

Snapshot Two

Profiling Youth Development Organisations and Programs.

A discussion paper

April 2003



AUSYOUTH

Supporting youth development across Australia

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This publication was researched and written by Jan Patterson, Principal Policy Officer Ausyouth and Roz Averis, Senior Policy and Project Officer Ausyouth.

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PROFILING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS AND PROGRAMS

I. INTRODUCTION

The profile of the people and activities involved in youth development across Australia is not well developed.

Originally the intention of this publication was to provide a detailed profile of youth development programs and organisations around Australia. However, to be able to do this effectively required:

- a common understanding of the concept of youth development across organisations and programs;
- a common language to describe the various aspects of organisations, programs and activities;
- accessible statistical data collection mechanisms to already be in place within organisations and programs, with similar definitions of terminology used;
- organisation and program time and resources to provide relevant data to a third party.

An early attempt to gather data from a number of youth development organisations and programs by the Ausyouth project revealed the disparate nature of the data held. It also highlighted the pressures on organisation and program staff time (many there in a voluntary capacity) to provide data in a form that could be meaningful and collated across the diverse range of activities.

Instead it seemed more useful, at this time, to provide youth development organisations and programs with information and ideas which could be used by them to profile their organisations and programs. From this starting point it may be possible in future for some agreement on the collection of a standard set of data that effectively profiles youth development in Australia.

This discussion paper explores the notion of statistical profiling as a means for youth development programs and organisations to present a comprehensive picture of themselves.

Statistical profiling provides a tangible picture of the extent of effort contributing to youth development. It also provides real evidence of what otherwise may be seen as unsubstantiated claims. Organisations have different methods for collecting statistical information about their participants or members and about their programs and activities. Often this is an underdeveloped area, and even when information is collected it is often not well utilised because the focus is primarily on financial accountability. The potential exists for statistical profiling both within organisations and, using a common data set, across organisations that provides a powerful picture of programs and activities. A minimum statistical data set for collection by youth development organisations and programs is proposed.



2. STATISTICAL PROFILING

2.1 Introduction

It is generally recognised that to be able to report on an organisation or program the collection of basic statistical data about various aspects of the organisation/program is necessary. Statistical profiling is a way of presenting the information contained in the statistical data to create a picture of an organisation/program and to inform organisational/program improvements.

Through statistical profiling a fuller picture of an organisation or program can be developed. This includes:

- establishing baseline data about the organisation/program and identifying trends and making projections;
- identifying the magnitude of 'effort', such as the range and number of activities and the levels of participation;
- testing out assumptions and challenging myths such as the patterns of participation about who is involved and in what capacity;
- providing information about the consistency or diversity of experience across programs and jurisdictions.

A well developed statistical data set provides an important source of information for evaluations of the organisation/programs.

Fundamental to statistical profiling are two factors:

1. Organisations/ programs need to be convinced that collection of data is useful to them.

Often those asked to supply statistical data are least likely to see how the data they collect is used. Creating a profile of the organisation/program from the statistics that are collected routinely by that them provides tangible evidence that the collection of data is useful and worthwhile. Involving 'collectors' in the determination of what data is to be collected and included in the profile can increase commitment to data collection that otherwise may be seen as an additional administrative task with no direct relevance to program implementation.

2. The audience for the profile must have confidence in the integrity of the data.

The well known quote 'lies, damned lies, and statistics' reflects the cynicism that sometimes pervades the presentation of statistical data, particularly if the statistics bear little resemblance to commonly held views and/or knowledge about the organisation/ program. Statistics, by themselves, do not necessarily provide useful information unless accompanied by explanation and analysis. It is this explanation and analysis that provides the substance of an organisation's or program's profile. Details about how the data was collected and collated and by whom are important in establishing the reliability and integrity of the data.



2.2 Tips for statistical profiling

- Think about the key questions that the data may be able to help answer. Often the trends that the data can show are more helpful than exact numbers — for example, the average age of participants is increasing/decreasing; the number of girls is the same but the number of boys joining is decreasing/increasing; average length of time of participation is increasing/decreasing, local program group size in country areas is increasing/decreasing. The implications for policy development and program implementation from the data trends will depend on the organisation/program's priorities.
- Do an audit of all existing data collected by the organisation/program. In some instances, digging into the data which is actually being recorded may provide information — but its usefulness may not be immediately obvious at first glance. For example, if records are kept about awards or certificates presented or tests passed, this may help to provide some information about the length of time that the particular participant was a member.
- Develop a data collection strategy to identify what information about the organisation/program needs to be collected for the profile. Use existing data as the starting point for the profile and introduce new items to the data collection at planned intervals.
- To provide more in-depth information, a once-off 'census' where more detailed information is collected on that particular day/or in that week/or in that month may be useful.
- Involving others in determining what the profile might look like and how this might be useful to them will help increase ownership and commitment to data collection.
- Establish a database for recording the data that allows quick retrieval and reporting of data for analysis. Do not underestimate the time and capacity needed to collate and analyse the data.
- Provide reports based on the data often and, when possible, to those collecting the data. Smaller, more frequent reports that focus on particular aspects of the data will let data collectors know how the information is being used.



3. STANDARD DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SETS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

3.1 Introduction

Youth development programs and organisations are defined by a number of key features forming what might at present be described as an 'embryonic' set of standards for positive youth development models in Australia.

As youth development as a national approach targets all young Australians, an inclusive ethos — whether in recruitment processes or program design — is one of these standards which is critical, not only as a feature of the programs themselves, but also in terms of achieving the broader aims, longer-term vision and ongoing sustainability of the youth development project. The measure of success will in large part depend on the extent to which the enrichment of Australia's young people through positive youth development programs can be clearly demonstrated.

As a starting point to this process, it is necessary to have an understanding of the issues relevant to establishing and utilising a minimum data set to ensure consistency of demographic data collection across the relevant areas involved in youth development. This will complement the information currently being collected about youth development organisations and programs and enable a more comprehensive understanding of youth development in Australia to evolve over time.

3.2 International context

Australia is signatory to a range of international conventions which have been established to uphold human rights and promote a just and harmonious society. The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948 states that:

... recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world ...

In Australia, the principles embodied in some of international instruments have been incorporated into laws which operate at national, state and territory levels. Under these statutes, it is unlawful to discriminate against individuals or groups in the provision of services in any area of public life on various grounds. These grounds differ across Australian states and territories. However, all must comply with the *Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of their:

... race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, age, medical record, criminal record, impairment, marital status, mental, intellectual or psychiatric disability, nationality, physical disability, sexual preference, or trade union activity.¹¹

Australia's obligations to the international conventions include periodically submitting progress reports on equity outcomes to the United Nations. State and territory jurisdictions are similarly required to make this information, which is collected from a variety of sources, available for examination at the national level.

Data collected through the Australian Census of Population and Housing is analysed by cross-referencing variables and is used to construct basic community profiles. From this, we are provided with a picture of what

¹¹ See the Equal Opportunity Commission website at <http://www.eoc.sa.gov.au/public/index.html> which lists relevant international instruments and national and state/territory Acts.



Australia looks like, providing a platform for government action to redress inequities which are contrary to the intent of international conventions which Australia has made a commitment to uphold.

3.3 Community profiles

As noted, in Australia, government at Commonwealth, state/territory and local levels systematically collect demographic data through the national Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other sources. One of the primary purposes of this is to provide information about the Australian population and highlight whether segments of the community are excluded or disadvantaged, who they are, and where this is happening. Indicators for each state/territory are able to tell us what proportion of the population is Indigenous to Australia, is of non-English speaking background, is in a particular age bracket, lives in an area of socio-economic disadvantage, and so on. The 1996 Census generated some useful statistical reports which can be used to guide target-setting, so that participation in activities or access to services by various groups of people reflects demographic trends within the broader population. Cross-reference with readily available baseline data from other sources can be used to monitor achievement of equity targets at various levels – program, organisation, state or national.

Some areas of youth activity or status are well defined, for example education, training and participation in the youth labour market. However, youth development does not have a well developed profile of activities, participants or people involved in program delivery.

To begin to map this area, programs which are actively supported by government can play a critical exemplar role. Modelling good practice in data collection, statistical profiling, and monitoring to ensure that positive youth development activities are shared equitably across the youth population are indicative of high quality program provision.

3.4 Inclusivity as a youth development agenda

One of the hallmarks of positive youth development, and one which is endorsed in the initial National Youth Development Strategy, is its inclusive ethos. Youth development is not about further advantaging those who are already privileged at the expense of those who are not. Neither is it about exclusively targeting young people at risk, already in trouble (or assumed to have the pathology for anti-social behaviour) at the expense of other individuals who also deserve the opportunity to reach their potential. Taking a lesson from the United States experience, a universal approach has been identified as the most effective way to achieve a 'critical mass' of young people involved in relevant activities. Targeting for inclusivity – that is, for ensuring diverse representation that reflects the mix of the broader population – is good practice. (Labeling for the opposite reason, on the other hand – for exclusion – is discriminatory and is not acceptable within a positive youth development framework.²)

On the face of it, inclusivity as a characteristic of youth development approaches is not a difficult or challenging concept to understand. The dictionary definition of 'inclusive' is quite clear, viz, 'not excluding any section of society'.

However, when we talk of youth development having an 'inclusive ethos', this is not merely a statement of principle made to reveal good intentions; it implies a range of actions which need to be implemented to make inclusivity a reality. At the Second National Youth Development Conference, 'Our Future Now – Empowering young people through youth development', a number of questions which reflect the inclusivity agenda for youth development were raised during the panel session on participant diversity:

² Pittman, K, Irby, M & Ferber, T (2000), *Unfinished Business: Further Reflections on a Decade of Promoting Youth Development*, International Youth Foundation,



- How do we make youth development a truly cross-community, cross-cultural, cross-gender, inclusive experience?
- How do we ensure equity (that is, equal outcomes)?
- How do we best manage fair access?
- How do we ensure youth development programs for young people with a range of disabilities?
- How do we tackle racial stereotypes and negative attitudes that make participation for some young people less comfortable than for others?

For inclusive organisational cultures to develop, implementing an effective framework needs to involve three stages: collecting the necessary statistics; understanding why certain groups are not involved; and initiating action strategies to address non-engagement.³

3.5 Inadequacy of current data

Program providers must be also be accountable for proper, equitable and effective use of resources — whether to a management board, or in the case of the public funding, ultimately to Parliament through a minister. This includes being able to demonstrate that the inclusive ethos of specifically funded youth development programs is genuine as well as being able to satisfy the interests of transparency and probity in the acquittal of public funds and other entrusted resources.

Perhaps the most important point to bear in mind — particularly in relation to programs which receive public funding — is that, in a climate of scarce resources, outcomes dictate continuation, expansion, or withdrawal of support. Anecdotal evidence is inadequate to defend a program's continuation. On the other hand, documentary evidence and hard data can present a compelling case.

At the moment, a number of youth development organisations and programs do not collect a wide range of data. For example, the Topley Report (Cadets: The Future — A Strategy for the Australian Services Cadet Scheme)⁴ presented in August 2000, highlighted that very little 'prior quantitative or collected codified qualitative material' (p23) was available to assist the review. This made the exercise considerably more intensive and painstaking. As a consequence, absence of strategic data on cadets, including sets indicating ethnic or language factors, Indigenous origin, and gender mix was noted as a particular concern. Record keeping and data collection practices across units revealed 'varying levels of consciousness of a need to facilitate membership from [diverse] bodies of young people — from proactivity in a few cases to indifference or uncertainty in a few others' (p34).

In developing the publication Snapshot One, which profiles the state government sponsored youth development programs, Ausyouth experienced similar difficulties in obtaining data. At a recent meeting of state program managers, consideration was given to establishing data collection as a standard procedure across all local program groups, by applying a consistent set of demographic data which would be collected from all program participants.

Note: All Ausyouth publications cited in this paper are available at <http://www.thesource.gov.au/ausyouth/>

3 Halliday S (2001), 'Equity and Access in Youth Development', *Our Future Now – empowering young people through youth development*, Second National Youth Development Conference, Conference Proceedings, Ausyouth, Adelaide at http://www.the_source.gov.au/ausyouth/

4 The review's findings were presented to the Hon. Eric Abetz, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence on 25 August 2000. John Topley, chaired the steering group for the project.



4. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SET PROPOSED

To be able to present a comprehensive statistical profile of youth development organisations and programs, at a minimum the following data will need to be collected.

4.1 Local program group information

- suburb or postcode location;
- location, such as school based, regional branch office or community organisation;
- establishment date, closing down date;
- primary provider organisation and/or program to be delivered;
- age range (or range of year levels, if school based) of participants to whom the program is offered;
- regular meeting time/s (for example, in school hours, out of school hours, combination of both, evenings, weekends, monthly) and average time spent on program per week;
- participant, leader and adult volunteer numbers reported half yearly.

4.2 Participant information

Demographic information about participants:

- date of birth (preference) or age;
- gender;
- identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young person;
- identifies as a young person who speaks a language other than English at home and/or was born overseas;
- identifies as a young person with a disability or disabilities;
- primary home postcode.

Participant information in relation to program:

- local program group name (linked to local provider group information);
- date commencing in program;
- date exiting program and reason for exit (that is, standard list of options
- specific awards, certificates and Vocational Education and Training (VET) modules achieved (that is, standard list of options — for example (i) first aid, (ii) Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/CVA, (iii) specific award/s from service provider organisation, (iv)VET module).

Youth development organisations and programs may also wish to collect similar information about their leaders and other adult volunteers.

All data items within the data set for local program groups and for participants need to be able to be cross-tabulated with all other data items and across the two data sets. For example, to be able to identify the service provider organisations that are currently involved in a local program group when at least one of the participants has a disability/disabilities.

The demographic data about participants proposed for collection by youth development organisations and programs is already used for statistics compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on vocational education and training, education and young people.



5. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SET CATEGORIES

The following categories are considered as the **minimum** which would be required:

- age;
- gender;
- young people who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin;
- young people who speak a language other than English at home and/or born overseas
- young people with a disability or disabilities;
- primary home postcode.

These categories correlate with the grounds for discrimination set out in international covenants and with anti-discrimination legislation in place in Australia. The categories comprising the proposed minimum data set, and how the baseline data can be used, are explained below.

5.1 Age/date of birth

Age criteria provides a starting point for the design of age-relevant activities, for tracking retention rates of participants, or duration of involvement in an organisation. They can be used for assessing what sorts of programs and activities have the most effective impacts for particular age brackets over a longer term,. They can also be used for cross-referencing with other data collected in qualitative and quantitative surveys, existing indicators (for example, the Census), purpose-designed quantitative and qualitative evaluations and longitudinal studies. As an example, the Topley Report used available age data from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) 1999 Census to cross-reference with survey data to reveal that 'cadets produce disproportionately high entries to the ADF' (p32) compared with the general population. The data also showed that entry to the ADF full time was more likely if a cadet had served at least 24 months, and that a higher proportion of ranked personnel had been cadets. As a result, the report recommended that ADF recruitment strategies take account of current long serving cadets as a strong potential source of full time recruits to the defence services.

5.2 Gender

The desired objective is to achieve balanced gender representation across the range of recognised youth development activities, or within individual programs (unless they are designed to be gender specific to achieve certain outcomes). Baseline data revealing a greater proportion of male participants could prompt further research to find out how structures or activities within an organisation might be changed in order to encourage a higher level of participation from young women. Being able to demonstrate a reasonable balance of young men and young women can promote an organisation's inclusive ethos and overcome preconceived ideas about predominant male (or female) cultures within an organisation which might otherwise act as a recruitment deterrent.⁵ An unbalanced result could signal that action needs to be taken to change an organisation's sexist language or culture. It might also be an indicator that intentional forms of discrimination or harassment are at work. (Both intentional and unintentional forms of discrimination are unlawful.⁶)

⁵ See for example, 'Defence Cadets – a new and bright future', *Ausyouth Newsletter*, Issue 3, February 2, page 1

⁶ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website (as at March 2001), *Getting to know the Sex Discrimination Act: A guide for young women*, at http://www.hreoc.gov.au/sex_discrimination/young_women/index.html.



5.3 Indigenous status

In the most recent national Census, 'Indigenous status' includes young people who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. In some states/territories with higher populations of Torres Strait Islander people, people in the Indigenous group may prefer their ancestral origins to be disaggregated. (These categories can always be combined at a later stage if comparison with other data using the category 'ATSI' or 'Indigenous' is required). Compared with other sectors of the population, young people of Indigenous origin suffer disadvantage on a range of social indicators, including health, education, and disproportionately high involvement with the justice system. It is likely that without careful targeting and encouragement, they may also be under-represented in positive youth development programs. If the figures reveal that this is occurring, we need to find out why, and what could or should be done to improve young Indigenous people's participation.

5.4 Cultural and linguistic diversity

Australia's population is characterised by a significant degree of cultural and linguistic diversity. Seeking information about whether people speak a language other than English at home and/or were born overseas will generally reveal whether someone is a new entrant to Australia, or has parents who are immigrants. Similar to the previous category, people in this group and their children can be marginalised from 'mainstream' activities and services – language or culture often presenting a barrier to access. A United Kingdom based study examining barriers to youth development involvement found, for instance, that twice as many 'white' compared with ethnic minority young people were involved in campaigning or volunteering activities. Often this could be attributed to family cultural differences, and different parental expectations of children based on cultural norms.⁷ This has implications for program design and broadening the range of activities that families of ethnic backgrounds find acceptable. There may be some advantage in considering whether a finer level of detail about national or ethnic origin could be useful in ensuring that program design is culturally appropriate with activities that appeal to diverse groups, or ensuring marketing strategies take account of different linguistic groups.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly those who live in traditional communities, sometimes identify as speaking a language other than English at home, or as being of non-English speaking background. If it is important to be able to discern 'new' or second generation Australian status, it will be necessary to be able to disaggregate categories, such as 'speaking a language other than English at home', from information which is designed to reveal overseas origin of the participant or their parent/s.

The four base questions used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to indicate cultural and linguistic diversity include 'country of birth'; 'language spoken at home'; 'non-English speaking background'; and 'identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander'.

5.5 Disability

Young people with disabilities have varying capacities for involvement in a wide range of activities and readily take up the challenge⁸. If youth development program statistics show poor representation of people who identify in this group, obviously access and inclusivity issues will need to be addressed. Consultation with peak groups representing people with special needs can assist programs to ensure that young people with a disability have opportunities to connect with their broader community and are able to participate in a wide variety of fulfilling activities which will assist them to reach their potential.

7 Intersecting gender and ethnicity also revealed some gender-specific cultural barriers. See Roker, D; Player, K & Coleman, J (1999), *Challenging the image: Young people as volunteers and campaigners*, National Youth Agency, Leicester

8 A case in point is the achievement of the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Medal Award by a young woman with an intellectual disability (see Rachel High's presentation in the Second National Youth Development Conference Proceedings)



There are a wide range of disabilities — visual, auditory, sensory or neurological, physical impairment, psychiatric, intellectual, and also multiple combinations of these. They could be temporary or permanent. In addition, disability can intersect with other factors such as ethnic or Indigenous background, which can tend to compound disadvantage. Unintentional exclusion, therefore, can also occur in a correspondingly wide variety of ways if attention is not specifically directed to measures to ensure appropriate access by diverse groups. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission suggests the development of an organisational action plan, and has developed some excellent resources to assist organisations in this regard.⁹

5.6 Primary home postcode

Postcodes are commonly used as indicators of socio-economic status, of metropolitan, country, rural or isolated residency. They can also indicate whether a region is subject to the impact of structural unemployment, is characterised by intergenerational unemployment, has a high proportion of people from ethnic or Indigenous backgrounds, lower rates of school retention, and so on. Understanding the demographics of a region assists in optimising access and equity strategies to ensure that disadvantage concentrated in particular pockets is not compounded by under-servicing or lack of opportunities that people in more affluent or accessible areas take for granted.

One factor which may prove to be an issue in this category is the primary postcode for program participants who are boarding away from home. If absolutely accurate statistics are required, it is possible that both home and boarding residence postcodes will need to be recorded. If, on the other hand, the information is being used to indicate general trends, the primary postcode would probably be adequate.

⁹ See, for example, the *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plan: A Guide for Non-Government Organisations*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website at "<http://www.hreoc.gov.au>"



6. OTHER DATA COLLECTION ISSUES

6.1 Ease of collection

A simple and effective method of collecting and managing the data without creating administrative systems which are cumbersome and time-consuming is essential if such an exercise is not to fall by the wayside. This is especially important when the data management role relies on volunteer capacity.

Ideally, participant data would be collected at the point of recruitment on an 'enrolment' form containing all the relevant categories. For existing participants, it may otherwise be possible to retrieve the information from within existing systems, for instance schools' student records, by cross-referencing known details about program participants.

Another alternative would be to seek personal information through a 'census' of existing participants.

6.2 Self reporting

Although young people may be legitimately requested to provide personal details about themselves, the choice by individuals not to divulge what they might consider to be sensitive information must be respected. Some participants may not feel comfortable about indicating, for example, their ancestry or a disability, preferring to identify with young people 'in the mainstream'.

Young people aged over 14 may take part in surveys requesting disclosure of personal information; however, young people aged under 16 must have parental permission to participate in a program (and therefore to endorse the provision of information required on the relevant recruitment form).

6.3 Confidentiality

The Commonwealth the *Privacy Act 1988* arose from Australia's signing of the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and establishes strict safeguards about the use of personal information collected from individuals. These apply when collecting, storing, using, or allowing anyone else to use the information. A high level of confidentiality will need to be observed in relation to data about program participants. This factor is particularly important in terms of managing data about children and young people in a way that ensures that their interests are protected. Organisations and programs will need to have privacy statements¹⁰. Records such as hard copy and files containing personal data should be stored securely either in a locked room or cupboard, with electronic data stored on computing equipment which is password-protected and levels of access determined on a 'need to know' basis. Permission to access the data should only be given to personnel who have a legitimate reason to use it, and on the understanding that the information must be kept in strict confidence.

¹⁰ The website of the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner is helpful – <http://www.privacy.gov.au>



7. LINKS WITH MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Collection of data is a misuse of people's time and resources if the data is only to be locked away in a filing cabinet and never referred to again. Data collection is, after all, only phase one of an access and equity plan.

Phase two requires the data to be developed into statistical profiles, presenting a picture of organisational activity in a way that enables observation of trends over time. Such profiles serve as a management planning tool in assessing progress on goals and objectives, in evaluating whether participant populations reflect the demographic mix of the population at large, or whether more effort is required and where this should be directed. Further research may be required. The reasons why there is an equity imbalance might not always be obvious, nor easily disclosed. This step — understanding **why** a program is failing to be inclusive — is critical. Only then can the appropriate action be set in place to redress the problem (phase three). For an organisation to maintain its include ethos, monitoring, evaluation and adjusting the program accordingly are actions which need to occur as an ongoing exercise..

Collecting and maintaining a data set for each program participant, as outlined above, can be extremely useful in demonstrating that youth development programs **are** meeting their aims of providing opportunities to participants from a diverse range of backgrounds and with differing individual circumstances. Having a statistical profile of participants allows program providers to counter unwarranted criticisms of exclusivity, and recognise the need to review program design features or recruitment processes to ensure that they do not discriminate directly or indirectly against particular individuals or groups. This latter point goes beyond good practice — as pointed out earlier it is required by law.

Evaluations which are non-routine can, and indeed do, produce extremely useful data about programs. However (and without by any means denigrating the value of one-off evaluations), they are not by themselves sufficient. One-off' evaluations are not meant to be a substitute for efficient and effective record-keeping. The Topley Report, and in a number of the state government sponsored youth development program evaluations which formed the basis of Ausyouth's Snapshot 1, noted they can involve relatively higher costs in time and resources. They also found that retrieving responses can present logistical difficulties, and the effectiveness of the data can be limited by an inadequate sample size. Ideally, a 'one-off' form of evaluation would complement accurate demographic data which is routinely collected and maintained on an ongoing basis.



8. OTHER PROFILES

While statistical profiling can provide a quantitative picture of youth development organisations and programs, providing a qualitative picture is equally important. Most organisations and programs are familiar with promotion and marketing strategies and the use of publications, such as annual reports, to provide information to others. By building on these processes, various profiles from different perspectives and for different audiences can be created.

A set of comprehensive profiles can be used as a framework for reporting and a resource for developing specific promotional material. In a way it is the 'human' side of strategic or business plans.

Some suggested profiles might include:

Within organisations

- linking youth development programs aims, objectives, outcomes and goals to the organisation's corporate and operational plans that support the implementation of youth development programs;
- outlining to own organisation, the range of other organisations that may be involved in the delivery of youth development programs and activities;
- young people involved in the youth development programs and activities presenting their stories directly to senior executives and boards;
- describing and linking programs according to regional or operational divisions.

For external bodies

Profiling organisations and programs is necessary to ensure ongoing investment in youth development. The audience they are targeting will influence how organisations and programs develop their profiles. One particular area in which youth development organisations and programs may be able to expand and extend is in partnerships with business. Ausyouth's Business Partnerships for Youth Development provides ideas and suggestions for how best to go about this.

Outcomes for young people

Profiling the outcomes for young people is particularly important if organisations and programs are to grow and be sustained. Presenting young people's individual stories about their involvement is one way of demonstrating outcomes (see Ausyouth's *Better than Fantastic* for examples). Asking young people about their expectations, experiences and the outcomes they have identified for themselves and documenting this is another way (see Ausyouth's *Learning from what young people have to say* for an example of this).

Identifying outcomes for specific groups of young people is also important if youth development is to cater effectively for the diversity of young people. Ausyouth's *Youth Development and Indigenous Young Australians*, for example, provides discussion of some of the issues that organisations and programs need to consider in working with Indigenous young people and their communities.

Developing generic instruments for measuring outcomes for young people from their involvement in youth development is also necessary. While considerable work has been done in the United States on this¹¹, contextualising the instruments for the Australian environment is still in the early stages. The longitudinal study being undertaken by the Youth Research Centre in may be able to provide some guidance about measuring outcomes for young people.



Application of good practice

Profiles can be developed using the Ausyouth *Good Practice in Youth Development: A Framework of Principles* as the basis. Indicators specific to the organisation or program can be identified and reported against, forming a picture of good practice and aspirations within the organisation of program. The two Ausyouth good practice implementation guides *Creating the Environment for Youth Development* and *Volunteering and Youth Development* provide other more specific starting points for creating a profile of good practice.

Appendix One outlines a schedule of other items that could be included in a comprehensive organisation or program profile.

11 The National Academies of Science recent publication *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development* provides a good overview of this research. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10022.html>



9. CONCLUSION

It makes good and strategic sense for youth development organisations and programs to develop comprehensive profiles, and in particular to adopt a standard minimum demographic data set. The development of generic instruments for measuring outcomes for young people involved in youth development is still in the early stages for the Australian context. However, it is also critical to be able to demonstrate outcomes in a way that attracts ongoing investment in youth development by governments, businesses and communities.

Taking steps to demonstrate inclusivity, and ensure that Australia's diverse youth population is reflected in participant representation, models good practice. It also sets an example for other organisations offering services within the youth sphere. It underpins accountability for the equitable and effective use of public resources, and enables more effective decision making about youth development policies and procedures at program, organisation, state and national level. Ultimately, it will enable governments and youth development providers to meet their commitment to young people by providing quality organisations, programs and activities which suit the diverse needs of all Australian young people who wish to be involved in youth development.



APPENDIX ONE

Other items that could be included in an organisation or program profile

1. Purpose/outcome
2. Value, philosophical base
3. Performance indicators
4. Governance structure
5. Advisory structures
6. Involvement of young people in decision making structures and processes
7. Scope (range or restrictions on membership and/or participation)
8. Equity strategies
9. Scope of programs offered
10. Partnerships with other organisations (including structural arrangements)
11. Funding base
12. Sponsorship
13. Funding use policy and acquittal arrangements
14. Fees for membership, policy on participants
15. Uniform or other required equipment policy
16. Staffing policies, guidelines, protocols
17. Policy on volunteers
18. Duty of care policies
19. Risk management, insurance and liability arrangements
20. Roles of paid staff and volunteers
21. Training and development program for staff (paid and volunteers)
22. Behaviour standards
23. Complaints handling policies
24. Structure of programs offered
25. Commitment and time allocation requirement by members or participants
26. Learning outcomes and education/training methodologies to be used in program
27. Recording and reporting on skills and recognition arrangements
28. Promotion strategy
29. Newsletters, other publications, conferences, regular major events
30. Links to national, international organisations and programs
31. Accountability requirements, including statistical reporting
32. Evaluation (including satisfaction and other feedback from participants)
33. Strengths of various programs — earmarking good practice



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