered and it moved me to tears out of admiration, respect, sadness and anger towards a world that does not take steps in condemning the oppression of torture. I cannot comprehend having my freedom stripped from me with such brutal force. At this point in time, I feel to say any more will not only not justify what I heard but also take away the deeper emotion that I feel.

Mark, male Youth Work student, 25

Students' reflections on immersion – Australia 2013

In interviews five years later, 12 of the original cohort of 14 were interviewed. Questions asked focused on the long-term impact of the trip and if it changed their thinking about poverty and social justice. All noted the difficulty in transferring their new knowledge and raised consciousness to Australian society. The majority noted that over time it became an incredible challenge to put their new political awareness into action. The realisation of how difficult applying new knowledge would be often happened soon after return to Australia:

When I first got back, I really wanted everyone to know about the Tibetan situation and this huge injustice that had taken place. How is it that we have allowed genocide to take place? But I really felt that no-one understood me or gave a shit. I remember wearing one of those t-shirts that said "China is raping Tibet" ... my poor mum asked me to stop wearing it ... she said it was too full-on and would confront people. The Olympics were on, and every time I mentioned China's occupation of Tibet, people kept saying how great it was that China was hosting and how the Tibetans needed to get over it. I actually felt there was no point saying or doing anything ... a lone voice in the suburban wilderness!

Sam, male Bachelor of Youth Work

I don't know. I guess a lot of people were asking me "How did it go? What was it like?" I thought that was kind of hard describing in some ways, just like the stark contrast and just like poverty there. For the most part, if they asked me

how it was, I would just say “good”. It was a life-changing experience for sure. I usually told people that, it was life changing. At which time they say “Oh yeah”, and we never talk about it again.

Alicia, female Bachelor of Youth Work

Coming home was ghastly. I missed having friends no longer living nearby – it all came as a shock despite having known what to expect. I found myself overwhelmed and excited by the options at the supermarket. And I found that toilet bowls filled up with way too much water. But despite all the shock from being back in Australia, I found comfort in being home; in falling back into my old habits of blasting country radio in my beat up car, driving past the beach, to eating an early(ish) dinner (and lobster!) and drinking espressos in my parents’ kitchen ... and, quickly, it all just went back to normal. I find it way too easy to go back to my regular life and regular things.

Amy, female Bachelor of Social Science

Even where students noted that they had felt a deep transformation while in India, they felt acting on this once they returned was problematic. Several students noted problems reintegrating, applying and coming to terms with what they had learned:

What I took from the Tibetans most was this quietness and gentleness of spirit. I realised when I was there that my suffering is much less than what many have endured. I made a commitment there that I would be more mindful, more generous in spirit. I try hard to incorporate that in my work, but it’s so hard to go against the mainstream. You are trying to treat people with compassion and your boss is carrying on about meeting targets.

Sarah, female Bachelor of Social Science

I think one of the biggest things I learned from the Tibetan culture is they tell you to live small. I think in a way there are lots of possessions you have, but realising that we have an entire world around us ... luxuries and other things. We have to understand that we are sharing everything in this world ... but you know, I found it really hard to live like that. I married an American and they are big people ... big everything, and now I seem to have all that I resisted on returning home.

Matt, male Bachelor of Youth Work

I’m actually a little ashamed to say, especially to you, how little I integrated the whole experience into my life ... I mean, remember the day we left there? I kept looking back up the hill and thinking, I will not walk away from you or leave you behind,

but in reality that's what I did. I came back, for a few weeks I lived more simply than normal, which was something I wanted to do ... and then it all just went back to how it was, going out, shopping, planning a trip and, yeah, I didn't look back.

Sam, female Bachelor of Youth Work

In discussing this, several students used phrases such as “having their eyes opened”, rather than a long-term transformation. It was evident that while students had logically learnt a lot during the trip there was a distinct lack of reference to an emotional change, which indicated there had been a limited impact on their identity and life:

I came back [home] having had my eyes opened to poverty and human rights, both issues that really I had paid very little attention to. I guess I came back with a heightened awareness of something that is important locally as well as in terms of federal policy. But I didn't find it a deeply emotional experience or anything like that. So it wasn't that when I came home, I didn't feel any sense of, I don't know, it wasn't an emotional thing. It was much more of an intellectual realisation ... Another student described this as a life-changing experience, so different people respond it to a different ways.

Adam, male Bachelor of Youth Work

Adam claimed Alicia had had a transformative experience, and it was clear that Alicia had indeed experienced intense emotions. Several times during the trip she cried at the suffering she saw and was often emotional when refugees recounted their stories. When asked what it was like to return home, she replied:

It was confusing because I was very rapidly getting pulled back into my normal life and priorities and stresses. I felt like I was not following up on the moving experience that I had had. It was confusing of whether or not I was spending my time wisely [back at home]. What I rationalised, is that what I do for a living does do a lot of good things for a lot of people in the world ...

Alicia, female Bachelor of Youth Work

Alicia's account of the trip being powerful would seem to indicate evidence of someone who had a transformative experience through immersion. What was surprising was that although the conditions for transformation seemed apparent, by the time of the 2013 interview there was limited evidence of any long-term change.

Changes in thinking about poverty and social justice

Nearly all students mentioned that they felt more appreciative after witnessing poverty, although several other students spoke about the way the trip reconfirmed already existing

thoughts about poverty and social justice:

It's true, that trip was a major challenge for me. It pushed me outside of my comfort zone and I learned a lot about how others live outside of Australia. I am not saying that I came back the exact same person – obviously an experience like that had an impact on me – but I didn't come home with this profound new outlook on life. Spending time in India made me have a great appreciation for all the opportunities and luxuries (big and small) that we have in Australia.

Sarah, female Bachelor of Social Science

In this way the immersion reaffirmed an already existing way of thinking. For instance, one student who had been part of several social justice projects working with the homeless in Australia noted:

Did it make me think about poverty and social justice? Yes, of course, how could it not? But it didn't really change me as such. I know the immersion trip wasn't volunteering but I guess because we did the community engagement it really made me think about it. The problem I see with volunteering and immersion is that it often walks a fine line between empathetic involvement and "humanitarian douchery"; [you are] putting a lot of money on a trip in order to work on something a local could just as easily be paid to do (and would love to be paid to do), while remaining generally unaware of the complex root issues that caused the problems you are supposedly going to help "fix". I had already been thinking about this before I left, and the trip confirmed that for me.

Adam, male Bachelor of Youth Work

Part III: Discussion

Friere viewed transformation as affecting both the visitor and the host community. While ACU intended a Frierian transformational experience for its students, it is clear that the students did not conceptualise or experience the immersion in the same terms. At the same time it could be argued that the immersion study tour embedded existing binaries and stereotypes as the host families viewed the students as a financial opportunity, noting their general lack of interest in connecting in human terms with their host family and the Tibetan refugee community more broadly.

Given the one-month duration of the immersion it is reasonable to ask if any form of profound transformation could be expected? While students did note an awareness of the historical, political and economic struggle of the Tibetan refugee community, their most common experience was a sense of disconnect in terms of on-going relations

and solidarity with their hosts. While some felt transformed on their initial return to Australia in 2008, over the next five years students did not apply their critical consciousness to political activism within Australia, indicating that whatever lessons or solidarity they thought they had gained did not “stick” with them. While this is a very small sample, the durability of the student transformation appears to have been short-lived.

The failure to develop deep, cross-cultural interest and engagement that would resonate through students’ lives could be attributed to poor program design; however, the ACU cohort had intensive preparation, which included discussion of poverty, globalisation and colonialism, the plight of the Tibetan community globally, the political circumstances of Tibetans in India and the international claims by Tibet for sovereign statehood. In addition to pre-departure and in-country lectures from a range of Tibetan community organisations and representatives, students had the opportunity to live in Tibetan refugee homes with Tibetan families and to eat regularly alongside their hosts; however, the students’ evident detachment from their Tibetan hosts is evidence of what Uusimaki and Swirski (2016, pp.428-29) argue is “cross cultural distance”, which itself reflects a superficial approach to service learning and cosmopolitanism. It is possible that this cross-cultural distance articulates with Butin’s (2003, p.1675) argument that the depiction of “technical” and “cultural” perspectives of service learning correspond with students engaging in international practicums that seek to extend their technical capabilities. A stronger critique might describe such programs as the 2008 ACU immersion study tour to Dharamsala as “marketised” internationalisation and “corporate cosmopolitanism” (Sidhu & Dall’Alba 2012, p.428).

The above critiques are salient reminders for an Australian university sector that is keen to engage in student global mobility and which is marketing such programs as transformative experiences for students. Clearly such claims of transformation need to be more rigorously assessed and treated with some caution. Indeed, some scholars (Simpson 2004; Palacios 2010; Georgeou 2012; McGloin & Georgeou 2016) have argued that rather than immersion experiences being transformative in terms of altering a student’s worldview, such immersion experiences may actually serve to entrench existing assumptions and binaries that reflect current global power inequalities.

Conclusions

The findings from this study of one immersion tour raise the question of how to foster a sense of commitment to distant communities visited by Australian students. It has

raised important questions about the operational principles of short-term immersions that involve students “passing through” the lives and communities of distant others. As this article has shown, even with the best-intended preparation, the “transformation” was fleeting for those who participated in this program. We do not pretend to have the formula for how enduring transformation in worldview can be fostered by immersion tours, and the debate will no doubt continue on what “transformational experience” means in the context of the modern Australian student immersion programs.

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Whakapiri–Whakamarama– Whakamana

A reflective framework for connection, participation and change

Nicola A. Hurst*

As youth development in Aotearoa New Zealand is enhanced by professionalisation and becomes more common and visible, practitioners are required to become more considered, evidence-based and transparent. Building upon lessons learnt from similar therapeutic professions, this article briefly explores the challenges existing fields have had in moving beyond the idea that the practitioner knows best. It suggests the benefits of reflective practice and proposes the use of a model developed in Aotearoa in order to ensure intentional practice and authentic participation. The Whakapiri–Whakamarama–Whakamana model is introduced as a framework for reflection, both in the moment and post-session. It explores opportunities to use this model to measure the effectiveness of our practice to support connection and empowerment of taiohi/young people in Aotearoa and meet the challenge we all face in aligning to the principles of the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa.

Key words: youth development, reflective practice, framework, YDSA, New Zealand Aotearoa

Youth development in Aotearoa New Zealand is an exciting, emerging field within the broader social services area. As a sector we have recently celebrated the professionalisation of our peak body, Ara Taiohi, and the formation of its membership branch, Korowai Tupu. We work in diverse areas, with mixed groups of young people and within the constraints and challenges of shifting funding models. Within this space we are continuing to develop useful ways to discuss and reflect upon our practice. By

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their very nature these conversations contain a variety of viewpoints, ways of being, opinions and practices.

“How do we know what we do does?” was a favourite challenge of a colleague to his students (B. Robinson, personal communication). It is a courageous question for us all. It asks us not simply what we do, but to consider what the effects of that work may be. Echoing that question is: how do we know if what we do is useful for the young people we are working alongside? And how do we let them lead in answering that?

The purpose of this paper is to present a framework developed in Aotearoa for use both in practice and for reflection, a framework that has space for varying viewpoints and allows for authentic participation. Having been developed in New Zealand, Whakapiri–Whakamarama–Whakamana (WWW) creates space for all worldviews, with an emphasis on connection and relationships (Lang & Gardiner 2014). Lastly, WWW also aligns well with the principles of the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa (YDSA), ensuring that it meets the needs of our taiohi/young people and the sector.

The Aotearoa New Zealand context

In 2016 it was estimated there were 850,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 24 living in Aotearoa (Statistics New Zealand 2017). These young people face challenges and opportunities that are unique to their time and place. Conversations continue around access to services, supports, sexuality, mental health, education and housing. Youth workers advocate with and alongside young people around areas as diverse as jobs, jails, voting and daily life. Together we operate in online worlds and discover new ways to test and try out identities. Those working with young people here passionately support and facilitate these conversations and aim to provide strengths-based support as young people face these challenges and opportunities (Ministry of Youth Affairs (MYA) 2002).

Those of us working with young people also reflect in our conversations both on our place within this sector and on the legitimacy of our practice in and of itself (Emslie 2016). We are engaged by funding, scarcity and supervision. We discuss codes of ethics, participation, authenticity, new tools and how we walk in our worlds in ways that make sense to us. And always there is that overarching conversation around the opportunities and challenges of professionalisation.

Within and around these conversations lies our place in the social services structure of New Zealand. We operate within a politically constructed landscape engaging in an experiment called “social investment”, a funding model that in part asks us to demonstrate an ability to meet success targets, measure impacts and compete with one

another in ways that are mandated to be “client-centric” but with specific and challenging parameters. Service providers have a clear directive that any investment of government funds must be targeted, with clear expectations of outcomes and change that service providers will be able to demonstrate and record (MYD 2015). This, of course, creates tensions between managing the sheer volume of our caseload and the aspects of case-management in which we engage with our young people in genuinely authentic and co-constructed ways.

We have a long history of youth development in New Zealand (Beals 2014), and as we move into the future we need both the respect of international practice and the heart of Aotearoa-based research to shape our tools and create a space in which we construct our own ways forward. And, if we are savvy, we can use the lessons learnt in similar sectors to ensure that our work is truly participatory and youth led.

What we can learn from others

In order to meet these competing interests and do the work that we see as crucial and necessary, we need the ability to reflect in a way that is constructive and robust. There remains a growing need for peer review, supervision, transparency and mentorship (Emslie 2016). Within this space there are opportunities to develop the tools we use to serve our unique needs here in Aotearoa, tools that are culturally appropriate and world-leading (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata 2010).

We can learn much from existing research in similar fields and from those that came before. Increasingly, those working with young people in schools and the community come from a counselling, psychotherapy or social work background, and often these people will develop into youth workers, or, in our increasingly transdisciplinary workplaces, youth workers will work alongside those from these professions. These vocations share a similar core purpose of supporting others to attain wellness but may approach the work in a number of very different ways. As we share our work and our experiences we have the opportunity to grow together and learn from one another. And as youth development is a relatively new research space, it seems useful to review the findings from these similar fields in social services in order to bolster our own practice, grow from the experiences of others and create genuinely connected ways of being with young people.

In reviewing the effectiveness of counselling and psychotherapy, Rennie (1994) and Hill et al. (1993) discovered that those working in helping professions believe they know when what they are doing is working; the evidence, however, shows this is not the case.

Current youth development researchers echo the challenge of this space and can also struggle to find usefulness in client-based feedback measures (Emslie 2016).

Rennie (1994) suggests that clients frequently “defer” to their therapists for reasons ranging from a need to be seen as good clients, protection of the relationship, fear and powerlessness and a perception of the professional as an expert. Through this deference the client will:

- express agreement with therapists when they actually disagree with them;
- withhold critical or challenging comments;
- conceal negative reactions and feelings;
- overlook/make allowances for therapists’ mistakes;
- not ask questions about things that are not understood; and
- try to see things from the therapist’s perspective.

Hill et al. (1993) tell us that 65% of therapists’ clients leave at least one thing unsaid during sessions; 46% keep important information from their therapists, and around 50% of this is of a sexual nature.

Further evidence suggests that in order to counter these findings we need to engage in truly open reflective practice that incorporates some form of client-led feedback – no matter how challenging (Duncan, Miller & Sparks 2011). Success has been seen in the use of client-informed feedback measures that have been developed for the Aotearoa context, yet many remain skeptical of clients’ abilities to know what works for them (Drury 2007; Emslie 2016).

Many in the helping professions fall into arguments around the usefulness of their preferred way of working (Cooper 2008). What we know from meta-analysis of counselling, psychotherapy and other therapeutic interventions suggests that these debates are semantic and that true connection allowing for positive outcomes occurs within the context of the relationship that is developed (Asay & Lambert 2010). In youth development circles we tend to understand this inherently; the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa (YDSA) embeds its elements and reiterates throughout the need for authentic relationships (MYA 2002).

However, it is up to the practitioner to envision how these relationships are developed, by what methods, and to what degree they will allow young people to lead this process. Reflective practice, supervision and feedback-informed practice are designed to support

the practitioner in putting aside inherent biases and to work in a useful and successful way (Asay & Lambert 2010).

Participation and authenticity

In the context of youth development, we argue for authentic opportunities for youth participation, and many of us ascribe to Hart (2008) and Shier's (2001) ladders of participation as frames to ensure our connection and authenticity. But when it comes to the actual tools we use to achieve this, we need to remain conscious of not falling back on "what we know is best" without reflecting on whether or not we are meeting authentic, participatory goals (Mearns & Cooper 2005).

Participation is challenged when the tools in our *kete* are old, outdated, and non-Aotearoa models of work that we rely upon without question. Or, in an effort to challenge ourselves, these tools may have been adapted to our context, but without any robust evidence base that this adaptation is useful, working or able to be reviewed/assessed for usefulness.

Furthermore, in attempting to gather the evidence that what we are doing is useful, we risk becoming so bogged down in the attention paid to the delivery of our work and its impact that we are more concerned with technique rather than connection. Mearns and Cooper (2005) argue that a focus on technique is likely to have three main issues:

- When we are focusing on implementing a tool, we aren't connecting with the person or group in front of us. Our attention has shifted from relational to procedural.
- In relating to people through a technique, we aren't seeing them as unique. We become distracted by watching out for what we think we are looking for, or outcomes that we are hopeful of, at the cost of true connection.
- While we are using tools and techniques to connect with others we often miss out on creating a relationship based on ourselves. We may do so in a seemingly reflexive and natural way, but without reflection [we] can fall into autopilot at the cost of our own authenticity.

By shifting the focus to youth-led work from a place of authenticity, we allow ourselves to acknowledge the need to co-create space with our young people, and in doing so, let them lead us in what works for them (Shier 2001). Our challenge remains to be open to looking critically and realistically at how we achieve this. And if we are able to learn from the research above, then reflective practice and a focus on relationships can give us the tools to meet this challenge (Duncan, Miller & Sparks 2011).

What about the YDSA?

In Aotearoa, youth development is grounded by the six principles provided in the YDSA by the (now) Ministry of Youth Development (MYA 2002). These were developed through extensive consultation with young people and the sector and are supported by a rich evidence base. One purpose of these principles is to provide guidance for those developing policies and programs in youth development. These principles outline a need for youth development to be:

- shaped by the big picture
- providing positive connections
- strengths-based
- occurring in positive relationships
- triggered when young people fully participate
- evidence-based, able to be evaluated and transparent (MYA 2002).

These principles provide effective guidelines to our sector and challenge us to engage in practices to ensure that we do so. One way to ensure that this occurs is the use of reflective practice.

There are many ways to practice reflectively and also many ways to engage positively with young people. A model of reflective practice that also requires us to make space for youth participation would be ideal. It would also be useful if this framework challenged us to remain open to our young people's needs and not to our preferred way of working. It needs to challenge us, make us brave and let us be vulnerable and alongside our clients (Brown 2010). Finally, it needs to be grounded in evidence-based practice, able to be reviewed and discussed, and robust enough to be critically engaged with (MYA 2002).

The framework: *Whakapiri–Whakamarama–Whakamana*

Massey University academics Lang and Gardiner (2014) in consultation with kaumatua/elder Mason Durie, developed an Aotearoa framework for pluralistic counselling that potentially fits this purpose. The core qualification of pluralistic work asks that the practitioner accepts that many different ways of being work for our clients, and if we want to know what these are, then we should ask them (Cooper & McLeod 2007). This premise, if accepted, seems to mirror the needs of the authentic youth participation in which we see young people lead and negotiate spaces with those who work with them (Hart 2008). It also requires us to consistently and transparently address the six principles of the YDSA (MYA 2002).

The framework Lang and Gardiner (2014) developed sees practitioners work with clients through three steps – from Whakapiri (connection/engagement), to Whakamarama (clarification/collaboration), to the achievement by the client of Whakamana (empowerment/agency). This framework ensures that we meet the pluralistic ideal of asking our clients what they want, and how they want to do it, or conversely, the YDSA’s ideal where effective youth work occurs when young people are given authentic opportunities to participate.

The framework may be used overtly as a tool with an individual or a group, but also as a way to frame our practice and ensure reflection both in the moment and afterwards in personal review or supervision (Lang & Gardiner 2014). The framework also asks us to complete this cycle as many times as needed. The end of the work is guided by the individual’s or group’s growing sense of whakamana/empowerment and ensures the process gives the power and agency to those engaging with it.

Using Whakapiri–Whakamarama–Whakamana in practice

The intention behind proposing WWW as a framework is to allow for the creation of a space that is responsive to our young people and that authentically allows for them to lead the process. However, in order for it to be useful, the practitioner needs to ensure that they have ways to use it – in the moment and afterwards – that work for them. The key concepts are explained below and presented as either “in practice” as a guide for use when working with young people, or “in reflection” to support use in, for example, supervision, discussion with colleagues or reflective journaling.

Whakapiri – connection/engagement

In practice – This is where we develop or deepen our relationships. This is the space in which we are able take time to get to know each other, why we are here and to develop trust. Culturally, this space is crucial to acknowledge who we are as people and to ensure that whatever rituals are appropriate or necessary may be followed (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata 2010). Here, we listen and accept and use our empathy to create connection and allow others to feel supported, heard and comfortable (Brown 2010). Here, also, we acknowledge that for effective work to occur we must first have a solid relational foundation (Duncan, Miller & Sparks 2011).

In reflection – This is where we are asking ourselves how we were able to be with our young people. Principle four of the YDSA states that youth development happens through quality relationships (MYA 2002). *Whakapiri* asks us to prioritise relationship building from the start and examine the processes we engage in to connect with others.

It challenges us to justify how we began our work and also how we deepened our relationships in that space.

Whakamarama – clarification/collaboration

In practice – This stage is where we co-create the space in which we will work and ascertain the goals we hope to achieve. This is also where the fifth principle of the YDSA – youth development, when young people fully participate – is triggered and most visible (MYA 2002). This space encourages us to work together to consider interventions, tools or ways of working, or may be a place to jointly review how things are going. We are able to confirm goals, collaborate with our young people around what they hope to achieve or ways of being with each other. And in doing so we are remaining intentional in our practice: our work must be strengths-based (principle 2), informed by the big picture (principle 1) and evidence-based (principle 6). In collaborating we are building upon the earlier *whakapiri* – connection/engagement. If we are not able to collaborate here, it would be a clear indication that more *whakapiri* is required.

In reflection – This is where we look at how we worked and what tools we may have used. We should be thinking critically about the *mana* (value, courage, respect) underpinning this work. Does it genuinely create space for participation? Is it intentional? Has our work engaged and built upon our relationships? Is it time to move on? Is it grounded in evidence and best practice? And crucially, are we working within the framework of the YDSA?

Whakamana – empowerment/agency

In practice – At this point we encourage the individual or group to lead based on what they have developed in the earlier two stages. This may mean supporting young people to fully plan out or execute their goals or, conversely, to celebrate the work completed so far. It is about celebrating the strengths and courage developed together to move on into self-sufficiency.

In reflection – This is where we examine what was achieved. How do we know that we have empowered our young people? Where to from here – back to *whakapiri* or out into the world? Are you able to actively step back or are you still required? If this an ending, how so? It is an acknowledgement of goals attained and a chance to review where to next.

This cycle may occur many times during a single session or activity with young people, or it may occur over a number of weeks or months. And in supporting young people to plan the work we do with them, we may even choose to use the framework to make

these plans. WWW can also be a useful way to frame notes for supervision or within any reflective journaling or planning that may be required.

In essence, WWW is a cyclical framework that begins with culturally responsive relationship building. It challenges all parties to work together towards a goal they have negotiated; however, by incorporating the YDSA we ensure that the young people *lead*, and that they have the tools and support to do so.

Conclusion

During the recent “Evidence to Action” conference, Professor Kristy Muir argued that social change is possible if we can be clear about what the problem is that we are trying to solve, and about the importance of measuring what matters for the people who matter (Muir 2016). WWW is intended as a framework to assist those working with *taiohi* young people to develop as reflective practitioners and, in doing so, help youth workers to remain focused on what matters for the people who matter.

The early focus of *Whakapiri* on relationships allows for diverse cultural needs to be acknowledged and integrated. *Whakamarama* occurs when *taiohi*/young people make use of the space to decide what and how they would like to engage. And *Whakamana* celebrates the work achieved, the strengths built upon and the authentic engagement that has occurred. The cyclical nature of the framework allows for creativity, and ensures that any plans are goal focused and useful. The framework aligns cohesively with the YDSA and celebrates and emphasises building a solid relationship in order to allow for youth-led work to occur that connects *taiohi* and builds them up.

In the constantly evolving and challenging sector we work in, WWW has the potential to ground us and give us a way to ensure that we are working within the principles of the YDSA. It also allows for us to be clear in our purposes, flexible in our execution, and to reflect on what is working for us and our *taiohi* from a core of authentic relationships with one another.

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Case management and post-release young people

Joel Robert McGregor*

Case management plays a central role in the control of young people who participate in crime and then re-integrate into the community. In the course of their work, case managers must negotiate complex interpersonal relationships with their clients. These relationships mean that the case manager will often become both a confidante and friend to their client while fulfilling their role as a mandatory governmental reporter. This paper draws on qualitative interviews conducted with case managers working with post-release young people, to critically investigate the practices of case management. The paper also draws on Foucauldian notions of disciplinary power to interrogate the interpersonal dimensions of case management in the context of the government of welfare. In this regard, the article proposes that to work effectively with post-release young people, case managers must establish a relationship of trust with the client, and exercise discipline through the interpersonal technique of friendship.

Key words: youth justice, case management, youth support programs, Foucault

In 2014, Greg Smith, the then Minister of Justice in the Government of New South Wales (NSW), Australia, announced a \$12-million-dollar, three-year funding scheme for “vulnerable young people who are at risk of becoming entrenched in the criminal justice system” (Smith 2014). This program, known as the Joint Support Program, addressed the “criminogenic risks of young people” through a case management model of service delivery (Moore 2003, p.6). As a model of early intervention and prevention, the Joint Support Program exemplifies how case management is becoming increasingly prevalent within public policy discourse and as a standardised mechanism for the state management of youth. Such programs draw upon the paradigm of public health behaviours of risk

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to focus on criminogenic risks or predictive factors of recidivism. These programs, therefore, situate young people within a specific set of ideas, or a “discourse” of risk. As a scientific or evidence-based solution, risk-factor analysis creates the individualised risk subject. The regulation imposed on the risk subject allows for the exhibition of state intervention towards this population of young people that the general public so fear, yet it ignores the causes of social problems and further perpetuates the discourse of delinquent or dangerous individuals (see France 2008).

This paper uses a Foucauldian framework of analysis to provide a theoretically informed understanding of case management practice. The starting point for the analysis below is the concept of the discursive construction of populations (Foucault 1991), which describes how young people come to be governed. In this context, risk assessment tools create a regime of truth whereby post-release young people are made governable through techniques and rationalities that define and construct them as dangerous, a knowledge that allows for the operation of power. Here I will use the notion of disciplinary power as a way of thinking through the case manager–client relationships that take place within this context.

More broadly, this paper argues for continued discussions of the case manager–client relationship that goes beyond the current practice literature of “establishing good relationships”, “establish[ing] rapport” or “setting boundaries” (Frankel & Gelman 2012, pp.73, 78). In doing so, the nuances involved in the management of the case manager–client relationship would be better understood. In particular, the paper contends that case management operates to discourage recidivism by employing techniques of friendship as technologies of discipline that aim to produce, in the first instance, a governable subject and, at the conclusion of the program, a self-governing disciplined subject. It is the understanding of these practices of case management which fall outside of the current policy and bureaucratic rationality.

Methodological considerations

This paper draws upon data collected for a study that investigates the role of the case manager in the (re-)integration journey of young people who have participated in crime. Twenty-one qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with case managers from nine non-government organisations located in Northern NSW. Recruitment was undertaken by contacting organisations directly and asking for their participation. Following data collection, interpretive themes were established and transcripts were coded accordingly. It became apparent that the case managers considered the negotiation of personal relationships with clients to be a critical aspect of their work.

This negotiation informed the delivery of the case management. The case managers in this study moved between the traditional pastoral role of social or youth work and the brokerage model of case management. They would work one-on-one with their clients to achieve desired outcomes yet would refer them to a range of services when required. This blended delivery method required the case manager to build a trusting relationship with their client while maintaining boundaries so as not to create a relationship of co-dependency. Further, participants within this study worked between the principles of Risk-Needs-Responsivity and the Good Lives Model. However, the analysis below is informed by Risk-Needs-Responsivity where a negotiation of power/knowledge subjected clients to disciplinary technologies. The merging of different forms of practice, I would argue, is reflective of the case managers' personal and professional histories. It is these complexities of case management practice that this paper interrogates.

Discursive production of populations

In Australia, case management is the primary mode of service delivery for juvenile and adult detainees released from penal institutions. It is a "generic term" for the definition of different methods of intervention used across a variety of welfare sectors (White & Graham 2010). Before engaging with a service, clients will have been scored through the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Many jurisdictions within Australia, including Juvenile Justice NSW, use the YLS/CMI as their primary risk assessment tool. The risk score, determined through the identification of criminogenic needs, outlines predictive factors of recidivism (Ward & Stewart 2003, p.127). The needs or risk factors include a lack of prosocial activities, antisocial personalities and behaviours, inappropriate parental monitoring, and substance abuse (Andrews & Bonta 2010, p.310).

The YLS/CMI purports to allow the case manager to judge the client based upon their "total situation" and address the "needs and problems found in the assessment" (Summers 2012, p.43). The risk assessment tool has been developed around two assumptions. First, "a young person's criminal activity is caused by a complex network of variables (individual characteristics and circumstances)". And, second, "interventions with high-risk youth can be effective in reducing recidivism provided the interventions are targeted to a young person's criminogenic needs and are delivered effectively" (Hoge & Andrews 2011, as cited in NSW Government, n.d.). This risk assessment tool rests on the assumption of the deficit of young people whereby they can be subject to discipline and regulation.

Case management programs are a form of moral regulation where the clients' "conduct, values or culture" is problematised in comparison to other young people's, and discipline is imposed upon them (Hunt 1999, p.1). Case managers provide young clients with referrals to mental health or drug and alcohol services, advice for gaining employment, recommendations for enrolling in education, and assistance in finding suitable accommodation (Frankel & Gelman 2012). These referrals, while important, reflect a problematising of current conduct and a focus on ways of preventing re-offending. Hence, when working with a client, the case managers' roles extend beyond providing access to relevant resources to a mode of governing where they utilise interpersonal relationships. As White and Graham (2010, p.90) suggest:

Helping offenders basically means providing them with the resources, the programs and the opportunities to forge new ways of living and interrelating with those around them.

Andrews and Bonta (2010) advise that the case manager can reduce recidivism if the program appropriately targets the criminogenic needs of the client. Case management serves to maximise the "personal and social functioning and independence" of post-release young people (Moore 2003, p.6). However, case management places its central focus on the management of the individual and, in doing so, ignores the broader social factors by which the problems of the young person emerge. It is a method used to control the risks of "dangerous populations" without addressing the fundamental problems of inequality (France 2008).

Knowledge and power

If, as White and Graham (2010, p.90) have suggested, the operation of case management is to help post-release people "forge new ways of living" then case managers require the means and procedures to guide their conduct. Risk assessment tools produce knowledge or regimes of truth of post-release people to be used in the exercise of power. As Foucault (2000, p.17) explains:

No knowledge is formed without a system of communication, registration, accumulation and displacement that is in itself a form of power.

In the remainder of this article, case management is investigated as a form of disciplinary power. Foucault (2006) suggests that disciplinary power is a mode of intervention and regulation of potential behaviour. Using complex systems of surveillance or "perpetual visibility", disciplinary power seizes the actions, time and behaviours of the social body; it is the modern regulation of individual behaviour that renders people productive

(Foucault 1977). More than simply repressive, this form of power aims to produce particular behaviours, identified through the cultural order, to regulate the actions of post-release young people.

Disciplinary power uses techniques of organisation and surveillance to control conduct and behaviour. Such techniques of organisation include the control over activity through timetabling and methods of training the body to perform desired actions (Foucault 1977). Further, techniques of organisation allow for the additional technologies of surveillance. For Foucault (1977, p.170), discipline allows for operation of power “by means of observation”. The case manager undertakes this observation or gaze aimed at the prevention of the client continuing to do wrong. If disciplinary power is effective, the young person will continue to monitor themselves after the program has ended.

Hence, approaching case management as a form of disciplinary power is useful as it allows for the examination of interpersonal relationships between the case manager and client. It permits the exploration of the forms of authority that are embodied and practised to influence a change in the behaviours of (“at risk”) young people and to shape the way they “present themselves and operate in the world” (McDonald & Marston 2005, p.380). The need to negotiate a “good” case manager–client relationship is recognised in advice to case managers, who are encouraged to build bonds of rapport and friendship with their clients (Frankel & Gelman 2012, p.32). Traditional case manager skills are categorised into interpersonal, practice and intervention, and evaluation (Frankel & Gelman 2012).

Of particular note here are the ways that notions of case management approach interpersonal skills of empathy, praise and support. For example, Frankel and Gelman (2012, p.73) suggest that empathy can be achieved by sharing or “finding something in your own history from which you can relate”, while praise or positive support will “help the clients do something” or “stimulate new behaviour patterns” (Frankel & Gelman 2012, p.75). However, current literature also stresses the need to set boundaries in the case manager–client relationship. The case manager must be professional without being overly personal, yet they must also be “naturally friendly” to effectively work with the young person (Frankel & Gelman 2012, p.67). It is this contradiction of too much or too little that will be explored further below. It will be proposed that an alternative way of viewing the negotiation of a professional but personal approach is through the lens of the “technique of friendship” within the technology of discipline.

To govern is to exercise power and, as will be seen in the data presented below, the exercise of discipline allows for the operationalisation of pastoral power. Foucault (1982,

p.784) points to the modern objective of pastoral power as ensuring the salvation of people within this world. Modern salvation is considered to be “health, well-being (that is, sufficient wealth, standard of living), security, protection against accidents” (Foucault 1982, p.784). If a young person actively participates in the program, they will not only be granted salvation, or at least gently nudged toward it, but they will also be freed from the constraints of the state.

This Foucauldian framework offers a productive approach to analysing the work of the case manager in discouraging a client from re-offending. Case management is a technology of discipline and an operation of pastoral power in governing post-release young people. I argue that this method will allow for an enhanced approach to understanding the management of the critical interpersonal relationships between the case manager and client and is well placed to examine the individual practices of case managers currently outside the case management practice literature.

Case manager–client relationships

As indicated above, the central tension at the core of post-release youth case management is the negotiation of interpersonal relationships. To enable an effective manager–client relationship, the case manager must convincingly show the client that they care about their progress throughout the program while maintaining professional boundaries. To achieve this, the case manager must foster a sense of belonging and familiarity with their client, while negotiating their professional role as an agent of the state. There may be times where the case manager will need to act from a purely professional standpoint, employing a top-down juridical operation of power (Foucault 1982), rather than taking a lateral, pastoral approach to regulation of the subject.

In interviews, this enduring tension between the personal and the professional was highlighted as a central struggle for all case managers in their relationships with young clients. Frankel and Gelman suggest (2012, p.67) that it is important to be “naturally friendly” with clients. However participants emphasised the importance of not sharing too much personal information for fear that the client may view the professional relationship as a friendship. From the data collected, the management of disclosure was seen as an essential element in building and maintaining the interpersonal relationship of the case manager and client. In this respect, “friendship” is considered a key technique of governing young people in the case manager–client relationship. Case managers are able to choose to share aspects of their personal life, but, ultimately, they maintain full control over the disclosure. The case manager will share enough of their personal life for the

client to feel a sense of belonging and reciprocate the disclosure, yet not enough that the client feels that they know the case manager intimately.

All 21 informants in this research implied that it was “doing the fun stuff” (participant, Gloria) with their clients that brought about the most significant changes. For example, interacting with the young people on a personal level while shopping or going to the gym was seen to enable a mode of positive interaction with clients. This points to friendship as a technique used by case managers to regulate the relationship. In fact, data points to the inability of case managers to interact with their clients until personal relationships are established.

Debbie described a client who “was quite withdrawn to begin with” and “wasn’t exceptionally keen” on the case management program. However, she was able to work with him once the client knew that there was “no judgement and that [she] actually cared about him”. A case manager must remain personal to support the client in achieving the prescribed outcomes, yet, as Robert highlights, a client needs to develop trust in their case manager before interventions can effectively be put in place:

We develop trust and would rather not have people tell us their life story when they first arrive because they are asked to do that so often. You know, it can be a barrier: “Here I go again telling people my life story”.

Here, Robert implies a critical component in the technique of friendship. The case manager must build a trusting relationship with the client independent of his/her history. Robert acknowledges that young post-release people are often engaged with multiple different agencies upon their release and if, as case manager, he was to pry too much into his client’s life before building a strong relationship, it was likely that the client would resist participation in the case management program.

Working for a different agency, Maranda also pointed to the need for relationship building when working with young people. Notably, she suggested that, when working with young clients, the “level of rapport and relationship building is really different” to that developed with the adult clients with whom she had previously worked. Maranda described how she was spending a lot of time with one current client: “You know, cooking and shopping and just having a chat”. She was interacting with her client on a very personal level, a level which would not be achieved if she were physically to stay within the service office.

Gloria experiences a sense of restriction in this regard. She said she would like to be able to say to her clients, “I have a free afternoon. I don’t have any appointments so let’s

go take a movie or something”. She described this as “normal” because it is something she does with her children. Here, Gloria implies that she would like to create a sense of belonging with her clients in a way that she knows very well: as a parent. In fact, it was common for case managers to align their relationships with their clients to family relations. Clint said, “They [clients] begin to feel very much a part of an imaginary family”. In doing so, professional boundaries become blurred and case managers want to do more to help their clients than what is required in the case plan. Gloria said she would like to be “more helpful than supportive”:

Why can't I just jump in the car and drive this person and make their life a little bit easier for them? Other than say "No, you have to catch the bus".

Gloria's professional role as a case manager means she cannot offer lifts to her clients, even if she wants to; the client must learn to become independent of Gloria's help. This points to the constant struggle for case managers to be personable while remaining professional. Gloria acknowledged this to be the policy of the organisation; it is the exercise of discipline whereby the client must learn the skills needed to become independent once the program ends. Yet it is the negotiation of interpersonal technologies of “belonging” that are key to building a successful relationship between the case manager and client.

However, this desirable sense of belonging and trust can build a close personal relationship, one that potentially clashes with the professional role. As Eve explained:

You end up becoming a surrogate mum or dad or like, you know, yeah big sister or whatever. I guess that's what happens when you work with someone like that for a period of time.

Despite differences in agencies, these parallel experiences highlight the tensions that exist when the notion of being a friend or confidante forms part of the disciplinary practices used to manage the young client. For instance, Chloe said, “I tend to not share a lot of personal stuff, but I'll talk about my favourite music, movies and general stuff”. She expressed that she doesn't share details about her life that are too personal unless the client asks. She said when explaining her approach:

I'm only going to be in their life for a certain time. It's not really fair to share all this intimate stuff that will build a close relationship and to have them having expectations of me that are more on the friend side rather than professional case worker side.

Here, Chloe highlights the technique of friendship. Chloe shares enough information to foster a sense of belonging and trust, yet not too much that would make her

uncomfortable with the client knowing. The formation of this interpersonal relationship, whether reflective of parent–child relationships or friendship, is a technique used by case managers to influence the active engagement of the client within the program and, in doing so, it becomes a mode of governance and operation of discipline. Yet, the relationship built exists within the confines of the organisation – as Harper reinforces, “a friend with boundaries”. Therefore, friendship is conceptualised as a technology in the management of the case manager–client relationship. Friendship remains bound within the institutional structure.

For case managers, the interpersonal technology of being a “friend” can conflict with the maintenance of their role as a professional worker. When case managers interact with their clients as they would with their friends or children, professional boundaries are breached. For case managers, some level of boundary transgression was required for them to build a strong and trusting case manager–client bond. Without that kind of bond, it would be unlikely that the client would feel as though their participation in the case management program was voluntary.

Voluntary but regulated participation

Interview data strongly implied it was important for the client to feel that their participation in the case management program was voluntary. This perception was necessary to successfully engage the hierarchical observation of the case manager, which regulated the client’s progress towards a reduced likelihood of re-offending. This represents the exercise of disciplinary power over the “free” subject. In any operation of pastoral power, the subject is understood to be an entity that is self-aware and capable of choosing (Foucault 1982). He or she “chooses” to participate in the program.

Case managers were found to govern their clients through interpersonal technologies whereby they were able to frame governing as facilitating change. In doing so, the client was strongly encouraged to dissociate the “friendly” case manager from the regulating institution of the state represented by the agency. For example, one case manager described their role as supporting young clients to “get to better” (participant, Leslie). Such a comment emphasises a pastoral care approach, rather than one of state regulation.

Overall, case managers were found to undertake their work on a personal level, distancing themselves from statutory services. The quote below highlights how Maranda built rapport and trust with her client so that he regulated himself. In “being chilled and getting [the] relationship going”, Maranda felt she had enabled responsibility and self-governance in her client:

When something happens, he just comes here and tells me ... he used ice again once a few weeks ago and came straight in and told me. He's like "I have to tell you, I need to get it off my chest, I did it once". And we really talked it through and it was amazing to see that he came in and talked about it.

Maranda highlighted the importance of the close relationship she had developed with her client. She had spent a lot of time with him, as noted above, and she was able to extend her close relationship to enact a technology of governance whereby he had begun to regulate himself. In the above example, the interplay of disciplinary and pastoral power is witnessed. The client transgressed the rules of the program, by using ice again, and felt the need to tell the case manager of his transgression. The client was comfortable confiding his ice usage with the case manager, an action that, arguably, could only occur through the successful negotiation of the technology of friendship. As Maranda is a mandatory governmental reporter, the young client's action of confiding in his case manager could have been detrimental to his post-release journey. Subsequently, Maranda bent the rules of the program for her client because of his openness in confessing, and his notable self-regulation. Here, we see the interpersonal technology of friendship working as a critical tool in case management.

Indeed, confession has been identified as a key interpersonal technology in case management for "transforming and 'freeing' the self" (McDonald & Marston 2005, p.385). As we saw above, rather than reporting the client, Maranda used the moment of confession to justify the need for continued intervention with the young client. In this case, the requirement to report was negated as the individual had become a subject. The client became a subject of disciplinary power through confession, made possible through the technology of friendship. By that logic, the client had become the perfect disciplined subject. In the act of her client confessing to her, Maranda is enacting pastoral authority; the client has a shortfall that can be managed and improved upon.

However, this should not imply that there are no sanctions that apply if a client transgresses a rule of the case management program. The transgression is recorded against the client record. Debbie, for example, recalled a time where the familiarity with her client was fractured and she had to adhere to her professional reporting obligations:

If he doesn't make an appointment with me it does get put down and he does breach. So it's voluntary to work with us or another service but they still need to do that.

Here the tensions of being simultaneously a case manager, a friend and a mandatory government reporter are emphasised. In the quote above, Debbie explains that if the

young person does not make an appointment with their case manager it will be noted as a breach of their bail conditions. In other words, their involvement with a case manager is not voluntary but ordered by the state. Hamish explains that, “If you are looking at it in the most simplest form, they have an outcome plan to complete and if that’s not completed, then they go back to court”. Therefore, through the technology of friendship, elements of both disciplinary and pastoral power are evident. The case managers utilise their relationships with clients to shape the rules of the program in a way that is not felt as punitive (discipline), but rather, can be seen as a way of helping clients overcome difficulties they face (pastoral).

In effect, an environment is created for the young clients where they are made to take responsibility for their own actions. As Clint pointed out, “The young person creates the thing and we just help facilitate the thing happening. We help them to make it something real”. The process of case management individualises young people to forge a transformative subject that is responsible for their own biography. The case manager can “facilitate” the process by being personable and creating a sense of belonging but will, when needed, employ their professional role. As a mechanism of disciplinary governance, I term this the “paradox of a voluntary service”.

Discussion

The technique of friendship requires a complex organisation of trust and rapport with clients. As McDonald and Marston (2005, p.383) have pointed out in regard to the case manager–client relationship, “authority is naturalized and shifted beyond the realm of contestation”. The governed client becomes a subject that is most effective when there is no direct imposition of authority rather a willingness to seek the assistance of the case manager. The analysis of data above shows how the practices of case management operate as forms of disciplining within a pastoral operation of power.

Hence, a client becomes the subject of disciplinary power through the technology of confession. Confession is an important part of the workings of case management. The clients told their case manager about current transgressions so that they could move forward on their journey of rehabilitation and overcome the backsliding effects of their actions. As a confidante, the case manager then exercised a choice that points to the paradox of the job itself. They could choose to add the confession of transgression to their case notes, or they could decide to be empathic and not record the transgression in an effort to create change in a different way. However, case managers must have first built rapport and trust with their client to get to that decision point, and, in doing this,

they used friendship as a technology of governing. This technique was exemplified in the case of Maranda. With successful navigation of relationships with their clients and the development of trust, case managers can direct their client's progress throughout the program with cooperation rather than authoritarianism.

In another sense, the confession of the client is a technique of surveillance that opens the client to a variety of power relations. Confession transforms the client into a subject of pastoral power and source of knowledge. As a knowing subject within a regime of power, the YLS/CMI-defined client is open to discipline. In their role of governing that person, case managers become friends to their clients and therefore exercise disciplinary power. Thus, the disciplinary power is effective but it is not felt as punitive. As we saw in their accounts above, to facilitate the client's post-release journey, case managers often distance themselves from top-down state authority and, in turn, the clients are able to feel the bonds of friendship with their case manager. This is where the role of the case manager is vital in discouraging recidivism – through the interpersonal technique of friendship, they are able to forge the discipline subject where control is underlined through pastoral power.

Conclusion

Negotiating between professional and personal relationships was identified as a central tension that ran through all accounts of case management practices. As such, case managers were persistent in reinforcing the key word of “manager” within their position title. However, the relationships they built with their clients transgressed the normative case manager role. They tried to build a relationship with their clients whereby they were no longer seen as an agent of the state but rather as a comrade to the client. Here, institutional context is crucial as participants within this study did not see themselves as discipliners, rather they guided the young people through their reintegration journey. A Foucauldian investigation of power and discipline inevitability lends itself to negative connotations; however, the aim of this paper was to present the analysis as neutrally as possible.

For this reason, examining the case manager–client relationship through techniques of friendship indicates a set of conditions where the client was made to take responsibility for, and action towards, state-recognised problems. The young person became the subject of surveillance and treatment while the case manager's role was naturalised through the techniques of friendship. Therefore, the theoretically informed analysis of the data presented above provides a constructive way to understand how the interpersonal

dynamics of case management contribute to the successful government of young people labelled as “at-risk”.

In conclusion, the workings of case management explored above – friendship and confession – support Skeggs’ (2011, p.498) description of the “governmental normative subject”, disciplined through moral regulation as a practice of governing. Moral regulation problematises the conduct of young post-release people while imposing forms of regulation (Hunt 1999). Scoring a young person’s likelihood of recidivism assumes an ideal type of young person that is based upon “moral assessments of values, lifestyles and experiences” (Hannah-Moffat 2005, p.37). The apparently scientific claims of objective assessment constitute “bureaucratic or clinical judgement [using] the case note and the file” (Dean 2010, p.219) where young people are subject to a range of practices that serve to lower the possible risk of re-offending. Subsequently, through the disciplinary techniques of case management, a young person becomes a “moral individual” who is self-responsible and becomes bonded to the network of community created by the organisation (Rose 1996). For these reasons, it is argued that case management is both a strategy of moral governance and a practice of the self. The client, the young person in question, is evaluated and governed as a moral subject who can choose to trust and be influenced.

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Highly vulnerable teens

A social justice imperative

Catherine Robinson*

In 2016–2017, the Social Action and Research Centre (SARC), Anglicare Tasmania, undertook to investigate and document why and how some teens in Tasmania come to experience extraordinary trajectories of high vulnerability from early childhood into adolescence. The research explores the life histories of a cohort of teens (aged 10 to 17 years) whose needs for care have fallen outside families, between government agencies and between non-government services. This paper introduces some of the findings of that investigation and considers both contexts of individual vulnerability and available support systems and services. It unravels the fundamental paradox that those most vulnerable – both developmentally and in terms of the layers of adversity they experience – seem to be, at best, retained and, at worst, entrenched in vulnerability. As such, young people’s experiences of high vulnerability are framed as a key social justice imperative for Tasmania.

Key words: social justice, Tasmania youth, support services, vulnerability, homelessness, care

Vulnerability takes on another meaning at the moment it is recognized and recognition wields the power to reconstitute vulnerability (Butler 2004, p.43).

There exists in Australia’s island state of Tasmania a cohort of highly vulnerable young people, aged 10 to 17 years, who concurrently experience lifetime trajectories of cumulative harm, repeat homelessness, limited education, contact with police and youth justice, and repeat child protection notifications. This paper reports on recent research responding to cross-sector disquiet in Tasmania about the experiences of these young people whose needs for care have fallen outside of families, between government agencies and between non-government services (Robinson 2017).

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Importantly, this is a cohort not on Care and Protection Orders and for whom placement in out-of-home care is often considered too challenging given limited appropriate placement options, the ages of the young people, and the highly complex needs they present. Instead, these highly vulnerable young people move between unstable familial and friendship environments; they couch surf and are episodically unaccompanied in specialist homeless services (SHS). They live with little or no income and are excluded from mainstream and, potentially, alternative schooling. Instead they are engaged with police and youth justice and face escalating crises in mental and physical health. They misuse drugs and alcohol and remain exposed to further violence and trauma.

The Social Action and Research Centre (SARC), Anglicare Tasmania, undertook to investigate and document why and how some teens in Tasmania come to experience such extraordinary hardship and prolonged precarity.

Highly vulnerable teens in Tasmania

It is known that in Tasmania there is an overrepresentation of young people aged 12 to 24 in the homeless population (Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) 2015, p.15), with around 190 young people aged 12 to 18 homeless on any given night (ABS 2012, p.19). In 2014–2015 on an average day there were 148 young people (aged 10 and over) under the supervision of Youth Justice (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2016a) with approximately 30% of released young people returning to Youth Justice supervision within 12 months (AIHW 2016b). It is also known that in 2014–2015 nearly 1000 children received substantiated child protection notifications, 267 children were admitted to Care and Protection Orders (DHHS 2016, p.37) and 196 children were admitted to out-of-home care (DHHS 2016, p.15).

Qualitative research on youth homelessness in Tasmania sharply illustrates connections between young people's experience of homelessness and involvement in the child protection and youth justice systems (Pryor 2014). Data gaps make it difficult to trace children and young people's longer-term contact with these three sectors, but linkages between data taken from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), youth justice supervision and child protection notifications and substantiations in the states of Victoria and Tasmania demonstrate that:

- children and young people with involvement in one of these three sectors are more likely to be involved in another of the sectors than the general population;
- young people with a child protection history enter youth justice supervision at a younger age; and

- young people, particularly young women, completing a detention sentence are at greater risk of homelessness (AIHW 2012, p.vii).

A proportion of these young people experience high vulnerability, indicated through their repeated and/or concurrent contact with homelessness, child protection and youth justice systems. Highly vulnerable youth are a cohort of extreme concern because of the very high human cost of their trajectories of risk and harm which ultimately result in cumulative trauma and exclusion from family and community. Early childhood abuse and adversity is compounded through disengagement from education, unstable out-of-home care placements, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, self-harm and involvement with statutory authorities into adulthood (NSW FACS 2014a, p.25). As a result, highly vulnerable youth can have very high care and intervention costs (e.g. Baldry et al. 2012; MacKenzie et al. 2016; NSW FACS 2014b).

Despite these very high human and financial costs, and despite being known to authorities early in life, the common trajectories of highly vulnerable youth into repeat homelessness and repeat contact with statutory authorities show that current systems are not resulting in better outcomes and indeed can be understood as actively contributing to young people's vulnerability (NSW FACS 2014a, p.16; Baidawi, Mendes & Snow 2014, p.33). In fact, it is understood to be "*likely* that involvement in multiple sectors is concurrent; for example, that children and young people in the child protection system are simultaneously under juvenile justice supervision and that young homeless people are in and out of juvenile detention" (AIHW 2012, p.6, emphasis added).

It is a fundamental social injustice that young people's intense need for care and healing is ultimately met with criminalisation and homelessness. Most research in the area of highly vulnerable teens has highlighted the experiences of those entering and exiting the child protection system and has focused on "cross-over youth" – those "dual systems" clients who are involved in both the child protection and youth justice systems (e.g. Baidawi, Mendes & Snow 2014; Cashmore 2011; Malvaso & Delfabbro 2015). There is also a focus on those who cross over child protection, youth justice and homeless service systems (e.g. AIHW 2012, 2016a), and on the relationship between experiences of the child protection system and homelessness (e.g. Champion 2005; Gibson & Johnstone 2010; Johnson et al. 2010).

The concern of SARC's project is a specific cohort of the highly vulnerable teen population that will *not* always be visible in such research. Some highly vulnerable teens remain invisible in existing research because they have never come to the attention of

child protection authorities, their notifications to child protection have never moved to investigation and response, or their cases have been closed. Further, given age restrictions on unaccompanied entry into Specialist Homeless Services (SHS) – in Tasmania young people need to be aged 13 years or older – there will be a cohort experiencing homelessness who are likewise invisible to SHS agencies.

Given the prevalence of couch surfing among this group and the small number of youth SHS in Tasmania, they are likely to remain less visible in the homeless sector even as they get older. Problematically, however, they may become more visible within the youth justice system, particularly if they have experienced early childhood adversity. The well-documented link between abuse and neglect and offending (see Cashmore 2011) points to a context in which, as Judy Cashmore argues (2011, p.36), “children in need of care or in care who move into the juvenile justice system are arguably neglected by both the child protection and juvenile justice systems”.

Thus, while highly vulnerable teens may be well known to individual or multiple government agencies and non-government services, there will be some who never make contact. Further, of those who *are* known to agencies, not all will be visible in data matching efforts. This is significant as it means that the true scale of the highly vulnerable teen population remains unknown with the data matching between child protection, youth justice and specialist homeless services only capturing those *receiving* a service and thus only providing a snapshot of the kinds of adversities teens can face.

Anecdotally, the adverse outcomes of all highly vulnerable teens are expected to be similar – whether or not they have been placed on Care and Protection Orders or in out-of-home care. Given the relative invisibility of those outside or on the edges of the child protection system, it could be argued that their exposure to ongoing harm is potentially more prolonged and acute with less opportunity for intervention. For these reasons, understanding more about this cohort in Tasmania became the central concern.

Research questions, aims and methodology

Responding to long-held cross-sector concerns and making a unique contribution to existing research literature, SARC’s research explored the experiences of highly vulnerable young people (aged 10 to 17) in Tasmania who have not been placed on Care and Protection Orders or in out-of-home care. It sought to answer the following research questions:

- Why and how do teens (aged 10 to 17) in Tasmania become highly vulnerable?

- What are the gaps in the provision of services to highly vulnerable youth in Tasmania?
- How useful is the concept of “high vulnerability” in explaining and describing the experience of concurrent adverse outcomes for teens?

Centrally concerned with the representation of vulnerable young people in Tasmania, the research sought to engage in “counter-storytelling” – capturing lived experience not regularly visible in public and policy domains (Baker & Plows 2015, p.199). In order to deepen or challenge existing, dominant representations of, knowledge of, or “stories” about vulnerable teens in Tasmania, the research had an explicit focus on learning from, and communicating to broader audiences, voices not ordinarily heard.

Research conducted with highly vulnerable young people focused on gathering biographic narratives or life stories. The process of engaging young people in the research and appropriately supporting them during and after their involvement was actively coordinated primarily through the Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS). TYSS is a unique service funded by the Tasmania Department of Health and Human Services that provides long-term casework for highly vulnerable teens aged 10 to 17. Anglicare Tasmania delivers TYSS in northern Tasmania and Mission Australia and Bapcare deliver TYSS in southern Tasmania.

After introduction to the research and recruitment by support staff, 16 young people aged 14 to 17 participated in one-to-one interviews with the researcher. Informed consent was verbally given and audio-recorded along with the interview. All participants were given a department store gift card (\$40) in recognition of their expertise and the length of time contributed to the project (one to two hours per interview).

It was close collaboration with services that made appropriate, supported engagement with some of this hidden population possible. Support workers were responsible for making assessments about young people’s interest in participating in the research, their capacity to provide informed consent and the appropriateness of their participation in relation to their immediate physical and emotional circumstances. They were responsible for recruiting participants, introducing them to the researcher and making available post-interview debriefing and follow-up.

Service providers working directly with highly vulnerable teens were invited to take part in one-to-one, in-depth interviews with the researcher. Service providers were identified through snowballing – or the informed recommendation of other participants – and through a concern to engage a wide range of government and non-government

professionals with responsibilities for responding to vulnerable teens. Interviews focused on the range of adversity faced by highly vulnerable teens, the strengths and weaknesses of current support services available, and on what systemic changes might be needed to improve the lives of highly vulnerable teens. Service providers were also asked to offer observations about the experiences of those aged 10 to 13 who, for a range of ethical and practical reasons, were not engaged in one-to-one life history interviews.

Both group and individual interviews were conducted, including 20 with staff from homelessness, housing, mentoring and casework services, and six with staff from Tasmanian Government services including Youth Justice, Tasmania Police (Early Intervention) and Child Safety Services. In total, 32 service providers participated. Approval for staff participation was provided by government agencies and all individuals provided written informed consent. Interviews were audio-recorded and, as they were undertaken during usual hours of paid work, no participant incentive was offered.

Ethical issues arising in research with highly vulnerable young people

While a detailed account of the research and ethics process is beyond the scope of this paper (please see the full report for more detail), it is important to add a brief reflection on the ethics of undertaking research with a highly vulnerable and young population. Ethics approval was granted by the Anglicare Victoria Research Ethics Committee (AVREC), which offers a fee-for-service research review. This project was considered “high-risk” and slightly unusual in its request for very vulnerable young people to provide independent informed consent.

The application for ethics approval highlights some of the issues faced in ensuring vulnerable young people’s access to research participation and ultimately in ensuring that their difficult life experiences are respected and recorded. As in the context of service provision, in the context of conducting research, the extreme vulnerability of potential participants – both because of their age and adverse experiences – may paradoxically lead to their exclusion. Considered “too hard” for service engagement, vulnerable young people may likewise be considered “too hard” for research involvement. This is because they may be “too hard” to reach, “too hard” to engage, or “too hard” to keep safe because of the potential risks they are perceived to pose to themselves or others.

Vulnerable young people by default are considered at risk in the conduct of research. Under normal circumstances, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human

Research (2007, p.51) makes it clear that parental/guardian consent is required alongside that of children and young people under the age of 18. As Baker and Plows (2015, p.198) suggest, balancing “protection and participation” in research with vulnerable young people can be difficult, and tackling the issue of parental/guardian consent became a key issue in the conduct of this research.

SARC determined that requesting parental/guardian consent could be a barrier to vulnerable young people’s research participation and could in fact potentially create risk of harm. The case was made that it is most appropriate for young people to provide independent consent, but with the support of an informed, alternative adult who can safely engage with young people and assist them in understanding the implications of research involvement. The engagement of support workers as alternative and physically present gate-keeping adults for their young clients was designed to serve the best interests of young people.

Too hard? Highly vulnerable teens in Tasmania: **A brief overview of SARC report findings**

Drawing on life story work with teens and in-depth interviews with a range of service providers who work directly with them, the report illustrates trajectories of high vulnerability that begin in early childhood and only deepen in adolescence. In life-story work with highly vulnerable teens – again, those who have contact with child protection, youth justice, police and homelessness services – two key childhood experiences emerged as central. Violence and abandonment were core shared experiences across the lives of the young people interviewed. Family violence, sexual and physical abuse, and sexual and physical violence were repeated experiences through childhood and adolescence.

Alongside the impacts of complex trauma resulting from violence and abuse, young people described a profound and deeply disturbing sense of abandonment by parents and caregivers and other adults who actively hurt them or who were unable to keep them safe – often because of their own complex needs. Some had parents who had died, who had gone to jail, who had simply left without explanation or who were perhaps absent from the beginning. Siblings too came and went as parents separated from partners and made new relationships. Young people had chaotic family and physical living environments in which care could not be relied on and attachments remained thin. Even for those young people who did not experience violence or abuse during childhood, the profound experience of an absence of care and protection – and the grief and disorientation associated with this – nonetheless featured.

Compounding the research participants' experiences of violence, neglect or sense of abandonment was also their experience of being responsible for, in fact, *providing* care for others – for siblings, parents and grandparents. For example, young people described providing extraordinary physical and emotional care and protection for siblings and mothers during and after episodes of domestic violence. They provided support and care for parents with physical and mental illness and for ailing grandparents. One young woman described what seemed to be a lifetime of intense caring responsibilities for multiple younger siblings, including her prematurely born baby sister and for her mother with cancer. She also provided personal care for her grandmother. And she missed primary school while doing this.

While these are just quick glimpses into the lived context of high vulnerability, the intensity of early childhood suffering, stress and adult responsibility in the lives of this group of teens cannot be underestimated. Eventually, aged between 10 and 13 years, young people commonly described reaching breaking points at which their mental and physical health often began deteriorating dramatically and they began couch surfing to escape their current home circumstances. As one young person described it, “I just couldn't take it anymore”.

As might be expected, young people's experiences of couch surfing were also marked by sexual and physical violence, family violence, stand-over experiences and exposure to drug use. Young people slept rough and also accessed specialist homeless services, but, predominantly, participants reported a roundabout of insecure “staying with friends” and even periods of returning to unsafe or conflictual home environments, through which they cobbled together ongoing shelter.

Young people also experienced extreme poverty – often they were too young to receive youth allowance – and even for those over 16 who had been lucky enough to access needed specialised assistance in making their application, poverty remained an issue. Survival crimes, such as stealing food and clothing and trespassing, were seen to be necessary.

At the same time as young people were exiting home, experiencing homelessness, and becoming involved with older youth and more serious crime, they were also losing contact with their own peers and exiting school environments. It became clear that for young people, both home *and* mainstream school – as the key environments normally expected to enable young people to flourish – were not only unsafe but resoundingly reinforced negative self-concepts and a sense of hopelessness.

Together it was bullying and suspensions that turned school into an alienating environment that young people were, in turn, becoming old enough to reject and escape. As well as being bullied, interactions within the school environment seemed to trigger young people's extreme and uncontrolled anger – anger that stemmed from their experiences of complex trauma and the absence of care and protection. Beginning in primary school, these violent outbursts involved both students and staff and ultimately resulted in young people being suspended, expelled or dropping out – often from Grade Six onwards. In general, young people reported little interest from schools in the complex issues that may underpin such violent behavior and some got a clear sense that they would not be missed if they just stopped turning up.

Significantly, young people's descriptions of childhood and adolescence were resoundingly validated in interviews with a wide range of service providers working within both the government and non-government sectors. These service providers also described an inadequate service response to the profound complex trauma and neglect they saw this cohort of young people experiencing.

They characterised the service landscape in Tasmania as unable to provide the full and proper age-appropriate care needed by highly vulnerable teens. Their interviews revealed a dire mismatch between the long-term, therapeutic, relational care they see highly vulnerable teens as needing and the current reality of revolving referrals between short-term and uncoordinated interventions.

It might be expected that Child Safety Services would be the service to provide the holistic response needed by highly vulnerable teens. Consistently, however, it emerged in interviews, including with Child Safety staff, that without placement options in out-of-home care that could provide a meaningful alternative to young people's current home environments, there was little incentive to seek child protection orders for young people. And in terms of those not meeting the current threshold for child protection orders – it wasn't clear how daily care could be ensured.

Among young people's options are homelessness services that provide support and accommodation – but only from 13 years of age. Homeless service staff described their struggles to provide the kind of support needed by vulnerable teens. With just one worker staffing services night and day, providing the intense, therapeutic care young people need is an overwhelming struggle. Of course, all services do their best, but ultimately the challenging issues young people face make them more likely to be exited – that's if they can access a bed in the first place.

Homelessness service staff described the constant stress of finding themselves as one of the last services providing general care to this cohort. Confronting complex trauma and other mental illness, self-harm and suicidal behaviour, drug-use and addiction, they were at their wits' end in terms of trying to access other specialist supports for their clients. Unable to access mental health services through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and without residential drug and alcohol detoxification and rehabilitation available for under-18s in Tasmania, many service providers felt they just helped young people lurch between one crisis and the next – and little more. The absence of residential drug detoxification and rehabilitation services and the absence of accessible, ongoing community mental health support for trauma and self-harm were experienced as major gaps. And without these key pieces of the support puzzle in place, they not only felt unsupported in their own professional practice but also were distressed witnesses to young people's long-term cycles of homelessness and suffering.

Overall, as opposed to the common depiction of vulnerable teens as “self-selecting” independent accommodation and as having capacity for “self-protection”, the counter-narratives of both the teen and service provider participants in this project suggest that they are *propelled* from often unbearable home environments towards whatever options for care and protection that happen to come their way. These options are sometimes very unsafe and usually short term and unstable. With no or little income or ongoing support, young people struggle to survive independently and safely and to maintain their schooling. As such, they experience immediate harm, sustain negative impacts on their long-term wellbeing, and their high vulnerability persists.

In summary, four key findings emerged from this research:

- highly vulnerable teens have experienced abandonment and violence during childhood;
- highly vulnerable teens experience continued trajectories of adversity and trauma in adolescence;
- young people's need for intensive, therapeutic, relationship-based care is met by a culture of referral; and
- engagement with highly vulnerable teens is “too hard” for current specialist services.

The report reveals a context in which the existing service system and specialist services within it together contribute to sustaining the harm that begins for young people in their

family contexts. A lack of capacity and resources seems to drive referral between short-term interventions and underpins the struggle of specialist services – including Child Safety, Youth Justice, CAMHS, Education and SHS – to provide meaningful and lasting intervention. In short, both fundamental and specialist experiences of care and protection are absent in the lives of highly vulnerable teens.

The picture of the *persistent* high vulnerability of young people presented in the research is crucial to the shaping of needed new interventions. Attention to life history and cumulative trauma can be used to challenge problematic assumptions – centrally embedded in practice – about young people’s agency and their perceived capacity for freely self-directed behaviour. This project offers a nuanced picture of young people’s deeply “constrained choices and actions” (Hanson & Holmes 2014, p.25) through which, in turn, system failures and absences can be better recognised. This is a picture also crucial in building understanding of the ethical imperative to improve responses to highly vulnerable teens.

Through narrative research, the report works towards explaining high vulnerability and clarifying what is missing in responses to highly vulnerable teens. It provides fundamental insight into the “double suffering” (Brown 2017, p.180) of a cohort of teens known to Child Safety but not placed on Care and Protection Orders. This “double suffering“ incorporates experiences of extreme adversity, including complex trauma, during childhood and adolescence *and* the *continuing* struggle during adolescence to realise basic human rights relating to safety, shelter, care and education. Thus, not only do young people experience abandonment within family contexts, they are also abandoned by the systems of care and support for which, ultimately, the Tasmanian Government has legislated responsibility for delivering.

This double abandonment and its traumatising impact drive the high vulnerability of teens in Tasmania. It is also clearly identifiable – through the passionate contributions to the research by service providers – which fragments of the care needed do exist across the service system. The question remains as to how to “scale up” these fragments of care and, further, how to ensure the inclusive practice of specialist services and address the absence of distinctly missed specialist adolescent services.

Argued in the SARC report is the need in Tasmania for a new tranche of adolescent care that sits between that offered by Child Safety and SHS – both of which see highly vulnerable teens as “too hard” to serve in sustainable, long-term, therapeutic ways. Given, as one service provider identified, “there isn’t an agency for that to come from”,

the provision of care for highly vulnerable teens can be understood as an inter-agency responsibility, but one requiring distinct and discrete program leadership from within Children and Youth Services.

These are not radical or new suggestions. A history of advocacy for vulnerable teens exists in Tasmania and there is scope to follow the current lead of NSW FACS, which, as a result of the *Going Home, Staying Home* reform of SHS, is in the process of implementing the Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP). This is a policy area and related program of service delivery that specifically targets highly vulnerable teens who fall outside child protection or who problematically move between child protection and youth homelessness services.

What could be a more radical development is a pivoting away from continuing to name such a program and actual need as relating to *homelessness*. As this research demonstrates, the key social problem being experienced and addressed is actually a fundamental age-related lack of *care*, of which homelessness is one symptom. This is certainly reflected in the concern of the HYAP to distinguish the unique and intensive individual support and family work needed for highly vulnerable teens but which is usually outside the scope of SHS in their current form (NSW FACS n.d.). Nonetheless, clearly articulating the core issue as a need for youth care more immediately points to the holistic and complex nature of responses needed.

Conclusion: Making highly vulnerable teens visible

Overall, SARC's research aims to contribute to the continued development of a practice of care that centres on the outcomes of young people, rather than on the outcomes of programs (see NSW FACS 2014a, p.11). The strength of the research is its contribution to broader work on vulnerable teens in Australia, which to date focuses in particular on those young people who are dual-system clients of child protection and youth justice. SARC's research is unique in its attempt to ensure inclusion of the voices of teens who remain *outside* or on the margins of this cross-over population but who nonetheless experience extreme and enduring vulnerability. It illustrates how important it is to understand that the highly vulnerable teen population includes *both* those with and without Care and Protection Orders. Further, it makes clear that given the limitations of child protection responses, child protection involvement cannot be used as a default indicator of the high vulnerability of young people. Revealed is a fundamental, unmet and acute need for holistic, long-term care available to young people *regardless* of their child protection status.

The project provides a solid starting point for understanding the kinds of experiences that result in trajectories of high vulnerability into adolescence. Life history as a methodological approach enables unique insight into how and why these trajectories unfold. Young people's life histories offer a view across the critical developmental periods of both early childhood and adolescence through which a picture of accumulating adversity can be built up. In providing access to rarely heard voices and those of highly experienced practitioners who work with them, the project also offers an important step forward in the needed re-thinking of what supports work best for this cohort. Indeed, a key contribution of the project is a re-thinking of "the ways social arrangements can exacerbate or relieve vulnerability" (Mullin 2014, p.267).

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The role of civil society in supporting the settlement and integration of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia

MYAN Australia's National Youth Settlement Framework

Nadine Liddy*

This article explores the role of civil society in supporting the settlement or integration of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia, through highlighting some of the work of the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN Australia). It emphasises the importance of a targeted approach to addressing the needs and building on the strengths of young people in countries of resettlement, with a focus on the MYAN's National Youth Settlement Framework. It also highlights the fundamental place of youth-centred and participation approaches to supporting young people to realise their potential in the integration context.

Young people settling in Australia through the Migration programme (Humanitarian, Family and Skilled) have enormous potential to be active participants and contributors

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to their new society.* The engagement of young people as active citizens in Australia has significant and long-term benefits for each young person, their families, communities, and socially cohesive societies.

Young people experience the process of settling in a new country in ways distinct from adults and younger children, due to their age, development stage, role within the family and the particular role they often play in assisting families to build their lives in a new country. The complex tasks of settling in a new country are compounded by the developmental tasks of adolescence and pre-migration trauma. Underpinning these multiple challenges is often very limited or no social capital in the Australian context.

As the UNHCR notes, this group of young people demonstrate high levels of resilience and resourcefulness and arrive in resettlement countries with a range of strengths. These include multilingual skills, broad cross-cultural and international knowledge and a strong desire to access education and succeed in their new society. However, they face a range of challenges in navigating the resettlement experience, which can place them at social and economic disadvantage. A targeted approach that builds on their strengths and capabilities is essential to addressing these challenges and supporting young people to realise their potential.

The challenges facing young people in the settlement context include:

- learning a new language and negotiating unfamiliar education and employment pathways (sometimes with a history of disrupted or no formal education);
- understanding and negotiating a new culture/cultures and cultural values;
- establishing new peer networks;
- navigating unfamiliar and relatively complex social systems and laws, including new (youth) rights and responsibilities;
- negotiating new or changed family structures, roles, responsibilities and relationships in the context of new concepts of independence, autonomy, freedom and child and youth rights;
- negotiating (multicultural) identity;

* United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2002, *Refugee resettlement: An international handbook to guide reception and integration*, 'Part 3.3 Investing in the future: Refugee children and young people', UNHCR, Geneva, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4a2cfe336.html>, p.264

- juggling family and community expectations (e.g. in relation to cultural or faith identity, education/employment and career pathways);
- managing grief and loss associated with separation from peers or family; and
- building social capital as a young person in their new context.

There are also a number of factors in the host country environment that young refugees must contend with, including government policy (e.g. immigration detention, restrictions on family reunion), community and media attitudes towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, access to employment, education and housing, access to community services, and racism and discrimination.*

Civil society has a critical role to play in supporting young people to overcome these challenges, realise their potential and become active contributors to and participants in their new society. This includes organisations specifically funded to provide support to new arrivals, ethno-specific organisations, volunteer organisations, sporting clubs, and mainstream youth organisations across the health, education, justice and employment sectors. This includes service delivery organisations as well as organisations with a focus on policy and advocacy.

In the Australian context, civil society organisations work in partnership with government to deliver a range of services, including “settlement”-specific services to those settling in Australia through the Humanitarian and broader Migration Programmes, and projects or programs that foster social cohesion.

MYAN is Australia’s national body promoting the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. MYAN works in partnership with young people, government and the non-government sectors to support a targeted approach to addressing the particular needs of this group of young people in policy and service delivery. It does this through preparing policy papers, engaging in research and a range of capacity-building activities, and supporting the development of young people’s leadership and advocacy skills. We work across the youth and settlement sectors as it is at this intersection that good practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds lies. MYAN is a unique structure in the context of global resettlement and integration programs.

* Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues 2006, *Settling in: Exploring good settlement for refugee young people in Australia*, CMYI, Victoria, available at: http://www.cmyi.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Settling%20In%202006_0.pdf

MYAN's work directly with young people supports their empowerment and participation at the local, state, national, regional and international levels. This involves facilitating processes – providing opportunities, mechanisms and structures – that strengthen participation and empowerment. This includes supporting young people to build their skills, knowledge and networks to engage in their advocacy work and develop initiatives that create change in their communities. The MYAN has a national Youth Ambassador's Network (YAN) and hosts a biennial national multicultural youth summit.

MYAN also engages in advocacy at the regional and international levels. This includes supporting young people to participate in UNHCR meetings in Geneva (including bi-lateral meetings as opportunities for specific advocacy) and in regional advocacy activities, including through the Asia Pacific refugee Rights Network (APRRN) and consultation with young refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia. MYAN worked in partnership with the Refugee Council of Australia to coordinate the Global Refugee Youth consultations in Australia in 2016.*

Ensuring young people are active participants in their own process of settling in a new country is critical. The voices of young people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds are often marginalised in policy and programing design and many lack the social capital – networks, confidence, tools and knowledge – to advocate for their needs, influence decision makers or be supported as leaders in their communities. MYAN works from the premise that young people from multicultural backgrounds have unique experiences and knowledge, and should be supported to articulate the issues impacting on their lives and identify and implement solutions.

A key part of the MYAN's capacity-building work with the civil society and government is the development of Australia's first National Youth Settlement Framework.** This conceptual and practical framework provides an evidence-based approach to supporting and measuring good practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in the settlement context. Human rights, youth work principles and practice and settlement frameworks underpin the Framework.

* See *Speaking up: The Global Refugee Youth Consultations in Australia report 2016*, available at: http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/GRYC%20Report_NOV2016.pdf

** Multicultural Youth Advocacy network (MYAN Australia), 2016, *National Youth Settlement Framework: A national framework for supporting the settlement of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia*, MYAN, Victoria, available at: http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN_Youth_Settlement_Framework_April.pdf

It is designed to enable services to respond more effectively to the particular needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and facilitate good outcomes in the settlement context. To this end, it includes a set of resources for applying and measuring the framework in practice. Since its release in May 2016, MYAN has worked with government and the non-government sector across Australia to support embedding of the framework in policy and programming.

The optimal “settlement” outcome for young people is understood through the concept of active citizenship. Active citizenship in this context is understood to be inclusive (sometimes referred to as a “thick” description): not just about formal citizenship status with associated legal rights and responsibilities, but a proactive approach to engagement and participation in Australian society. It encompasses concepts of participation, power, agency, identity and belonging, and includes activities such as community service and volunteering. It includes structured forms of engagement with political processes, as well as more day-to-day forms of participation in society. It assumes the acquisition of social capital and agency as fundamental, where young people are supported to become active agents of change in shaping their own futures.

Developing a sense of agency is particularly important for refugee and migrant young people as this group of young people have commonly had their capacity for agency diminished by the refugee experience.

Active citizenship is comprised of four domains – Economic Participation, Social Participation, Civic Participation and Personal Well-Being – with a set of indicators developed for each domain. Building social capital and agency occurs through the development of skills, knowledge, confidence and networks across each of these domains. Skills and knowledge are required to understand, navigate and engage in Australian structures and systems, and confidence is inherent in utilising skills and knowledge. Networks are critical to facilitate this engagement and participation, including bridging and bonding networks – e.g. with peers, employers, educational institutions, sport and recreation organisations, health organisations, government organisations (including police) etc.

Active citizenship is both a process and an outcome – young people who are active citizens are able to successfully navigate their multi-cultural identity, feel a sense of belonging in Australian society, engage with cultural/religious expression, understand Australian culture and society (as complex, dynamic and multi-layered), successfully navigate and access a range of services, including pathways in education and employment.

Active citizenship reflects key developmental tasks of adolescence – negotiating identity, independence and interdependence with family, community and the broader (new) host society. These tasks are compounded by the refugee and settlement experience and may be more salient and complex in the settlement or integration context – young people are simultaneously navigating the development tasks of adolescence and finding their place and sense of belonging in a new culture and society.

A set of eight good practice capabilities underpin the framework, providing guidance on facilitating good settlement at the service delivery level. These are: cultural competency, youth-centred and strengths-based, youth development and participation, trauma-informed, family-aware, flexibility and responsiveness, collaboration and advocacy. The framework includes supplementary resources to assist organisations to assess, measure and apply the good practice capabilities and active citizenship indicators.

The potential for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to become active participants in and contributors to Australian society is high. Ensuring young people receive support targeted to their strengths and needs, and working in partnership with young people to build their social capital and agency, is vital to achieving this potential.

Amanda McKenzie

Amanda McKenzie was National Director of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) between 2006 and 2009, where she helped build a non-partisan movement of young Australians to tackle climate change. The organisation now has more than 120,000 members across the country. In this abridged and edited research interview, Amanda reflects on her part in establishing the AYCC, and the role of young people in the climate movement. Amanda is now the CEO of the Climate Council. In 2009 she was named the Environment Minister's Young Environmentalist of the Year and Rotary Young Achiever of the Year.

I think I always had the passion to be interested in the environment and climate change. We did a lot of camping when I was growing up – a lot of bushwalking. My dad had a science background and was always telling us about how the world worked. We looked through telescopes and kayaked down rivers, so I had an appreciation and wonder for the natural world. As I got older I developed a desire to give back to the community and began working on a range of social justice and environmental issues. At 22 I read Tim Flannery's book *The weather makers*. It was a turning point for me. It made me realise that the problem was urgent and I had to do something. At that time, few people really knew about climate change, so early in 2006 my sister and I started an organisation in Melbourne called the Australian Climate Change Education Network, which tried to raise awareness by giving presentations in schools and universities. At the time, opportunities offered to young people in non-government organisations (NGOs) were not very exciting or meaningful – you ended up doing things like stuffing envelopes. When I noticed that young people were not playing a strong role in climate change, I was motivated, along with other young people including Anna Rose, to start a new NGO called the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) to create meaningful ways for young people to make a difference through advocacy and education.

The biggest campaign we did at the AYCC that really changed my perspective was going to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in 2007. We met young people from all over the world who were working on the issue. It was inspiring. We were a part of something really big there. But we also met many Pacific Islanders who were already

threatened with losing their homes, their cultures, their livelihoods, everything. A person from Kiribati thanked us for the work we were doing. They said, “The thing I’m most frightened of is that we might have to take boats to where the island used to be to practice our rituals and to visit our ancestors, and we won’t ever know the exact location.” In that heart-breaking moment I recognised the reality of climate change. It deeply connected me to what it meant for people.

In 2009, we organised Power Shift – a national summit for young people that brought 1,500 people together from all around the country. When I walked out on stage and saw the marquee full of young people who had been working on this project for between nine and 12 months, I realised they really were willing to do something about climate change. So we asked all those people to organise a youth vote on climate change, which we called Youth Decide. We had something like 1,000 events around the country. More than 20,000 young people voted at those events and another 20,000 voted online. AYCC had started just a couple of years before as a rag tag group of young people. Power Shift and Youth Decide helped us grow our community from 5,000 to 50,000 in the space of a few months.

The urgency of the climate crisis puts an enormous responsibility and burden on people running climate-change organisations. Humanity is changing the world so quickly and we need to do so much. That kind of anxiety and responsibility is unique to organisations promoting climate-change action. We have very small resources, so we need to do a lot with a little. The resource differential between the groups that are advocating for action versus vested interests advocating for inaction is vast. We used to have this saying at the AYCC, “You’ve got a shiny penny and a button, you need to create a unicorn by the morning, how are we going to do it?” And it’s always *we*: “How are *we* going to do it? How can *we* bring to bear a whole bunch of different people?”

When I was 24 and running AYCC, I often found I was the only woman in a room full of male CEOs who were all 20, 30 years older than me, but now there are a few more women in senior positions: Kelly O’Shanassy is now leader of Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and Anna Rose has led Earth Hour for WWF. If you look at who is working on climate change – whether scientists, policy leaders or leaders of the big not-for-profits – usually the highest level people are men, which I think probably reflects structural issues we have in society. In the climate change space that is shifting, and AYCC has been influential. Anna Rose and I started the AYCC with no sense that we were creating what ended up becoming quite a women-led organisation. It was an environment where both women and men felt they could grow, take risks and build a

career that they believed in. As a result, many AYCC-trained activists, including many women, have now filtered through the movement, creating a huge ripple effect. A number have worked at other environmental NGOs, like ACF, WWF and Environment Victoria, a number work for federal and state environment departments, and some have gone into Parliament standing for election or working as advisors.

I think the AYCC makes an especially good contribution to the environmental movement by training young people to be effective participants in democracy. Early in my career, I didn't realise how important it would be for the AYCC to train a generation of new young leaders who are interested in where this country is going, but that has been one of the organisation's really positive results. I think there is a lack of effective mentorship in training for middle management. Succession planning isn't something that the environment movement generally thinks about, because it's very focused on fixing what is happening right now. However, at AYCC we did a lot of succession planning. Youth organisations generally fall over when their founder leaves, so when Anna and I were leaving, we staggered it over a period of a year and a half. Anna left around the end of 2009, I left at the start of 2011, and then our chief operating officer became the CEO, so there was real continuity there.

I am now the CEO of the Climate Council and my partner, Sam, has been involved in high profile roles. We both have very intense jobs that dominate a lot of our life and we both believe passionately in the issues that we're working on. It's good to have a partnership where you really understand that. We work with a lot of other organisations to extend our reach. If we have great social media content at the Climate Council, we can send it to a range of organisations and say, "You may want to distribute this." There's a whole series of ways in which people can be influenced every day: you can shift the public discourse through the media, through social media, and through conversations on the ground. Membership-based organisations tend to quantify any impact they have in particular electorates so that they can communicate information about their influence directly to politicians. That can be done by, for example, showing the politician how many articles you've had published in their electorate, or how many people in their electorate are on your Facebook page. It could also be done by public polling.

I'm also on the board of the Centre for Australian Progress, which works for a broadly progressive Australia. We started this group to help the community sector do what it does best by providing some of the infrastructure it lacked. Part of what we offer is middle-management training to help with succession planning. Traditionally there has not been as much opportunity or autonomy for young middle managers in Australia as in the US

and the UK, or as many exciting people for them to work with. The Centre for Australian Progress's training provides opportunities for middle managers to grow and improve here, so we don't have a massive brain drain of highly talented younger leaders.

I have realised that people always underestimate themselves. Being part of a climate-change organisation is anxious work because we don't know if we'll fix it in time. With climate change, we might fail, and if we fail, the consequences will be drastic. That is a difficult thought to always have in your mind. You can never quite turn off that part of your brain. I have moments of feeling very, very sad, and I now find it difficult to be in the natural environment without noticing how it has changed. I know so much about the science now that when I go to the forests I grew up in, I can see the changing bushfire risk. But I'm a natural optimist, and I wake up in the morning still feeling like we can solve it. I have an innate belief in humanity. I'm motivated by the beauty I see in the world and the fact that most people are trying to do the right thing – trying to be good. I look at where the money's moving: money's really moving towards renewables. The momentum in the US and China has really shifted. There's a whole bunch of really positive things that you can look at internationally.

People ask me how I knew I would be able to do what I've done. Maybe my sense of responsibility comes from being a first child. My mum always says to me, "You've got the world on your shoulders. It's not all of your responsibility. You don't have to save the world." I have a deep feeling that it's my responsibility to do whatever I can. I think that I've been born into privilege, being able to live in Australia, being educated. We're so safe and so wealthy in this country, and we live on an amazingly beautiful planet – the only place we know that life exists. What more do you need to know to convince you you're responsible? And not just to safeguard all of these amazing different life forms, but also my fellow humans in other countries who don't have the same privileges that I do. You can't ask for anything better than having such a sense of purpose in your work.

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