Deficits or Strengths?

Re-conceptualising Youth Development

Program Practice

Kathryn M. Seymour

MSocSci(Applied Social Research)
BA (Hons)(History and Women's Studies)

School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Arts, Education and Law
Griffith University

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Abstract

This thesis is about the Queensland Youth Development Research Project (YDRP), a program of research I designed to respond to the absence of research on community youth development programs in Australia. The neglect in scholarly, policy and practitioner literatures of volunteer youth workers and community youth development programs has resulted in limited recognition of program diversity, the nature and impact of community-based programs, and the differences between strength-based and deficit-based approaches. Addressing this lacuna in the literature is important given the large number of young people from diverse social backgrounds who participate in organisations such as Surf Life Saving and Girl Guides.

I address two research questions: (1) What are the core characteristics of youth development programs? (2) What are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland community youth development programs? I explore these questions through two separate, but linked studies. In the first I use a participatory action research model to examine how strength-based youth development approaches can be conceptualised in a program environment. In the second I use questionnaires (n=440) and interviews (n=37) to explore young member socio-demographic, involvement and developmental characteristics and their program engagement and practice experiences.

In addition to the research questions, I address two methodological questions: (1) What might a strength-based approach to engaging young people in research look like? (2) How can such research be reported in a strength-based way that is consistent with inclusive participatory methodologies? I examine the first methodological question through an analysis of the theoretical, ethical and
practical issues associated with engaging with young people in research. I explore the second methodological question by deliberating on the ways in which the words we use can be inclusive rather than exclusive of others. I also consider how the ways we write can have an impact on those who are written about and those who are doing the reading. The youth inclusive mixed methods I present in this thesis were designed to accommodate diverse programs: The Boys Brigade, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Emergency Services Cadets, Girl Guides, Leo Clubs (Lions Clubs International), Police Citizens Youth Clubs Youth Management Teams and Surf Life Saving.

There are three research outcomes: (1) *An analytic tool* comprised of five youth program elements (theory, context, structure, operation and outcomes) showing the complex ecological nature of the youth development program. Most scholars, while not explicitly describing their research in this way, do examine a single element or some combination of these five elements. I show how some scholars, who describe their work using one or more of these elements, use them incorrectly, or fail to acknowledge their complex interlinked and bi-directional nature. This contributes to a high level of confusion about the characteristics of youth programs which the analytic tool helps to clarify.

(2) *A new good practice framework* comprising six strength-based principles along with 36 indicators and 288 examples of action describing quality youth development program practice. These focus on the themes of learning and development; leadership and decision making; an inclusive ethos; community service; partnerships and networking; and ethical promotion.

(3) *An analysis of young member self-report data.* Young people report that their participation in youth development programs influences their lives positively
through the development of important life-skills. Research underpinned by positive youth development theory shows that when young people are well equipped with life-skills they are more likely to reach their full intellectual potential and be happy, active, confident, healthy and contributing family, peer group and community members. Comparative analysis on a selection of life-skills between two sub-samples of 12-13 year olds (the YDRP and a more representative sample), reveals that young members have significantly higher levels of activity in volunteering and significantly better problem solving skills, capacity to control anger, and communication skills.

There are two methodological outcomes: (1) A new approach to using language to include rather than to exclude. This work has involved deliberating on the ways in which words can act to exclude or marginalise through entrenched dichotomies. Four examples are presented which focus on the ways we demarcate, for example, young people from adults, paid from unpaid workers, targeted from universal programs, and the ways in which an academic, de-personalised style of writing about research can obscure the role of the participants in that research.

(2) Five case-studies of adult-led and intergenerational models of older and younger people working together to highlight research factors which influence the development, scope, implementation, failures and successes of youth-inclusive research. These examples illustrate the importance of using a mix of participation strategies for both young and older people to motivate, support and recognise their participation as researchers, subjects and supporters. Research with young people in the role of subjects will be more successful if a targeted range of information and incentives are developed for young people and the significant adults who surround them.
Implications for future policy and research include the need to recognise and revalue the roles which Australian volunteer youth workers and community youth development programs play in equipping young people with important life-skills. In terms of practical implications at the program level there is a need to increase program accessibility for disadvantaged communities, widen the provision of intentional recognition to include more young people, and to foster more positive attitudes about mistakes that might be made by young people.
Statement of originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Kathryn Margaret Seymour
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Permissions

Ethics approval: Study One

Ethics approval and all necessary variations to conduct Study One were obtained from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU Reference: CCJ/08/06/HREC).

Ethics approval: Study One

Ethics approval and all necessary variations to conduct Study Two were obtained from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee for:

- YDOP membership data component: GU Ref CCJ/08/06/HREC.
- Questionnaire component: GU Ref CCJ/09/08/HREC.
- Interview component: GU Ref CCJ/10/08/HREC.

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Use of Adolescent Health and Wellbeing (AHW) survey data

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terms of the agreement between Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and Griffith University.
Defining youth involvement programs and activities

A youth development organisation is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation which delivers youth development programs and activities for and with kids and young adults. Some youth development activities and programs are delivered or supported by other kinds of organisations, including government run and government-funded or community-funded non-government organisations which deliver a range of services and programs for and with young and older people.

A youth activity is a single event. These can be structured or unstructured, group based or individual activities. Activities can be provided purely for fun or entertainment, to achieve a tangible goal and/or for specific education purposes. Activities can be joined into a program of activities or provided singly.

Organised activities are supervised by adults and do not have to be a part of a program of activities.

A youth program is a program of activities for young people.

Organised youth programs are individual or group-based structured programs of activities which are supervised by adults and emphasise physical, specialist, technical and/or life-skill building. Organised youth programs can be informed by strength-based or deficit-based theory, based on voluntary or mandatory youth participation, and, have a universal or targeted focus. They include:

- Extracurricular youth programs, which are provided in addition to the formal school curriculum and in collaboration with a school. These can occur before, during and after-school.

- Youth development programs, which provide a structured, age and developmentally appropriate curriculum of activities specifically designed to engage kids and young adults over an extended period of time and to result in tangible developmental outcomes.

Community youth development programs, are youth development programs supporting volunteer and universal youth participation, which are delivered using
a strength-based approach by local community members who are largely volunteers.
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<tr>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHWS</td>
<td>Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey</td>
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<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare</td>
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<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSI</td>
<td>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background</td>
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<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>The Boys’ Brigade</td>
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<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Queensland Government Department of Emergency Services</td>
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<td>Dukes</td>
<td>The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award</td>
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<td>EOI</td>
<td>Expression of interest</td>
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<td>ESC</td>
<td>The Emergency Services Cadets Program</td>
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<td>GU</td>
<td>Griffith University Queensland Australia</td>
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<td>Guides</td>
<td>Girl Guides</td>
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<td>HN</td>
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<td>Impact</td>
<td>Impact: Youth organisations reducing crime Ltd</td>
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<td>Lions Clubs International</td>
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<td>Leos</td>
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<td>MCAH</td>
<td>Melbourne Centre for Adolescent Health</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of understanding</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<td>OESR</td>
<td>Office of Economic and Statistical Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory action research</td>
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<td>Parent</td>
<td>Parent and/or guardian</td>
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<td>PCYC</td>
<td>Police Citizens Youth Clubs</td>
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<td>PYD</td>
<td>Positive youth development</td>
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<td>QYA</td>
<td>Queensland Youth Alliance</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>State Emergency Service</td>
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<td>SEIFA</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas</td>
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<td>SLSQ</td>
<td>Surf Life Saving Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>SYLP</td>
<td>PCYC state youth leadership program</td>
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<td>TILT</td>
<td>PCYC Tomorrow's Inspired Leaders Today</td>
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<td>YD</td>
<td>Youth development</td>
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<td>YDOP</td>
<td>Youth development organisations and programs</td>
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<td>YDRP</td>
<td>Queensland Youth Development Research Project</td>
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<td>YMT</td>
<td>PCYC youth management team</td>
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**Young member**

Kids and young adults who participate in youth development programs.
Chapter 1. The Queensland Youth Development Research Project

1.1. Introduction

How, and in what ways, do community youth development programs influence young people's lives? In this thesis, I present the findings of an Australian empirical study, the Queensland Youth Development Research Project (YDRP), which was designed to help answer this critical policy and research question. This thesis presents a fresh analysis of the program sector, the characteristics of community youth development programs, the young people who take part in them and strength-based ways of working with young people in research and program environments. Gaining clarity about the characteristics of the youth program sector, how to define it and where community programs fit in the sector, is necessary for understanding the ways in which they make a difference to children's and young adults' lives.

I present four significant outcomes from this work. First, I explain an analytical tool comprised of five key program elements (theory, context, structure, operation and outcomes). New analysis of these elements reveals the ecological nature of programs. I illustrate the use of this analytical tool in describing and understanding the characteristics of youth programs generally and community youth development programs specifically. This work also brings clarity to scholarly and practitioner understandings about program work and it addresses the absence
of the largely volunteer community program sector from Australian scholarly and
practitioner discourse.
Second, I explore what strength-based youth-inclusive research might look like through an examination of the theoretical, ethical and practical issues associated with engaging young people in the research process and illustrate their application in the YDRP. This work contributes to the emerging debates on the complex, interlinked ethical, practical and methodological challenges and responsibilities of doing research with young people. In these debates, issues such as the roles of significant adults, using inclusive methodological approaches and disseminating research outcomes are traced. Significantly, through the YDRP, I provide five case-studies of youth-inclusive research involving adult-led (older people with and informed by young people) and intergenerational (older and younger people working together as co-researchers) models.

Third, I introduce a new program practice framework. This new strength-based model of youth development practice recognises challenges and problems and supports positive participation and outcomes for young people, practitioners and the community. This work illustrates the practical application within the program environment of four of the five characteristic program elements – theory, structure, operation and context – all of which are necessary for supporting the fifth element – outcomes.

Fourth, I explore young people’s opinion about community youth development programs. In this work I explore the fifth program element, outcomes, by exploring youth opinion about the impact of their program on their lives and comparing the life-skills of two sub-samples of 12 to 13 year olds from the YDRP and the large-scale youth population Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey (AHWS) (Centre for Adolescent Health, 2005). This work is one of only a few studies which have
quantitatively and qualitatively explored the community program environment from young people’s point of view. This is also the only study to provide a comparative analysis between young community program participants and a more representative sample of Queensland youth. Overall, this thesis provides an original contribution to the existing conceptual, evidential and practical knowledge about program work.

In this chapter, I outline the scholarly, practitioner and program context for the YDRP. I discuss the need for a better understanding about the characteristics of programs and their diversity. I show how scholarly policy and practitioner discourse on youth work in Australia tends to neglect volunteer youth workers and community youth development programs. This has resulted in limited recognition of program diversity, community programs and the differences between strength-based and deficit-based approaches. I present the aims of my research, conducted from 2006 to 2010, which illustrate the breadth and depth of issues explored in the YDRP and discussed in this thesis. I outline the main conceptual elements which underpin my research approach and which constitute a new strength-based conceptual approach to presenting young people’s and youth worker stories. Finally, I provide a brief overview of the context of the Queensland YDRP and introduce the seven organisations and programs participating in my study. These seven summaries illustrate the diversity of Australian community programs. I conclude this chapter with an overview of my thesis.
1.2. Understanding youth development programs

Over the past three decades research exploring volunteer and professional youth work has led to an expansion in conceptual, practical and evidential knowledge about programs (ANTA, 2002; Emslie, 2013; Feldman Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, pp. 17-19; White, 2010b, p. 1). Underlying this burgeoning literature is the realisation that there is a need to better understand what characterises a high quality program and its outcomes (Borden, Wilson-Ahlstrom, Jones, & Yohalem, 2003; Kress, 2006, p. 45; Mueller et al. 2011; Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2003, p. 1).

In Australia, community program work has been sustained by anecdotal evidence arguing there is a strong relationship between youth involvement and positive developmental outcomes, such as the development of essential life-skills. When young people are well equipped with life-skills they are more likely to be happy, active, confident, healthy and contributing family, peer group and community members (Deschenes & McDonald, 2003, p. 4; Harris, Rogers, & Smith, 2010, p. xiv; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). However, there is very little Australian empirical evidence to support or to contextualise these stories. Only a few studies have been conducted in Australia and with Australian community youth development programs focusing on outcomes (Ausyouth, 2002c, 2002e, 2002f, 2003a, 2003c, 2003e, 2003f; CCYPWA, 2014, p. 94). Most of the program and activity research conducted in Australia focuses on exploring the participation outcomes of school-based extra-curricular activity (Blomfield, & Barber, 2009; Blomfield, & Barber, 2010; Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Blomfield Neira & Barber, 2012; Holdsworth, Lake, Stacey, & Stafford, 2005; Holdsworth, 2011), largely

At the international level, the majority of research has been conducted in the United States and on extra-curricular school-based programs (Anderson, Funk, Elliott, & Hull Smith, 2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Stearns & Glennie, 2010; Wilson, Gottfredson, Cross, Rorie, & Connell, 2009), the mixed structured and unstructured Boys and Girls clubs (Anderson-Butcher & Cash, 2010; Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003; Jones & Deutsch, 2011) and both school and community programs (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). There is, however, a growing body of work in the United States focusing on community programs such as Big Brother, Big Sister and 4-H clubs (Balsano, Phelps, Theokas, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009; Johnson Nicholson, Collins, & Holmer, 2004; Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, et al. 2005; Mueller et al. 2011; Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000; Schmid, Phelps & Lerner, 2011; Westhues, Clarke, Watton, & St. Claire-Smith, 2001).
The growing body of international evidence suggests that involvement in programs and activities, including community programs, promotes positive developmental outcomes (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Sesma, 2004; Busseri et al. 2006; Fredricks, 2012; Hansen et al. 2003; Holdsworth et al. 2005, p. 5; Kalish, Voigt, Rahimian, DiCara, & Sheehan, 2010; Larson, 2000; Loder & Hirsch, 2003; Meltzer, Fitzgibbon, Leahy, & Petsko, 2006; Oman et al. 2004; Rose-Krasnor, Busseri, Willoughby, & Chalmers, 2006; Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006). This work also suggests that the quality of a program and its activities will influence whether, when, and how much, participation will have a negative, neutral or positive effect on a young person’s life (Feldman Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006, p. 515; McLaughlin & O’Brien-Strain 2008, p. 313; Perkins & Borden, 2003, pp. 330-331; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a). Crucially, while research is increasing scholarly understanding about program work, there is still limited consensus on the key characteristics of youth programs. This is illustrated in three main areas:

*First,* there is a *high level of conceptual ambiguity* leading to inconsistency in language, definitions, measures and approaches (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006, p. 2; Holt, Sehn, Spence, Newton, & Ball, 2012; Mueller et al. 2011, p. 1116; Ramey & Rose-Krasnor, 2012, p. 88). This is evident even in tightly focused research studies exploring the connections between involvement and developmental outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004, p. 118; Bult, Verschuren, Jongmans, Lindeman, & Ketelaar; 2011, p. 1528; Feldman Farb & Matjasko, 2012, p. 5; Gardner, Browning, & Brooks-Gunn, 2012, p. 663; Rose-Krasnor et al. 2006, p. 386; Rose-Krasnor, 2008; Lerner, Napolitano, Boyd,
Mueller, & Callina, 2014, p. 18). Even the idea of a specific, identifiable period of childhood, adolescence or early adulthood (De Sales, 2005; Eccles & Gootman, 2002, p. 1; Furstenberg, Rumbaut, & Settersten, 2005; Leverett, 2011, p. 18; Schulenberg, Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 2005; Te Riele, 2004; Wyn, 2007) and the meanings of the terms children, youth, young people and adults (Bessant, 2006, p. 52; Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010; Fine, 2004; France, 2007; Kociumbas, 2002; Sandefur, Eggerline-Boeck, & Park, 2005, pp. 292-293, 315; Shanahan, Porfeli, Mortimer, & Erickson, 2005; Wyn, 2009, p. 1) are contested further complicating the debate about the roles of programs.

Second, there is enduring debate about the practical elements of a youth development program. There is no clear agreement about what exactly youth development programs look like, how they should be defined (Ausyouth, 2001e; Catalano et al. 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, p. 95; Gardner, Browning, & Brooks-Gunn, 2012, p. 663), how they can best support positive development (Benson et al. 2006, p. 2; Holt et al. 2012; Mueller et al. 2011, p. 1116) or what exactly attracts young people to participate in them (Anderson, Sabatelli, & Trachtenberg, 2007; Deschenes et al. 2010; Greene, Lee, Constance, & Hynes, 2013, p. 1569; Rose-Krasnor, 2008, p. 504). The debate on youth development is further complicated by differing opinions on the roles of young people and significant adults in programs (Crean, 2012, p. 187; Holdsworth, 2011; Kirshner, 2008, p. 94; Larson & Angus, 2011, p. 278).

Third, there is ongoing debate about the evidential or outcomes of participation in programs. This extends to questions on how to define program outcomes in positive ways rather than simply as an absence of problem behaviours.
(Lerner, Almerigi, et al. 2005, pp. 21-22; Lerner et al., 2014, p. 18; Zeldin, 1995, p. 454), what influence programs have on the development or wellbeing of young people (Crean, 2012; Kress, 2006, p. 45; Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, p. 221; Mueller et al, 2011, p. 1117) and what are the developmental processes which occur within the program environment (Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2013, p. 11; Larson & Angus, 2011, p. 278). Exactly how programs increase the likelihood young people will choose positive activities (e.g. reading for pleasure) over problem ones (e.g. illegal drug taking, crime) (Gambone et al. 2004; Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005, pp. 12-13) and whether specific types of programs will work best for young people with specific socio-demographic or behavioural characteristics (Bradshaw, et al. 2008, p. 210; Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012, p. 284; Kalish et al. 2010; Riggs & Greenberg, 2004, p. 179; Riggs, Bohnert, Guzman, & Davidson, 2010, p. 417) are also matters of debate.

These three lacunae in the literature illustrate three key issues. First they illuminate the complexity of meanings attached to the term youth development. Second, they underscore the complexity of the program sector within which community programs are situated. Third, they point to the growing impact of positive youth development theory.

In relation to the first of these issues, the term ‘youth development’ describes many things. Youth development can be used to describe the nature of development or growing up in its broadest sense as it takes place naturally all the time, across different places and times and in different domains or contexts (Holdsworth et al.
2005). It is also used to describe specific and tangible developmental outcomes for young people (Delgado, 2004; Pittman et al. 2003, p. 1).

With regards to the second of these issues, *youth involvement work is complex and diverse* making it difficult to classify programs and activities. Youth involvement work involves a range of organisations, services, events, activities and programs employing a diverse range of deficit-based and strength-based frameworks and approaches in different contexts, places, structures and times (ANTA, 2002; Blyth, 2003; Bohnert, Fredricks, & Randall, 2010; Borden, 2003; Bradshaw, Brown, & Hamilton, 2008, p. 210; Holdsworth et al. 2005; Gallagher; Stanley, Shearer, & Mosca, 2005; Mahoney et al. 2005, p. 4; Quinn, 1999; Witt & Caldwell, 2005).

Youth programs include sporting (Coakley, 2011; Fuller; Percy, Breuning, & Cotrufo, 2013; Perkins & Noam, 2007; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012), adventure (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011), academic or skills training (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002; Riggs & Greenberg, 2004) and programs targeting specific problems and issues (Springer et al. 2004; Stephens et al. 2009; Teasdale, Stephens, Slobodac, Greyd, & Stephens, 2009). Some programs rely heavily on volunteer youth workers, some are run solely by professional youth workers and some use a mix of professional and volunteer staff. These programs range from community to government sponsored and funded (Quinn, 1999, p. 98). Some programs are delivered using an intergenerational staffing philosophy, some are staffed solely by older adults and some are led solely by young people (Jolly, J. 2010, p. 8). Furthermore, some activities and programs are delivered during-school hours (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Okamoto, Herda, & Hartzog, 2013) and others are
provided after-school during the week (Hirsch & Wong, 2005; Nelson & Gastic, 2009), on the weekend or during school holidays (Nicholson, Collins, & Holmer, 2004). Some programs involve family, some are strongly linked with the local community and some are short-term programs aimed at high intensity impact (Gallagher et al. 2005; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Lawford, Ramey, Rose-Krasnor, & Proctor, 2012).

Other programs are universal programs designed to expose young people to a wide range of developmental activities and experiences over a long period of time (Apsler, 2009, p. 16; Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 11; Berlin, Dworkin, Eames, Menconi, & Perkins, 2007; Meyer, Miller, & Herman, 1993, p. 109; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 27; Pittman et al. 2003, p. 1; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 335). Some programs are run only in a specific location or community (Anderson, Sabatelli, & Trachtenberg, 2007), while others are linked into a state, national and international network of programs with the same program identity and guided by similar overarching principles (Baren, Meelan, & Meijs 2014). Some programs are voluntary and some are mandatory (Lakin & Mahoney, 2006). This complexity and diversity in programs reflects differences in youth policy directions and individual and community needs and interests which are influenced by theoretical, historical, social and political constructs (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 33; Gallagher et al. 2005, p. 562; Hill, 2010, p. 103; R. Homel, personal communication, 1 March 2015; Moore McBride, Johnson, Olate, O'Hara, 2011, p. 40; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 11; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b; Stearns & Glennie, 2010, pp. 296, 307; Tebes et al. 2007; Witt, 2005, p. 125).
With regards to the third lacunae in the literature, these program and activity differences are sharpened as positive youth development theory challenges the focus on deficits, turning instead towards a focus on strengths (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Sesma, 2004; Damon, 2004; Hilfinger Messias, Fore, McLoughlin, & Parra-Medina, 2005, p. 324; Kress, 2006, p. 54; Larson, 2006; Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005; Pittman et al. 2003, p. 10; Ramey & Rose-Krasnor, 2012).

The dominant deficit-based political and professional policy and practice discourse categorises young people into opposing groups, according to their problem status. In the first, young people are categorised as normal, mainstream and problem free. In the second, young people are classified as deviant, marginalised and troubled. In both categories, young people are judged against a risk, deficit-focused standard of problem behaviour which fails to prioritise each individual's unique talents and strengths. The impact of discourses of risk on young people's lives has been extensively explored in Australia by Kelly (2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2011), in the UK by France (2007, 2008) and in the UK and Australia by France and colleagues (France & Homel, 2007; France, Freiberg, & Homel, 2010). Strength-based practices challenge the deficit-based approach to program delivery. While it can be argued strength-based youth development has been widely practiced by community organisations and programs for decades (Maunders, 1990), the deliberate conceptual, practical and evidential examination and development of the field is undeniably new (Beck & Purcell, 2010, pp. 3-5; King, Schultz, et al. 2005).
1.3. Contemporary Australian youth development program context

Scholarly policy and practitioner discourse on youth work in Australia demonstrates the impact of the three conceptual, practical and evidential gaps described in Part 1. The Australian discourse has tended to focus primarily on the paid or professional youth worker, and targeted program and service sector. It largely neglects the predominantly volunteer, universal, community program sector. For example, White (2010a) recently presented a collection of 38 articles from the *Youth Studies Australia* journal to illustrate key issues in Australian youth work. None of these articles were about volunteer youth work. International literature recognises volunteer youth workers more frequently (Davies, B. 2014; Jolly, J. 2010; MCYA, 2013; Nicholls, 2012). The absence of volunteer youth workers is also evident within the work of the peak practitioner Queensland community youth affairs body, the Youth Affairs Network Queensland (YANQ). YANQ does not explicitly include volunteers and confines its work to addressing the needs and interests of professional, paid workers. This absence of recognition for volunteers is clearly evident in their recent suite of reports debating the meaning and practice of youth work (Archer, 2012, 2014; Quixley, 2010). The exclusion of volunteers is also reflected in the Victorian based Youth Workers Association which only allows youth workers with specified university degree qualifications to be full members (YWA, 2014). While volunteer youth workers are recognised as the early innovators of youth work (Quixley, 2010, p. 7) they are not widely recognised as current practitioners of youth work in Australia.

The most significant exception to this non-engagement with the volunteer youth work sector was the Australian Government funding of research into youth development program work from 2000 to 2005. The funding provided through the
Federal Government Department of Family and Community Services supported the Ausyouth national project (2000 to 2003) and a three year longitudinal study into school-based programs. These were important outcomes flowing from the National Youth Development Strategy (MCEETYA) (2000). The aim of the Ausyouth national project was to use a strength based approach to advance youth development work in Australia. Ausyouth also aimed to increase recognition of the complementary roles of universal and targeted program work (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 1; Gilding, 2001, p. 4). The aim of the longitudinal study (Holdsworth et al. 2005, p. 1) was to collect self-report outcome and practice data from Victorian, Western Australia and South Australian State Government sponsored or supported school-based, youth programs. The Ausyouth work and the longitudinal research study resulted in a suite of practitioner and project reports (Ausyouth suite of reports 2000-2003; Holdsworth et al. 2005). However, neither the Ausyouth project nor the longitudinal research work was, at the time, translated into mainstream scholarly discourse (e.g. journal articles, books). Only recently has Holdsworth (2011) published a critique of school-based community service learning in an edited scholarly book which referred to this body of work.

The youth development approach and the Ausyouth work have, however, been subjected to criticism by some Australian scholars. These analyses have largely been shaped by criticisms of the deficit-targeted approach to youth development within which the community youth work sector, the Ausyouth project and the strength-based youth development literature is conflated. Bessant (2003, p. 88; 2004, 390-391), for example, argues the Ausyouth work represents a government strategy to govern youth-at-risk and in doing so it problematizes young people. She suggests that the kinds of community programs profiled by
Ausyouth, and engaged in this doctoral research project, do not empower youth. Instead, Bessant (2003, p. 94; 2004, p. 402) argues these programs confine youth to adult-initiated and managed programs where they are unable to exercise power, challenge the ways they are represented, or exercise their democratic rights.

Contrary to this view, however, the Ausyouth work and community program work does not focus on youth-at-risk, utilises a strengths-based approach to development and has a fundamental emphasis on supporting all young people to influence and control their own lives (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 16-17). Overall, the body of Ausyouth (2000-2003) work challenges the dominant deficit-discourse about young people. Bessant’s criticism that community youth development programs are adult-initiated and managed is largely true. However, as the program summaries provided in this chapter illustrate, the ways in which power is operationalised differs from program to program. The ways in which young people are able to exercise power, challenge the ways they are represented and exercise their democratic power will also differ across adult-led, intergenerational and youth-led program work and activities. The degree to which youth exercise power will also vary across a program from group to group because the practice of sharing or relinquishing power relies on the skills and knowledge brought to, and developed in, the group by young and older people.

Wierenga (2003, p. 33) makes a similar assessment to Bessant (2003, 2004) also arguing that the youth development approach uses a deficit and “adultist” top-down approach. In contrast to Bessant, however, she suggests youth development mirrors formal education approaches imposed by adults on young people and fails to acknowledge that adults also need to develop. As I will show in Chapters 2, 6, and 7, quality community programs focus on the learning and development needs
of both young and older people. While both schools and youth development programs use structured curriculum approaches, the program environment is vastly different to the school-based environment. One focuses on formal, academic education, the other on a more informal, experiential holistic education (Davies, R. 2014). Young people's lived experiences also contradict Wierenga's point of view. To many young people, the youth development program environment provides an important contrast to the formal school system. Young people report that the program environment facilitates their freedom to make choices, to be themselves, to form relationships and to have fun in ways the formal school environment does not (Holdsworth et al. 2005, pp. 74, 89, 103; Walker, 2011). This contrast between formal and informal education environments is also reflected in some historical accounts by youth and leaders of community youth development programs (Alexander, 2012, pp.139-140; Kyle, 2014).

Wierenga (2003, p. 33) further contends the youth development approach does not recognise young people’s rights and this absence of emphasis on rights means the youth development approach contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Contrary to this point of view, a voluntary and youth-centred approach informs the program practices of each of the universal youth development programs participating in the YDRP. Despite the voluntary nature of these programs, it is possible for youth to be coerced into participating by significant adults. However, as shown in Chapter 2 and 5, young people will leave programs they are no longer interested in. Indeed, some community programs, like Guides, have consultative status with UNESCO through their international Federation and actively work on local, cross-national and global UNESCO projects and programmes of action advocating for the rights of girls and young women
(Alexander, 2012, p. 132). Wierenga (2003, p. 34) promotes an approach she defines as “capacity building in youth and communities”. According to Wierenga (2003, p. 33), the capacity building approach is better than the youth development approach because it focuses on building the capacity of young people, organisations, networks, and communities. Furthermore, the capacity building approach recognises youth as educators of adults, focuses on mutual discovery, builds internal capacity and resilience to deal with change and recognises the link between relationships, networks, and youth wellbeing (Wierenga, 2003, p. 34). As I demonstrate in Chapters 2, 6 and 7, this description could be used to describe the diverse work of contemporary community youth development organisations and programs.

White and Wyn (2008, pp. 103, 105; also Wyn, 2009, pp. 13-14; Woodman & Wyn, 2011, p. 6) in their key book on Youth and Society present the idea that both the deficit and the strength-based youth development approaches are problematic because they are focused on who young people will become as adults and not on who they are now. This premise, which they call futurity, operates in opposition to youth-inclusive participation approaches. As presented in Chapter 2, the strength-based approach does differ to the predominant deficit-based approach to youth development. Although some of the earlier positive youth development work defined youth as resources to be developed (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003, p. 172; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b, p. 172), the strength-based youth work approach strongly advocates for a change in discourse to valuing young people for who they are now while recognising their potential (Damon, 2004, p. 15; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, p. 324; Kress, 2006, p. 54; Larson, 2006).
Similarly, Bell, Vromen, and Collin (2008, pp. 32-34) present two opposing approaches: youth development versus youth involvement. They argue that the youth development approach is an intervention strategy, with a predominant focus on at-risk youth which, unlike the youth involvement approach, fails to recognise youth rights and equality, social justice and social outcomes. These criticisms are more relevant to analyses about historical and some risk-deficit approaches to youth development. They do not easily characterise the contemporary work of community youth development organisations and programs or the strength-based approach which has evolved over decades (Alexander, 2012; Beck & Purcell 2010, p.3; Bowie, 2005; Kyle, 2014).

More recently Wierenga and Wyn (2011) developed a youth development framework for the Australian Department of Defence that recognises the complexity of the youth development program environment and its focus on the positive, holistic development of young people. Despite this, the same focus seems largely absent from their more scholarly work. White and Wyn (2012, p. 116) have removed their analysis of the youth development approach in their new edition of the key Australian text *Youth and Society*. While, *futurity* is now more aptly identified as attributable “to a deficit approach to youth”, there is no correction to the analysis on the youth development approach which appeared in previous editions as discussed above. This leaves White and Wyn's (2008, pp. 103, 105) previous analysis intact and the youth development approach absent from this key Australian text on youth and society.

The absence of research and analysis about community programs in the Australian scholarly and youth work literature is likely to have contributed to the widespread lack of engagement with and valuing of program diversity and the
positive informal education and capacity building role they play in the lives of young and older people. Given the thousands of kids, young adults and volunteer youth workers who participate in the kinds of community programs discussed in this research project, this is a rather large gap. The absence of community programs also seems to have contributed to a preconception in Australian scholarly analysis about the youth development approach which characterises all program work as targeted, deficit-based, adult dictated and non-youth-participatory. Generally, therefore, the kinds of analysis presented by Bell, Vromen and Collin (2008), Bessant (2003), White and Wyn (2008) and Wierenga (2003) rely on broad generalisations, informed by a limited engagement with the Ausyouth project work and the youth work of community programs. Within this work there is also an absence of recognition of the core commitment of the youth development approach to youth participation (Ausyouth 2001e, p. 24). The reasons for the absence of analysis focused on community programs in the literature are complex and seem to intersect with the universal nature and mainstream reputation of these programs (they do not target young people at-risk), their long-history leading to a traditional reputation (they are viewed as maintaining the status-quo and not innovating) and their largely voluntary youth workforce (the work they do is not considered to be youth work).

1.4. Thesis aims

The primary aim of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding about community youth development programs and the ways in which they make a difference to kids and young adults lives. This work involves exploring two central research questions:
What are the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs?

What are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs?

The youth inclusive mixed methods research presented in this thesis explores these questions through two separate, but linked studies. Each study helps to build a picture about the seven participating Queensland community programs and the youth who participate in them (young members).

The first study explores the key characteristics of community youth development programs. Three questions are explored by Study One:

1. What are the program characteristics identified by practitioners and scholars as most important for supporting young people to achieve positive developmental outcomes?
2. Which program characteristics do young members believe are important for sustaining their engagement?
3. What program characteristics do young members experience in their group?

The second study explores Queensland young member characteristics. Four questions are addressed by Study Two:

1. What are the contextual socio-demographic characteristics of young members?
2. What are the structural involvement characteristics of young members?
What are the outcome characteristics of young members and what impact does involvement have on the development of these outcome characteristics?

How do the characteristics of 12-13 year old young members in the YDRP compare to those of 12-13 year olds from a more representative sample of school students in the AHWS?

By addressing these questions, this thesis contributes to the professional, conceptual and evidential understanding of community youth development programs.

1.4. Using language for inclusion: A strengths based approach

Working with young people, volunteer and paid youth workers and researching strength-based approaches to youth development work inspired me to think carefully about what strength-based, youth inclusive research might look like. It also led me to think about how to write about my research in way which reflects a strength-based approach; being inclusive rather than exclusive of others. The words we use can impact on both those who are written about and those who are doing the reading. Conducting youth inclusive research is addressed in Chapters 3 and 4. Here I discuss my aim, in writing this thesis, to model a strength-based approach to writing about and with young people and youth workers. In practice this has meant maintaining a focus on inclusion and, where possible, reframing problem, deficit-focused discourse on young people and youth workers to achieve this. This work has involved deliberating on the entrenched dichotomies represented in the ways we demarcate, for example, young people from adults,
paid from unpaid workers and targeted from universal programs. Throughout, I have been sensitive to the ways in which an academic, de-personalised style of writing about research obscures the role of the participants in that research and how ageist terminology can act to exclude or marginalise young and older people.

1.4.1. Age based talk: Adults versus children and young people

The concept of age is addressed in a number of ways. In Chapter 2, I present a discussion about age as it impacts on participation. In Chapters 3 and 4, I present a methodological discussion about age as it relates to research. The ways in which terms are used in this thesis to describe people in relation to their age has also been a subject for reflection. I have avoided categorising program participants into the opposing camps of children or adult, young person or adult. This decision recognises that the descriptive term young people is generally applied to individuals aged 12-25 years of age, that young people in Australia gain legal status as an adult once they turn 18 years of age and that they play different leadership and decision-making roles in youth programs. I have chosen where possible to preference role based descriptions (practitioner/program leader/young member), or more neutral age descriptions (younger/older) over aged based terms (young person/adult). This is an issue other academics and practitioners have also struggled with. Stacey et al. (2010a, p. 55) for example chose not to use the term adult and instead used the terms young people and workers. In some places rather than using the term adult, I have used the term significant adult to recognise and describe those people who are in roles of responsibility for children and young adults such as parents and guardians, grandparents, school principals and teachers. Sometimes these significant adults play a dual role as a program leader.
I have also chosen occasionally to use the term *kid* instead of *child* because this is how some young people refer to themselves. Ito (2010, p. 8) also chose to use the word kids instead of children to describe under 12 year olds for the same reason. They, however, also chose to use the word *teenagers* to describe 13-18 year olds because they argued teenagers have more agency than younger age groups. In the YDRP, I found teenagers not only used the term kids to refer to people younger than themselves but to also refer to themselves and their peers. I therefore use the term *kid* to broadly include all individuals up to the age of 17. While some use the term *youth* to refer to the teenage years only (Ito, 2010; Goodwin & Young 2013) and others use the term to refer to young people aged 12 to 25 years (Trewin, 2005, p. 22), I use it more broadly. My broad usage reflects the youth program inclusion of young adults, and in some community programs, young adults up to the age of 28 or 30 (e.g. Guides Olave program; Leo Community Clubs).

**1.4.2. Professional talk: Paid versus unpaid**

There is a pronounced tendency in Australia to overlook the expertise of voluntary youth workers. Australian youth work literature focuses primarily on the paid or professional program and service sector, and largely neglects the predominantly volunteer, universal, community youth development program sector (e.g. Bessant, Sercombe, & Watts, 1998, p. 311; White, 2010a). Davis and Smith (2012, pp. 77-79; also Davis, 2013, p. 8) note that professional hierarchies, such as between professional and para-professional staff, can stifle collaboration and the sharing of knowledge. As is the case with professional youth workers, volunteer youth workers apply the same fundamental youth work principles and practices, face similar challenges and create a diversity of youth-focused safe
spaces for young people. To properly recognise volunteer youth workers, I use the terms *program leader*, *youth mentor*, *youth worker* and *practitioner* interchangeably to refer to both younger and older people who take on a role working with young people, whether in a volunteer or paid capacity, to develop, deliver and evaluate programs and activities. Where necessary, I use the terms *professional* and *volunteer* and *paid* and *unpaid* to distinguish between those people who are paid for what they do and those who are not. Where this distinction is made, it does not give more value to the paid, professional, formally trained youth worker over the unpaid, volunteer, informally or formally trained youth worker. The work they do is of equal value and each can learn from the shared experiences and knowledge of the other.

1.4.3. Reputation talk: Mainstream, traditional and universal versus innovative, modern and targeted

The kinds of youth programs this thesis focuses on are often described as *mainstream* and *traditional*. They are characterised by their historical involvement in the provision of universal, developmental activities for young people (Libby & Sedonaen, 2006; Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011; Siliman, 2004; Wheeler & Edlebeck, 2006; Witt, 2005; Wright, 1998). The term *mainstream* is often used to differentiate these *universal* programs from *targeted* programs. Mainstream sometimes implies the work universal programs do is of lesser value because they are seen to work only with *low-risk* youth and where support is not needed (Kurtines, Montgomery, Arango, & Kortsch, 2004). The idea there is a mainstream of young people who are low-risk, and an identifiable group of young people who are high-risk, is contested (Eckersley, Wierenga, & Wyn, 2006). The use of the term
traditional is often used to imply that community youth development programs are conventional, act to maintain the adult-youth and society-youth power differentials and are elite driven (Kress, 2006; Libby & Sedonaen, 2006). The use of the terms traditional and mainstream often fails to recognise the diversity of program characteristics, including the social activism embedded in the work of some of these programs (Rochester, 2013, p. 117). This failure devalues the important role these programs play in young people’s lives. Throughout this thesis I employ the terminology community youth development programs to refer to these programs and avoid the dismissive stereotyping sometimes implied by references to mainstream or traditional.

1.4.4. Academic talk: Personalising the journey

To overtly recognise the lived experience of the YDRP I have chosen to write my thesis in a more inclusive, personalised style. This has resulted in a conscious weaving of personal experience into the scholarly narrative through the use of personal pronouns and names. Where possible I have incorporated named acknowledgement of individuals who provided targeted specialist support. In this way, individual and organisational contributions to the success of the YDRP are more clearly recognised and included. This approach is consistent with the participatory methodologies used throughout the YDRP. The commitment to personalise my research is, however, limited due to the ethical constraints associated with identifying certain program groups, young people, program leaders and other significant adults who participated in or supported the YDRP. Young people who participated in the interviews have therefore been given pseudonyms.
All other participants whose identity cannot be publicised are referred to by an age or role descriptor as previously described.

1.5. Organisations and programs participating in the YDRP

My doctoral research project, the YDRP, involves a diversity of organisational and program stakeholders and is an example of a government, community and academic research partnership. The YDRP is an Australian Research Council funded Australian Postgraduate Award Industry (APAI-only) Linkage Project (LP0561854). Following an initial proposal from the Queensland Youth Alliance (QYA), the application for an ARC funded APAI-only research project was developed by Professor Ross Homel and Mr Paul Wright as a partnership project between Griffith University and the then peak non-government organisation (NGO), Impact: Youth organisations reducing crime (Impact).1,2 Together they gained financial and in kind support from the Australian Research Council (ARC), Queensland Government Department of Communities and the QYA. Since the funding was for an APAI-only project the role of Professor Ross Homel as Chief Investigator (CI) and Mr Paul Wright as Partner Investigator (PI) were internal (academic) and external (industry) doctoral supervisors. I therefore managed this project and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data which underpin this thesis and will be used to provide further insights into youth development in the future.

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1 Subsequent to the completion of the field research and the delivery of the first major research outcome, Impact lost funding as a result of a general round of budget saving measures and different priorities introduced by the newly elected Queensland Government in 2012.
2 Impact, a member of QYA, was encouraged to follow this project through on behalf of the participating community youth development organisations and programs because QYA did not have incorporated status (P. Wright, personal communication, 8 March 2015).
At the initial planning phase, eleven Queensland based organisations and programs expressed an interest in participating in the YDRP. I excluded three of these because they were targeted programs, focusing on specific problems and therefore did not fit the universal, strengths-based program research focus. Paul and I approached the remaining eight Queensland programs who formally agreed to participate in the YDRP. One of these, Scouts Queensland, withdrew from the project before the fieldwork commenced, citing a lack of time and staffing (L. Pihl, personal communication, April 19, 2008). Seven programs remained active participants and collaborators in the YDRP. All seven of these remaining programs can be described as community youth development programs. Their specific program characteristics are, however, different and unique.

*The Boys’ Brigade* (BB) is a community funded, largely young and older adult-led, and volunteer based child and youth focused organisation providing a program of out-of-school-hours, developmental activities through which boys can progress as they age. The BB is a state-based uniformed organisation with national and international links which provides programs for three different age groups: ages 5 to 7 (Anchor Boys), 8 to 12 (Juniors) and 12 to 18 (Seniors) (BB, 2014; QYA, 2006a). BB program groups meet from between 1-2.5 hours on a weekly basis and for occasional weekend camps, hikes or outings (Anchors 1-2 hours, Juniors 2 hours; Seniors 2-2.5 hours) (R. Adam, personal communication, August 27, 2014; QYA, 2006a). The BB is church-based and focused on supporting boys and young men to develop life, leadership and physical skills, within a Christian framework (QYA, 2006a). BB Seniors members aged 12 to 18 and young leaders aged over 19 participated in the YDRP interviews.
The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award (Dukes) is an internationally recognised youth development program of activities undertaken in and outside school hours (L. Herrod, personal communication, August 27, 2014). In Queensland, Dukes is supported by the Queensland State Government (Dukes, 2006; QYA, 2006b). Dukes can be delivered to complement an existing school or community youth development curriculum (QYA, 2006b). Young people can transition through three award levels (bronze, silver and gold) (Dukes, n.d.; Dukes, 2006). While the program of activities is supported by adults, participation is largely youth-led and youth-determined (Dukes, 2006). Dukes cater for young people aged 14 to 25 years and encourage activities in four sections (service, expedition, skills and physical recreation) with a minimum expectation of at least one hour participation per week over a set period of time (Dukes, n.d.; QYA, 2006b; L. Herrod, personal communication, August 27, 2014). Dukes school-based program participants aged 14 to 18 took part in the YDRP questionnaire and interviews.

The Emergency Services Cadets Program (ESC) is a young and older adult-led youth development and emergency services skills training program provided outside school hours (DES, n.d.). At the time of the YDRP field work this program was funded and delivered through the Queensland Government Department of Emergency Services (DES, n.d.). In late 2012, as a result of a general round of budget savings measures and different priorities introduced by the recently elected Queensland Government, the ESC program lost funding (B. Grady, personal communication, September 12, 2012; Jabour, 2012). This program has since been refunded by the State Government and is now known as the PCYC Queensland
Emergency Services Cadet Program. The ESC program is now delivered through a partnership between the PCYC and the Queensland Emergency Services (J. Schoof, personal communication, September 10, 2014). The ESC program supports the development of life and specialist emergency service skills and caters for high-school aged young people aged 12 to 17 years (DES, n.d.). The program requires Cadets to wear a uniform, attend on a weekly basis for 2 hours and encourages a career in the emergency services (DES, n.d.). Each ESC program group is based at the facilities of a sponsoring SES unit (J. Schoof, personal communication, September 10, 2014). ESC members aged 12 to 17 and a small number of older youth aged 17 to 18 who were transitioning out of ESC and into the SES volunteers participated in the YDRP.

*Girl Guides Queensland* (Guides) provides a developmental program of activities for girls and young women. Guides Queensland program groups are uniformed and follow the Australian Guide program (Guides, 2014). Guides use a mixed adult-led, intergenerational and youth-led model to plan and deliver their program of activities (Guides, 2007; P. Nicholls, personal communication, September 21, 2014). Guides Australia is linked into a worldwide movement of largely volunteer based, community funded programs through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (Guides, 2007, 2008; P. Nicholls, personal communication, September 18, 2014). Members can transition through Guides from ages 5 to 18 and the Olave program from ages 18 to 30 (Guides, 2007). Guides members can spend from 1.5 to 2.5 hours each week during school-term in the Guides program (ages 5 to 7 spend 1.5 hours; ages 8 to 18 spend 2 to 2.5 hours) (P. Nicholls, personal communication, September 18, 2014). For the older girls (ages
8 to 17) Guides activities can also include weekend camps and special activities (P. Nicholls, personal communication, September 18, 2014). Girls and young women taking part in Guides are supported to develop their life, physical and practical skills (Guides, 2008). Guides members aged 12 to 18 and Guides young leaders aged 18 to 30 participated in the YDRP.

*Lions Clubs International* (Lions) is a world-wide community supported and volunteer based NGO which, at the local club level, sponsors Leo Clubs (*Leos*). Through Leos, young people can take part in an adult supported but youth-led and directed program of developmental activities (Lions, 2008; QYA, 2006c). Young people have opportunities to participate through School or Community Clubs; Alpha for kids aged 12 to 18 or Omega for young adults ages 18 to 30 (Lions, 2008, Lions, 2014; J. Wearne, personal communication, August 26, 2014). The time young people spend participating in Leos is determined by young people and will therefore vary depending on the Club (Wearne, personal communication, September 15, 2014). Most School Clubs meet fortnightly, although some Clubs choose to meet weekly or monthly, for between 30-40 minutes (J. Wearne, personal communication, September 15, 2014). Alpha Leo members take part in other activities which are mostly school-based but do include some out-of-school-time adult-led and/or intergenerational community activities with their sponsoring Lions Club (J. Wearne, personal communication, September 15, 22, 2014).

Participation in activities outside meeting hours can involve between 2 to 5 hours each week. Leo members can also attend the State Leo Conference, the Lions Club District Convention and take part in the District Leo of the Year competition (J. Wearne, personal communication, September 15, 2014). Young people
participating in Leos are supported to develop their life and practical skills through service to the community (Lions, 2008; QYA, 2006c). Alpha Leo members aged 12 to 18 and Omega young leaders aged 18 to 30 took part in the YDRP.

*The Police Citizens Youth Clubs* (PCYC) is a community NGO which has formal links with the State Government Queensland police service and provides a diverse range of activities and programs for young people (PCYC, 2012). The PCYC has three interlinked flagship personal and leadership development programs: the Youth Management Team (YMT) the State Youth Leadership Program (SYLP) and Tomorrow's Inspired Leaders Today (TILT) (QPCYW A, 2006; C. Stafford, personal communication, May 8, 2009). The YMT's are based at individual PCYC branches and are involved in running and organising activities in their local community and branch. YMT's are young and older adult supported but the activities are predominantly youth-led. Young people spend an average of 1.5 hours each week at their YMT meetings. The SYLP is a three year program which involves attendance each year at a residential course for five days. The first year focuses on personal development, the second year on leadership and the final year on community development (QPCYW A, 2006). The TILT program is a PCYC state youth advisory group which supports the PCYC Board of Directors (QPCYW A, 2006). Both YMT and TILT provide avenues for young people to return to their branches between courses and practice what they learn (PCYC, 2007; C. Stafford, personal communication, May 8, 2009). Young people involved in YMT’s aged 12 to 18 and young leaders aged over 19, some of whom had attended SYLP and were involved in TILT, took part in the YDRP.
Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLS) is a largely volunteer and community NGO, focusing on saving lives through beach safety and rescue services, community education, surf sports, commercial training and member leadership development (QYA, 2006d; B. Lofthouse, personal communication, Dec 18, 2014). SLS is linked to national Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) and works closely with state and local governments (SLS, 2006). SLS members are required to wear a clearly identified SLS uniform (SLS, 2013). As they age, girls and boys can progress through various adult and older youth-led youth development programs. Kids aged 5 to 13 can participate in Nippers, those aged 13 to 15 can participate in Active Cadets and young people aged 15 to 18 can participate in Active Juniors (SLS, n.d.). Participants in the SLS child and youth development and training program have opportunities to gain increasingly sophisticated life, physical and specialist skills as they learn beach and surf safety and sporting skills. SLS programs are offered during the summer season (September to April) and training for Nippers is usually run on a Sunday morning from 8-11am (B. Lofthouse, personal communication, Dec 18, 2014). Both Active Cadets, once they have their Surf Rescue Certificate, and Active Juniors participate in community service beach patrol activities appropriately supervised and matched to their membership and qualifications (SLS, n.d.). SLS young members aged 12 to 18 and young leaders aged over 19 took part in the YDRP.

1.6. Thesis overview

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. In this first chapter, I summarised my research outcomes and introduced the aims and contextual background of my research project. I outlined three gaps in conceptual, practical and evidential
knowledge about youth programs. I sketched the absence of volunteer youth workers and community youth development programs from the scholarly policy and practitioner discourse on youth work in Australia. Following this analysis, I presented the strength-based conceptual framework I use to talk about young people, program leaders and community programs. I concluded with a brief overview of the context of the Queensland YDRP and the diversity of Australian community youth development programs through the seven programs participating in my research.

In Chapter 2, I propose the use of an analytical tool comprised of five program elements (theory, context, structure, operation and outcomes) to describe and understand the specific characteristics of youth programs. Analysis of these five elements reveals the complex ecological nature of the program environment. Each of these elements is distinctly different; however, there are many clear synergistic and bidirectional linkages and effects between them.

Chapters 3 and 4 explore what strength-based youth inclusive research might look like through an examination of the theoretical, ethical and practical issues associated with engaging young people in the research process. In Chapter 3, I examine a diversity of viewpoints on the methodologies of working with kids and young adults across three essential research issues: methodology, participation and results. I argue there are four key interlinked participation issues - power, consent, privacy and incentive use - which researchers must address when conducting child and youth inclusive research. In Chapter 4, I draw out these themes as I introduce the adult-led and intergenerational participatory approaches used across Studies One and Two.
In Chapters 5 to 7, I present findings from Study One and Study Two on strength-based community youth development programs. Chapter 5 introduces the young people who take part in community programs and explores a selection of their contextual, structural involvement and life-skill outcome characteristics. Analysis of the contextual characteristics of the YDRP sample of young members indicates diverse young members take part in community programs. Analysis of activity involvement indicates the majority of young members are involved in a breadth of organised activities, however, younger age groups and advantaged youth have the widest breadth of activity involvement. A comparative analysis of an illustrative set of life-skills between 12-13 year olds in the YDRP and a more representative group of 12-13 year olds shows community program participants generally report higher levels of activity in volunteering and better problem solving, temper control and positive communication skills.

Chapters 6 and 7 introduce the new good practice framework for youth development organisations and programs. This new framework illustrates the conceptual application of a strength-based approach to youth development and advocates for the explicit recognition of a diversity of needs and contributions. In Chapter 6, I present the key structural features of the new framework and provide a summary of the six principles, their underlying indicators and examples of action which illustrate the meaning of each indicator. To begin with, I describe the first three principles, focusing on the themes of learning and development, leadership and decision-making, and an inclusive ethos. I then finish this chapter by describing the remaining three principles, focusing on the themes of community service, partnerships and networking, and ethical promotion. Chapter 7 presents a
case study exploration of the first principle, *Learning and Development*. This work illustrates the complex bi-directional links between the four program elements, *theory, operation, structure* and *context* profiled in Chapter 6 and the fifth program characteristic element, *outcomes*, profiled in Chapter 5.

Finally, in Chapter 8 an analysis of the main findings of this research and implications for future research, policy and practice is presented. This research presents an argument for a strength-based approach and language which can be used in fostering further inclusive dialogue in the development of program policy, research and practice. From young people’s perspective, participation in community programs makes a positive difference to their lives. While the seven programs participating in this research attract a diverse membership, this research shows there is a gap in accessibility for some young people.
Chapter 2. The defining characteristics of community youth development programs

2.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1, I argued there is widespread complexity and diversity in Australian programs and growing evidence that involvement in organised youth programs and activities has positive developmental outcomes for young people. To illustrate this diversity, I introduced the seven community youth development organisations and programs participating in the Queensland-based Youth Development Research Project (YDRP). This complexity and diversity has contributed to a lack of clarity about the characteristics of the program sector. I demonstrated that the Australian youth studies sector has had limited engagement with volunteer youth workers and community youth development programs. This has led to some scholars misunderstanding the sector and conflating the strength-based and the deficit-based youth development approaches further adding to the lack of clarity. Developing a better understanding of program characteristics requires looking at youth programs in new ways.

In this second chapter, I outline a fresh approach to understanding program characteristics which will help to resolve the lack of clarity illustrated in Chapter 1. This work directly contributes to my two central research questions exploring what are the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs and what are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs.
The emphasis on a need for clarity is important for two reasons. First, understanding program characteristics is necessary because it is the program and its structures and processes which support young people’s positive development (Lakin & Mahoney, 2006, p. 516). Not all programs and not all youth development groups offering the same program are equally effective (Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois 2011, p. 3; Ferreira, Azevedo, & Menezes, 2012; Lawford et al. 2012; McLaughlin & O’Brien-Strain, 2008, p. 313; Perkins & Borden, 2003, pp. 330-331; Roth & Brooks-Gunn 2003a; Zambon et al. 2010, p. 93). Second, the quality of a program, its activities, and outcomes, depends on whether its characteristics are understood, clearly defined and grounded in a theoretical, practical and evidential framework, underpinning and linking activities, objectives and anticipated outcomes (Chan & Short, 2011, pp. 132-133; Delgado, 2004, p. 23; Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003, pp. 879, 885; Feldman Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Gage et al. 2005, p. 517; Emslie, 2013, p. 130; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 3; Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004, p. 121; Small & Memmo, 2004; Wandersman, 2009; Zambon et al. 2010, p. 93).

There are four key benefits which can result from a program having a clearly defined framework. First, program promotional material which more accurately reflects what will be delivered by that program can be produced (Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 5; also Holdworth et al. 2005, pp. 92-94; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 55). This helps practitioners to ethically promote the program they are delivering, build widespread recognition of the program and ensure parents, guardians, and young people are well informed about what they can expect from participating (Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 5; Meyer, Miller, & Herman, 1993, pp. 97-99).
Second, youth workers are able to model more effective practices when information is available which communicates in a clear and holistic way what a program looks like and how it is located within an organisation, community and policy environment (Brown, 2010, pp. 35-36; Springer et al. 2004). Third, a clearly articulated program framework strengthens program sustainability by supporting the integrity and honesty of a program delivered and replicated across different places and times or delivered by different service providers or staff members. Holdsworth et al. (2005, p. 85) argue staff associated with school-based programs need defined principles and practices to help them mediate the negative impact which staff turnover and loss of program knowledge can have on continued quality program delivery. Fourth, a documented program framework can support consistency across program groups and activities (Meyer, Miller, & Herman 1993, pp. 97-99). Consistency better enables program leaders to support formal work in measuring a range of meaningful program outcomes and to plan, monitor and evaluate program curricula (Morris, Sallybanks, & Willis, 2003; Silliman, 2004). Achieving this consistency, Hill (2010, p. 104) suggests, is the “single biggest challenge for anyone interested in the informal education of young people.”

Hill’s point is an important one. The need for consistency requires us to be able to accurately map program characteristics. This work begins with understanding the characteristics of the youth program sector, how to define it and where community youth development programs fit in it. To address this need for clarity, I argue that programs can be better described and understood using an analytical tool comprised of five elements. These five interlinking elements address the theoretical, contextual, structural, operational, and outcome characteristics of programs. Analysis of these elements, shown in Figure 1, reveals the complex
ecological nature of the youth development program. Each of these elements is distinctly different. There are, however, many clear synergistic and bi-directional linkages and effects between them. As Guest and McRee (2009, p. 53) note, programs are complex and it is most likely the dynamic interaction of the multiplicity of program parts, rather than one single element, which has the overall effect on young people’s development. Gaining a better understanding about these program parts and how they interrelate will support better program practice and contribute to quality program outcomes.

**Figure 2.1. Model of youth development program elements**

In exploring the *theoretical characteristics*, or the beliefs, policies and procedures which inform youth development program actions, I examine both the
risk-based and strength-based youth work approaches. This analysis focuses on the strength-based approach which underpins the work of community youth development programs. An examination of the contextual characteristics, or the environment, place and developmental domains relevant to program delivery, reveals the importance of tailoring programs to meet the contextual needs of young people and their community. I focus my examination of contextual program characteristics on exploring location and the socio-demographic characteristics of sex, age and advantage and disadvantage. Analysis of the structural characteristics, or the particular arrangement and interrelationship of program parts, indicates there are three key structural elements which characterise strength-based youth programs. These elements are that strength-based programs are: structured programs; providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum of activities; over an extended period of time. In exploring the operational characteristics, or the manner in which programs operate, including program processes and youth work practices, I focus on three key operational elements: voluntary participation; universal eligibility; and youth-inclusive, strength-based youth work practices. Analysis of the outcome characteristics of youth development programs, or the end results from participating, reveals a focus in the literature on academic, life-skills and behavioural, attitudinal outcomes, rather than on physical, technical or specialist skills. These elements are illustrated in Figure 2.

Overall, in this chapter I show how this five element model can bring clarity to scholarly and practitioner understandings about program work. Many scholars, while not explicitly describing their research in this way, examine a single or combination of these five elements. Mueller, et al. (2011) for example, identify three features they argue are most important for quality programs. These features
are introduced as extended engagement, a focus on life-skill outcomes and the provision of community activities. Using the five program elements, these features can be understood as one structural feature (extended engagement), and two operational features (life-skill and community activity focused curriculum). In an earlier work, Lerner (2004, pp. xv, 127) argued there are three specific actions, he calls the “Big 3”, that characterise effective quality youth development programs. These actions are: the provision of leadership opportunities; life-skill building activities; and sustained and caring adult-youth relationships. Ramey and Rose-Krasnor (2012, p. 88) argue the “Big 3” are important contextual characteristics of positive youth development programs. However, using the five program elements, these features can be understood as one structural feature (activities that build life-skills); one interlinked structural and operational feature (provision of leadership opportunities); and one operational feature (positive adult-youth relationships).

Some scholars, who do explicitly describe their work using one or a combination of these five elements, also illustrate a high degree of conceptual ambiguity in their use. Riggs and Greenberg (2004, p. 182) argue that the operational issues of adopting efficient daily procedures and behavioural management techniques are program structural issues. Catalano et al. (2004, pp. 102-103), describes their framework of 15 constructs of positive youth development programs as operational characteristics. Using the five program elements to understand this framework, it is clear, however, that 13 of these constructs are developmental outcome characteristics and only two are program operational characteristics. Their first seven outcome characteristics of a strength-based youth program are resilience, self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy,
clear and positive identity, a belief in the future and pro-social norms. Their final six outcome characteristics of a strength-based youth program are the promotion of bonding and social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and moral competence. The only two elements identified which relate directly to program practice, and are therefore operational characteristics, are the active recognition of positive behaviour and the provision of opportunities for pro-social involvement for young people. Program practice does, however, have implications for delivering these developmental outcomes.

Some of the ways in which program elements are described also belies the interlinked nature of many elements. Deschenes et al. (2010, p. 6), for example, define the provision of leadership opportunities as a program structural characteristic. The successful provision of leadership opportunities within the program environment is, however, dependent on the structure of the curriculum, which provide leadership opportunities, and the operational youth work practices, which support young people in these opportunities. Another interesting example is Guest and McRee’s (2009, p. 51) highlighting of seven program features which they argue are structural characteristics. Only one, whether the program is structured or unstructured, is, however, a structural characteristic. Nature of peer networks and whether the program engages with parents and other adults are operational characteristics and influence of social class is a contextual characteristic. One, whether the program promotes identity formation, is an outcome characteristic. Whether the program promotes school engagement is linked across context and operational elements and whether the activity design is based on evidence is linked across theoretical and operational elements.
These five interlinking theoretical, contextual, structural, operational, and outcome activity and program elements support a better understanding of program characteristics. The distinctive differences between programs and the synergistic and bi-directional linkages which illustrate the ecological nature of the program environment also become clearer.

**Figure 2.2. Model of strength-based youth development program**

In the program environment, theoretical characteristics refers to the beliefs, policies and procedures which inform youth development program actions. Youth development programs can be delivered from either a deficit-based, risk-factor or a strength-based, positive youth development theoretical approach. Community youth development programs, however, use a strength-based rather than a deficit-
based approach to inform their program development, structure and delivery (Catalano et al. 2004, p. 108; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, p. 98; Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, et al. 2005, p. 57). Both risk-factor and positive youth development theoretical understandings and scholarly linked research based evidence have been used to contextualise youth and their behavioural decision-making in the individual, peer group, family, school and community developmental domains. These two approaches have influenced program practice, structure, policy, government and non-government funding streams and desired program outcomes (Cieslik, 2003, p. 5; Emslie, 2013, p. 128; Homel, 2005a; Jones et al. 2003, p. 55; Kelly, 2000a, p. 304, 2011, p. 434; Lerner, Ostrum, & Freel, 1995, p. 488; Zeldin, 1995, pp. 456-457). The location of young people into risk related frameworks (risk-takers and those exposed to risk) has, however, become central to a range of practitioner and scholarly discourses (Case, 2006; Sharland, 2006; Turnbull & Spence, 2011; Woodman & Wyn, 2011, pp. 19-23). In many countries, including Australia and the UK, while there has been interest in a more positive, strength-based program focus, the targeted, risk-based approach remains conceptually, politically and practically dominant (France, 2007; France, Freiberg, & Homel, 2010, p. 2, 16; Turnbull & Spence, 2011).

The strength-based and the deficit-based approaches to youth development can be broadly positioned within the developmental science suite of theories. Predominant amongst this suite of theories are the relational developmental systems theories which view human development as a mutually influential relational process occurring between an individual and their situational or environmental context (Lerner & Overton, 2008, p. 246; Lerner, Lerner, Von Eye, Bowers, & Lewin-Bizan, 2011; Mueller, et al. 2011). Both the strength and risk-
factor theoretical approaches have been influenced by the same early developmental systems theories. The most influential of these is Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2005) ecological theory of human development (Homel, 2000; Pittman, 2005). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory of human development recognises that an individual’s development is located in and influenced by multiple contexts across the physical, social, cultural, economic, historical and political environment and across the five developmental domains of individual, family, community, school and peer group. When interactions occur within and across these contexts, Bronfenbrenner argues they will have a varied positive or negative influence depending on the type of exposure an individual has had to the interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; also Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2005). Importantly, these positive or negative influences on the mental, physical and social development of a young person are iterative, bi-directional and can continue to have positive or negative effects well into adulthood (Bessant, Sercombe, & Watts, 1998, p. 31; Homel, 2005b). These interaction experiences within the peer group can include risk-taking activity such as engaging in drug-use, unprotected sex and criminal activity (Gambone, 2001) or strength-building activity such as engaging in sports, culture or academic activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005).

The common theoretical origin of the risk and strength-based positive youth development theories does mean there are similarities between the two approaches. The most significant of these is that both approaches have resulted in a shift away from the extremely negative remedial or punishment emphasis (Lerner, Ostrum, & Freel, 1995, p. 488; France, Freiberg, & Homel, 2010, p. 5) and they both recognise similar developmental or protective elements. A comparison
between the Search Institute's (Search Institute, 2007b) 40 developmental assets and the National Crime Prevention Project's (1999) 38 protective factors reveals a startling likeness (Appendix-1). The key difference is the inclusion of socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. small family size) and specific life events (e.g. moving to a new area) in the National Crime Prevention Project's 38 protective factors. The absence of these characteristics in the positive youth development approach is reflective of the strength focus. Emerging evidence does support this change in emphasis because it suggests the number of strengths or assets that a young person has is a stronger predictor of whether or not a young person is likely to engage in risky behaviours than the traditional at-risk demographic factors such as family size and living in a single parent family (Aspy et al. 2012; Oman et al. 2004, p. 1429; Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003; Sesma & Roehlkepartain, 2003; Zullig, Ward, King, Patton, & Murray, 2009). Indeed, Homel (2005a, p. 3) argues that demographic risk factors should be used to target communities and not individuals.

The Search Institute (2007a; also Small & Memmo, 2004) also makes a clear distinction between the strength-based and risk protective factor based approaches. They argue protective factors “inhibit high-risk behaviours” and only operate when a risk-factor is present. Developmental assets, differ in that they act as “building blocks” promoting the positive development of young people regardless whether a risk-factor is present or not. In contrast, the National Crime Prevention Project (1999, p. 62) defines protective factors as “reduc[ing] the impact of the risks or traumas that we cannot avoid, that help us to recover rather than go under”. Bynner (2001), taking a similar viewpoint, describes protective factors as those “malleable components of development… compris[ing] the
emotional, educational, social and economic influences of a child's life operating
singly, or more usually, in interaction with each other.” Protective factors can
therefore also be seen to act as building blocks for positive development. These
similarities illustrate Silliman’s (2004) assertion that the lines between the two
paradigms of prevention and development are blurred. Indeed, the Search Institute
(2007a) position their developmental asset approach to positive youth
development as having grown out of the protective factor paradigm.

Despite this tangle in meaning, these protective factors and developmental
assets are shown to be important factors in a young person’s wellbeing. Both
research on developmental assets and research on protective factors reveal that
the number of assets or factors a young person has is positively and negatively
correlated to the likelihood they will engage in risk behaviours. That is, a decrease
in negative factors is likely to lead to an increase in positive developmental
outcomes and vice versa (Hoge, Andrews, & Leschied, 1996; Search Institute,
2007b; Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2003). This is not surprising given the blurring of
the boundaries between these two frameworks. Catalano et al. (2004, p. 101; also
Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard, & Arthur, 2002, p. 236) suggest this blurring
is explained by substantial evidence suggesting positive and negative
developmental outcomes have a similar etiological base as they are affected by the
same individual, peer group, family, school and community developmental domain
factors.

When applied to youth work and youth program work, the risk-factor and
the strength-based approach can be viewed to have fundamentally different core
approaches. At its simplest, this difference revolves around the theoretical
foundations of the program with some programs delivered from a *deficit standpoint* focusing on youth problems and risky behaviour and some delivered from a *surplus standpoint* focusing on developmental outcomes and youth strengths (Holdsworth et al. 2005, p. 5). As well, France, Freiberg, and Homel (2010, p. 5; also Homel, 2005a, p. 3; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003, p. 172) note the strength approach, in contrast to the risk-protective factor approach, provides a strong recognition of context and the relational complexities of development explicit in the ecological perspective.

Complementing the emergence of the ecological developmental theory perspective has been the social theory and sociological analyses of childhood (France, Freiberg, & Homel, 2010, p. 5). This work contributes further to the critical analyses of the risk-factor approach to development; arguing that understanding young people through a risk framework is problematic. Engaging in problematic risky behaviour is, as Cieslik (2003, p. 5; also France 2007, pp. 137-141) contends, not the reality for most young people. Kelly (2001, pp. 25, 26, 30; 2003, p. 176; 2007, pp. 43, 45, 48; 2011, p. 434) positions the risk approach as troubling because it ends up making young people and their families solely responsible for adverse outcomes which does not take into account the contributing complexities of their lives. Social, cultural, geographic, economic and political complexities impact on the choices young people make and the opportunities that are available to them (France, 2007, pp. 76, 87, 108, 113, 130, 146-148; also Bottrell, Armstrong, & France, 2010, p. 67; Homel, 2005b, p. 98). Making individuals rather than society responsible for their own welfare is, as Rodger (2000, p. 3) argues, a symptom of the move towards a “privatisation of
responsibility.” Turnbull and Spence (2011, p. 941; also White & Wyn, 2008, p. 7) agree and argue this is doubly problematic because it not only makes young people responsible for the problem but it also makes them responsible for the solution. This, Martinek and Hellison (2009, pp. 31-33) believe, is a form of social injustice.

Perhaps the most influential criticism of the deficit-risk approach to youth development is that not all risk-taking leads to negative outcomes. Erikson’s (1965, 1971; also Bradley & Matsukis, 2000; Sharland, 2006, p. 5; Woodman & Wyn, 2011, p. 22) psychosocial identity development theory makes an important contribution to the debate on risk or recklessness by arguing that risk-taking and experimentation are a normal and vital part of young people’s positive identity development. As Erikson (Evans, 1967, p. 20) states: “[adolescents] cognitive capacities and social interests are such that they want to go to the limit of experience before they fit themselves into their culture and fit their culture to themselves.” In reviewing alcohol use and abuse, Chalder, Elgar, and Bennett (2006, p. 107) note this distinction. They found that some young people are motivated to experiment with alcohol to “experience the physiological or psychological enhancement gained by using alcohol”, while others drink alone to cope with their negative feelings or to forget their problems. Kuntsche, Knibbe, Gmel, and Engels, (2006) assert it is this last group of young people who end up drinking excessively and who need help to develop the skills necessary for managing their stress and building their self-esteem. Added to this is Bessant, Sercombe, and Watts (1998, p. 31; also Bottrell, 2007; Christensen & Mikkelsen, 2013, pp. 202-204) observation that many of the problematic behaviours exhibited by young people are in response to the power which significant adults hold over them. As they explain:
Young people need to negotiate the activity that other citizens take for granted. Young people need to negotiate the relations of power that they are subject to, and will experiment with different approaches, including compliance, passive resistance and outright rebellion (p. 30).

By seeking a conceptual shift away from a focus on deficit-based practice towards a focus on strength-based practice, positive youth development theory challenges the risk approach to youth development work practice, policy and research in three main ways. First, the strength-based approach challenges scholars, policy makers and practitioners to change the way they view young people as being problems to instead focusing on their strengths (Damon, 2004, p. 14). Second, positive youth development advocates for a move away from the dominant focus on valuing young people for who they will become to instead valuing them for who they are now and nurturing the skills and knowledge they need to thrive now and into the future (Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, p. 324; Larson, 2006; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003; Pittman et al. 2001; Pittman et al. 2003, p. 10; Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000). Lastly, it challenges more practitioners to deliver programs that recognise developmental challenges but no longer emphasise fixing and preventing problems (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 9). This involves stressing what can go right in the development of young people rather than what can go wrong (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005, p. 13).

Importantly, positive youth development challenges youth practitioners to think about how young people achieve positive developmental outcomes by focusing on the positive development of both their individual internal strengths and their contextual external strengths across each of their developmental domains (individual, peer group, family, school and community). In this way the
dominant trend towards making individuals responsible for their own
development is challenged. For young people to achieve the best developmental
outcomes this dual focus on internal and external strengths is vital. As Lerner, Von
Eye, Lerner, and Lewin-Bizan (2009; also Lerner, 2004, p. 110; Lerner, Lerner, Von
Eye et al. 2011) explain, all young people have internal strengths and the potential
to change the course of their own development in positive ways. Young people also
have external strengths in their environment which can support them to make
positive developmental changes. When these internal and external strengths are
aligned, young people will have optimal positive developmental outcomes (Lerner,
Von Eye et al. 2009). This potential for developmental change in adolescents and
young adults, Hawkins et al. (2011, p. 1448) found, can be evidenced by positive or
negative changes in the life-course trajectory.

Nevertheless, the risk-factor framework is still viewed by some scholars
and practitioners as useful. According to Hopkins, Nisselle, Zazryn, and Green
(2013; also Anderson-Butcher & Cash, 2010, p. 672), the deficit-based approach is
important because it captures the vulnerability of youth. This mirrors a concern
some youth workers have about the strength-based approach to youth
development work because they believe by focusing on youth strengths this will
neglect or gloss over youth problems, inequalities and vulnerabilities (J. Downie,
personal communication, 8 January 2014). However, this fear does not
acknowledge that to be successful, a strength-based program approach must take
into account the contextual characteristics of youth developmental challenges and
adversity (Damon, 2004, p. 15; also Bradshaw, et al. 2008, pp. 210, 213; Witt &
Caldwell, 2005, p. 13). Recognising, problems, inequalities and vulnerabilities,
Catalano et al. (2002, p. 65) argue, is an essential component of successful strength-based program work.

Overall, the shift towards a strength-based approach is, as Lerner, Ostrum, and Freel (1995, p. 488) assert, a better option than the risk-based approach because it helps to address the negativity, counter-productivity and stigmatism associated with the deficit, risk-factor approach to youth development. Overall, a strength-based approach, they suggest will help to challenge the persistent view that all young people will need active targeted intervention from older adults or else negative things will happen to or through them. The benefits of applying a strength-based approach to program work is further supported by emerging scholarly work, such as Davis (2013) and France, Freiberg, and Homel (2010), who explore the use of the strength-based approach in working with children, youth and their families in early intervention and prevention programs.

2.2. Contextual characteristics

In the program environment contextural characteristics refers to the setting or background circumstances that are relevant to program delivery. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) ecological theory of human development recognises that an individual’s development is located in and influenced by multiple contexts across the physical, social, cultural, economic, historical and political environment and across the five developmental domains of individual, family, school, community, and peer group. The ecological understanding of development, Riggs and Greenberg (2004, p. 179) argue, points to a need to properly appreciate the contextual features of programs and activities. Socio-demographic factors such as class and income, location, ability, race and
gender can impact on the diversity of young people who participate in organised programs and activities (Borden, Perkins, & Villarruel et al. 2006; King, Law, et al. 2010; King, Imms, et al. 2013; Kress, 2006; Weiss, Little, & Bouffard, 2005, p. 22; Wimer et al. 2006, pp. 14-15). Therefore, the complexity of youth characteristics, program delivery environment, place or location and developmental domains are particularly relevant to developing, delivering and evaluating programs. In this section on the contextual characteristics of programs, I focus on exploring how program location and the age, socio-economic status and sex of young people can impact on their program participation and retention.

2.2.1. Location

While Deschenes et al. (2010, p. 6) and Riley and Anderson-Butcher (2012, p. 1373) identify program location as a structural characteristic, location is in fact an important contextual characteristic. Community programs are delivered in a diversity of locations which have bi-directional effects on the operational and outcome characteristics of a program. In this section, I discuss the bi-directional links between location and three operational factors, organisational access to resources, curriculum content and youth access to the program, and one outcome factor, building connection to community.

First, location can be linked to the accessibility of operational resources. Riggs and Greenberg (2004, pp.180-181) examine whether the location of a program may affect its outcomes. They argue that location will impact on outcomes because of the specific resources available at that location. For example a gymnasium is a good location for a physical skills focused program and a church environment is a good location for a spiritual focused program. Therefore, they
conclude, the goals of a program can determine program location with the optimal location linked to program goals.

Second, community location can influence program and activity content. Rhodes (2004, p. 155) report that locating a mentoring program outside of schools led to a reduced focus on academic issues and the inclusion of a wider range of non-school based activities. This increased the opportunities for young people to build closer bonds with their mentor. Ausyouth (2003c, p. 10; also Bell, Vromen, & Collin, 2008, p. 111-112; Leong, Paine, & Hughes, 2010, p. 109; Meyer, Miller, & Herman, 1993, p. 97; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 24) report that some young people are more likely to participate in a program when the curriculum is relevant to and supported by the social, cultural, spiritual or religious community where they live, work and play. While a program needs to maintain its core features across geographic locations, flexibility means youth workers can fit the curriculum to the community where young people are located (Chan & Short, 2011, pp. 136-137; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12, 23; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 333; Petitpas, Van Raalte, Cornelius, & Presbrey, 2004, p. 328; Rhodes, 2004, pp. 155-156; Skattebol, et al. 2012, p. 82; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 65; Zaff, Oksana, & Eccles, 2008, p. 51). Core features can be defined as central topics which give the program a common purpose (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 13), specific defined values which underpin the program (Hill, 2010, p. 103) or defined methods of program delivery, style and structure which may include specific time commitments and regularity of meetings (Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 55).

Third, location can impact on program accessibility - real or perceived - and act as a powerful participation disincentive or incentive. The location of a program can subtly influence participation as young people base their participation decision
on whether, because of their personal characteristics (race, religion, gender, class or ability), they will feel welcome or not (Quinn, 1999, p. 105). France (2007, p. 91; also Skattebol, Saunders, Redmond, Bedford, & Cass, 2012, p. 53) notes the powerful effect of the safety of the familiar which can limit young people’s willingness to access educational opportunities located outside of their own community or geographical area. Roker, Player, and Coleman (1999, p. 191) argue that locality is often linked to parental income and transport issues. Here, lower-income families are often forced to the outer suburbs where housing is cheaper but transport infrastructure is poor (Skattebol, et al. 2012, pp. 49, 68). Location can therefore exacerbate or reduce difficulties for young people in getting safely to and from program or activity sites (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, pp. 16-17; Fuller, et al. 2013, p. 479; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 18; Wierenga, 2003, p. 7). This, Bottrell, Armstrong, and France (2010, p. 63; also Skattebol, et al. 2012, p. 88) report can be further exacerbated by young people’s anxiety of crime or inter-group conflicts which may be encountered in other geographical areas.

Location can also determine the attractiveness of a program. Compared to after-school programs located in schools, programs in the community have been found to be more attractive to older youth (who are more mobile) (Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 6), to some young Indigenous Australians (Ausyouth, 2002b, p. 32) and other young people who are not happy at school (Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 6). In contrast, Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, p. 29), note that deliberately locating after-school programs in low-income area schools increases access for kids from low-income families. Here, Osborne (H. personal communication, 26 January 2015) argues the location of programs, such as sporting development programs, in primary and secondary schools can increase accessibility for students and enable
them to participate in activities they may not otherwise have the opportunity to access in out-of-school time. This again highlights the important role of targeted strategies and school-community partnerships in increasing the accessibility of universal programs for diverse young people, discussed in more detail in 2.4.2. The impact of the socio-economic status of location on accessibility is discussed further in section 2.2.2.

Fourth, location can be linked with building positive connections to the community. The location of a quality program and activities, Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, p. 29) surmise can help to increase youth connection to the community where the activity is held. Riley and Anderson-Butcher (2012, p. 1373), for example, found that a strength-based sporting program located at a university demystified the university environment. Fredricks and Simpkins (2012, p. 284), for example, suggest that locating programs or activities in churches can increase youth sense of belonging and connection to their religious community. School-based programs, they suggest, could therefore have the added benefit of increasing young people’s sense of belonging to their school community. Fredricks and Eccles (2005; also Stearns & Glennie, 2010, p. 308) demonstrate this with their finding that involvement in extra-curricular, structured activities during school was positively related to school engagement. The strength of this pattern of association did, however, differ according to the type of activity with the higher status sports and leadership style activities leading to significantly higher school belonging. Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, and Atkins (2007, p. 214), argue that involvement in programs associated with community organisations can connect young people to a history, traditions and extended network, providing them with a lasting reference point. The benefit of programs increasing young people’s connection to community
and nurturing a sense of belonging can also extend to young people's families (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012, p. 284; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012, pp. 1371, 1374, 1375). Interestingly, Homel, Burns, and Goodnow (1987, pp. 167, 174) showed that this benefit is bi-directional and can also flow to young people from parental ties with community organisations, including youth organisations like Scouts and Guides. This effect flowing from parental membership of youth organisations may be partly explained by the fact that many program leaders are parents.

Location is therefore an important contextual factor which can impact on who participates and for how long. Rates of participation in organised activities is, Quane and Rankin (2006, p. 1241) argue, directly related to the level of youth-specific organisational resources available in the local community. The provision of diverse programs in varied locations will increase accessibility, require and support different program features and appeal to a wider range of young people. This is particularly important because there are significant opportunities for positive change in the life-course trajectories of all young people, in which youth programs, such as community youth development programs, can play a key role (Busseri, Rose-Krasnor, Willoughby, & Chalmers, 2006; Fredricks, 2012; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Hawkins et al. 2011, p. 1448; Holdsworth et al. 2005). While location is only one of an interlinked range of contextual and operational factors which determine program accessibility, the more programs are located in a community, the more choice and opportunities young people will have to participate.
2.2.2. Socio-demographic characteristics

Some scholars and practitioners explore program accessibility by examining how young people’s socio-demographic characteristics might impact on the ways they do or do not access programs. Some of this work notes a strong relationship between program participation and young people's socio-demographic characteristics (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, pp. 16-17; Bult, Verschuren, Jongmans, Lindeman, & Ketelaar, 2011; Denault & Poulin, 2009, pp. 1209-1210; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 4; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012; Imms, Reilly, Carlin, & Dodd, 2009; King, Petrenchik, Law, & Hurley, 2009; King, Imms, et al. 2013, p. 203; McGee, Williams, Howden-Chapman, Martin, & Kawachi, 2006, pp. 3, 7, 12; Nelson & Gastic, 2009, pp. 1181-1182). In this section, I explore the strong bi-directional links between the contextual and the structural and operational characteristics of a program by examining the participation impact of advantage and disadvantage, age, and sex.

**Advantage and disadvantage**

*First, advantage and disadvantage are linked to different experiences of exclusion and inclusion, and these experiences can impact on participation. Advantage and disadvantage can be manifested in the socio-demographic and activity characteristics of young people. Some scholars and practitioners focus on the low-risk versus high-risk dichotomy to discuss the accessibility of universal programs (Kurtines et al. 2004; Silliman, 2004, p. 13). Here, the work of community youth development organisations is seen to focus on ‘low-risk’ youth who do not need ‘help’ to the exclusion of ‘high-risk’ youth who do need ‘help’. ANTA (2002, p. 25) report that a firmly held view amongst Australian scholars and*
professional youth practitioners is that “the larger, more established youth
development programs attract... more mainstream young people than
marginalised young people.” Therefore, community youth development programs
are often judged to be delivering outcomes where they are least needed.

Nevertheless, there is a growing recognition that it is not helpful to divide
young people into a mainstream who are low-risk and an identifiable group who
are high-risk because this obscures the diversity of youth experiences, contexts
and needs (Eckersley, Wierenga, & Wyn, 2006; Wyn, 2009, pp. ix, 12). Categorising
some young people as mainstream, Eckersley, Wierenga, and Wyn (2006, p. 9)
argue is problematic because most young people will experience difficulties, such
as depression, at some time during their development. They therefore argue that
programs which support young people to build their developmental assets and
resilience are important for all young people regardless of their perceived risk
profile. This position is backed by Luthar and Becker's (2002; also Luthar, Shoum,
& Brown, 2006) research involving advantaged suburban youth who are typically
considered to be a low-risk group. The authors found there was a significant
correlation between high expectations to achieve and isolation from adults with
high rates of youth depression, anxiety and substance abuse. Homel (2005b, p. 91
also Case, 2006; Eckersley, Wierenga, & Wyn, 2006) maintains that the implication
of this kind of research outcome is that universal approaches need to be supported
by selected targeted interventions.

Some scholars argue that youth program inclusion or exclusion is affected
by the socio-demographic characteristics of families since parental support is
crucial to ensure program accessibility. Here, McGee et al. (2006, pp. 7, 13, 14; also
Quane & Rankin, 2006, p. 1244), argue that socioeconomic disadvantage can affect
participation both *indirectly* and *directly*. Participation is influenced by the *indirect effect* of a much lower value being placed on participation in recreational, cultural and intellectual programs and activities and the *direct effect* of the inability to afford the cost of membership fees or equipment. On this, Bottrell, Armstrong, and France (2010, p. 63; also Borden, Perkins, & Villarruel et al. 2006, p. 201) report that when families experience significant financial pressures, recreational activities which require a monetary outlay to participate, such as playing club sport, become inaccessible. Skattebol, et al. (2012, p. 69) illustrate how some young people adopt self-protective attitudes about programs and activities they know their families can’t afford by asserting they “do not like them”.

Overall, McGee et al. (2006, pp. 7, 13, 14) argue that the initiation, although not retention, of participation is reflective of young people’s family values. When a particular activity (recreational or intellectual/cultural) is valued within a family, children from that family are more likely to enrol in a complementary activity (sport or cultural/youth groups). Given the positive effects linked to program participation, the impact of parental values on their children’s program participation may well illustrate what Cuevo (2011, p. 135) describes as the intergenerational transfer of advantage or disadvantage. Wimer et al. (2006, pp. 14-15) also found a significant link between income and the level of participation in out-of-school programs. Lower-income youth participated in out-of-school-time religious clubs and activities, scouting and school based extra-curricular activities at lower rates than higher-income youth. Blomfield and Barber (2011, p. 591) observed a similar pattern. However, they also report young people from schools in disadvantaged communities were overrepresented in non-participation and sports-only groups.
Deschenes et al. (2010, p. 8; also James & Partee, 2003) suggest a feature of quality after-school programs is that they build a relationship with parents as well as with the young people who attend. Roker, Player, and Coleman (1999, pp. 191, 192) note that to participate in some activities, children need parental involvement. King, Law, et al. (2010, p. 101) note the crucial role families play in enabling young people with a disability to access organised activities. Engaging with families is, Ausyouth (2002b, pp. 53, 70) maintains, a key feature of successful Indigenous youth programs and is especially important for cultural activities. According to McMinn, Griffin, Jones, and van Sluijs (2013, pp. 4-5) active family social support is associated with higher levels of after-school and weekend physical activity. Skattebol, et al. (2012, p. 67) show how important extended family can be, with some grandparents playing a significant role in covering costs and transport needs. Lack of extended family or community support can be devastating. Here, Osborne (H. personal communication, 26 January 2015) cites the case of a sole parent who commenced working on Saturdays and could no longer transport her child to sporting activities. Since there were no other transport options available, her child was forced to stop participating.

Family involvement can, however, also be potentially problematic. For some young people with disabilities, family involvement may restrict the development of peer relationships (Palisano et al. 2010; Raghavendra et al. 2011). For other young people, family involvement can reinforce social or cultural norms in ways that can impact negatively on them such as reinforcing constructed gender roles (Serpell, Mumba, & Chansa-Kabali, 2011, p. 84). From the perspective of young people, it is the type of parental involvement that is important. Anderson, Funk, Elliott, and Hull Smith (2003, p. 252) show that young people prefer parental support which
facilitates their participation and gives them choices rather than parental regulation which controls their activity choice and subjects them to performance expectations. Importantly, Anderson, et al. (2003, p. 252; also Sharp, Caldwell, Graham, & Ridenour, 2006, p. 369) showed that parental support, rather than parental control, was significantly related to higher levels of enjoyment and sustained engagement. In the program environment, youth workers play an important role in mediating the involvement of families and addressing mismatches between what young people want and need and their family or community social or cultural norms.

Further complicating these research findings is the observation by Mahoney et al. (2005, p. 14) that fewer programs are generally provided in disadvantaged communities. Indeed, Deschenes et al. (2010, p. 4; also Whitlock, 2007, p. 513), argue there is an unmet need for diverse programs in rural and disadvantaged communities. Roker, Player, and Coleman (1999, p. 191) found this to be the case with a lack of voluntary activity opportunities for young people living in rural areas. In exploring this intersection between location and accessibility, Stearns and Glennie (2010, pp. 303-304, 306) found a link between activity provision and school characteristics. While urban and suburban schools did not differ in availability of activities, smaller schools and those with higher proportions of poor students were found to provide significantly fewer activities. The importance of this link is emphasised in their finding that higher rates of participation are directly related to higher levels of activity provision and higher levels of activity provision are directly related to a higher proportion of students achieving academically.
The lack of access for low socioeconomic families arguably illustrates a level of social inequality of opportunity (Cuevo, 2011, p. 135) which impacts negatively on young people, their families and the community. Youngblade et al. (2007, p. 48) observe that community investment in structural resources, such as youth programs, is significantly related to increased positive developmental outcomes in the community. Here, we return to the impact of cost on activity accessibility. After examining the impact of activity cost on the provision of activities in school, Stearns and Glennie (2010) conclude:

The student poverty level is negatively associated with the number of activities available. Given that many activities rely on parent financial support, either directly or by raising funds through selling goods, schools serving poorer children may not be able to afford as many activities (p. 307).

This, Osborne (H. personal communication, 26 January 2015) notes, is a similar situation faced by many community program groups. While some volunteer-run sporting clubs are able to absorb some of the costs associated with adopting cost reduction strategies for disadvantaged families, such as hiring uniforms for nominal fees and reducing membership fees, they still have overhead costs they must raise funds to cover.

Locally-based programs are a critical resource for all young people but research suggests they are especially important for low-income youth and their families (Darling, 2005, p. 503; Quane & Rankin, 2006, p. 1244; Wimer et al. p. 2). Blomfield and Barber (2011, p. 592) and Anderson et al. (2007, p. 36) suggest the positive impact of extra-curricular participation may be emphasised for disadvantaged youth because they have access to fewer developmental asset
building opportunities and therefore start programs with fewer assets than more affluent youth.

**Age**

*Second, the age of young people can impact on participation.* As young people age their rate of participation in youth development programs and activities decreases (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003, p. 40; Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, pp. 16-17; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 4; King, Imms, et al. 2013, p. 203; McGee et al. 2006, pp. 7, 12). Denault and Poulin (2009, pp. 1209-1210; also Balsano et al. 2009, p. 255) found that for the majority of young people, their involvement reduces as they age across both the number of activities and programs (breadth) and their frequency of participation (intensity). This, they argue, suggests participation is dependent on developmental processes. That is, as youth age their autonomy, identity development, decisions about how they spend their discretionary time and their opportunities for activity involvement change. Whitlock (2007, 513) agrees and suggests the reduced appeal of organized activities is partly attributable to older youth wanting activities that are free of older adult supervision. Similarly, Jones and Perkins (2006, p. 102) argue that as young people age they want more independence and decision-making opportunities. Wheeler and Edlebeck (2006, p. 90; also Libby & Sedonaen, 2006) agree, arguing that many older youth want to participate in activities which enable them to be civically active and advocate for local and global change.

Here, Rhodes (2004, p. 154) argues programs can meet these needs by decreasing supervision and increasing decision and leadership opportunities for older youth. This, Deschenes et al. (2010, pp. 6-7) note, may be easier for the larger
programs which have more resource capacity to offer more and diverse opportunities to challenge and interest older youth.

In contrast, Busseri and Rose-Krasnor (2009, p. 917) suggest this age based participation pattern may instead reflect a normative participation cycle which occurs throughout the entire lifespan. This means participation activity continuously shifts from wide-ranging to narrow, intense involvement and back again depending on the occurrence of identity development processes such as involvement in employment, education and relationships which can impact on how time is spent. Therefore, as Rose-Krasnor (2008), argues, for some young people:

‘quitting’ an activity may be a positive event, perhaps because the youth has gained all she can from it, outgrew it, found another activity more interesting, or wanted to increase her ‘doing nothing’ time (p. 503).

Ausyouth (2003c, p. 20; 2003e36), however, argue another crucial reason some young people choose to withdraw as they age is because they become increasingly subjected to *the cool factor*; which means being involved is not viewed positively or seen as desirable. Challenging the norms and values of one’s own peer group where participation in a program or activity is not viewed as cool is difficult for some young people to do (Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 9) and this is especially when their peers subject them to ridicule or teasing (Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1999, p. 189). The impact of attitudes can also influence the participation of older youth with a disability when their activity engagement is influenced by attitudinal barriers which increase as young people age (King, Law, et al. 2010, p. 102). Peers can, however, also be a positive influence supporting and encouraging each other
to become and to remain involved (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003, p. 50; Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1999, p. 192).

Denault and Poulin (2009, pp. 1210, 1212; also Pema & Mehay, 2010, p. 243) believe that high-levels of participation in organised activities is more vital in early-to-mid adolescence. This, they suggest, is because participation early in life predicts a longer-term positive developmental trajectory. Bradshaw, et al. (2008, p. 218), agree however they believe the earlier participation commences the better. Deschenes et al. (2010, p. 4) argue participation in programs from an early age is important because it can support better educational outcomes as children age. As well, McGee et al. (2006, pp. 8, 13) found there were significant continuities in involvement with early childhood participation predicting later adolescent and young adult involvement. Here, the continuity of program access from primary to secondary school is necessary to support continued participation (H. Osborne, personal communication, 26 January 2015).

The engagement of older youth in organised programs is, however, still important. As Crean (2012, p. 183,186; also Fredricks & Eccles, 2008, p. 1040) reports, young people tend to engage in higher levels of problem behaviours, such as stealing and fighting, as they age and start to make more of their own activity decisions. Here, Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, and Ferrari (2003, p. 50; also Crean, 2012, p. 186), found that young people who have increased their involvement in risky behaviour as they have aged, also have lower levels of significant adult support than other young people and, as Bradshaw, et al. (2008, p. 215) note, more delinquent peers. This, points to the significant role youth development programs can play in connecting older youth with supportive older people and with more pro-social peers.
**Sex**

*Third, the gender or sex of a young person can impact on participation.*

According to Kress (2006, p. 53) gender can determine whether a young person does or does not take part in a program or activity. Balsano et al. (2009, pp. 255,256) found that girls have higher rates of participation in out-of-school-time activities than boys. In contrast, Denault and Poulin (2009, p. 1206) found no difference between boys and girls in their level of organised activity participation except in grade 7 where girls took part for fewer hours but in more activities than boys. In a large study of school age youth, Crean (2012, p. 186; also Fredricks & Eccles, 2010, p. 329) also found no difference between boys and girls in the number of hours they spent in activities and the number of different activities they joined. He did, however find a difference in their activity choices, with more boys participating in sports related activities, school and neighbourhood clubs. In contrast more girls joined volunteering, church and cultural related activities.

Similarly, Wimer at al. (2006, p. 5) found no consistent evidence of gendered inequality in the level of participation across out-of-school programs. They did, however, find gendered patterns of program or activity choice with girls more likely to enrol in academic and school-based extracurricular activities and boys more likely to enrol in recreation and athletics activities. Zambon et al. (2010, p. 93) also found boys were more likely to participate in sports related clubs whereas girls were more likely to join volunteering activities. Interestingly, King, Law, et al. (2010, p. 101) report this gendered pattern of participation also holds for young people with disabilities, with sex generally a stronger predictor of activity choice than disability.
The socio-demographic characteristics of young people, their families and their communities are, therefore, important contextual features which can impact on who takes part and for how long. The effect of socio-demographic characteristics is strongly inter-linked with location. Both of these contextual characteristics will influence the operational practices of youth development programs. The contextual examples provided in this section demonstrate that the reasons young people do or do not participate in youth programs are complex and involve interlinked contextual and operational incentives and barriers to participation. These incentives and barriers to participation are often defined as selection effects. Mahoney et al. (2005) explain the process of selection effects as:

Activity selection involves a reciprocal process between contextual constraints and opportunities for participation, and the individual’s motivation and ability to perceive and act on them (pp. 13-14).

Discussion about selection effects, therefore, involves exploring the impact of program accessibility and appeal on young people’s participation. As outlined in this section across the contextual features of location and socio-demographic characteristics there are three key operational program features which can impact on accessibility: attitudes; cost; and availability. Despite these challenges, Witt (2005, p. 124) and Skattebol, et al. (2012, p. 82) argue youth organisations are uniquely positioned to play a significant role in bringing together young people with different class, race, age, sex and ability characteristics thereby helping young people to expand their social circle and nurturing intergroup and community understanding. The influence of program structural and operational characteristics
on encouraging diverse young people to participate is discussed in parts 2.3 and 2.4.

2.3. Structural characteristics

In the program environment, *structural characteristics* refer to the particular arrangement and interrelationship of program parts. There are three key structural elements of strength-based community youth development programs. These relate to the program curriculum which is designed to be: age and developmentally appropriate; structured rather than unstructured; and delivered sequentially over an extended period of time.

2.3.1. Program curriculum

The first structural feature of community youth development programs is that they provide a curriculum of activities that is strength-based and age and developmentally appropriate. A program can provide a curriculum of activities to support the development of practical and specialist skills (e.g. first-aid knowledge or meeting procedures) (ANTA, 2002; Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 14; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b); life-skills (e.g. confidence or communication skills) (Greenwald et al. 2006; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Kress, 2006, p. 48; Larson & Angus, 2011); cerebral skills (Bers, 2012, p. 32) and physical skills (e.g. swimming or abseiling) (Armour, Sandford, & Duncombe, 2012; Fuller, et al. 2013, p. 477; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012, p. 1370). While the opportunity to learn these physical, practical and specialist technical skills is often the reason why young people choose to participate (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 14; Fuller, Percy, Breuning, & Cotrufo, 2013, p. 475; Greene, Lee, Constance, & Hynes, 2013, p. 1565; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 9; Petitpas,
Van Raalte, Cornelius, & Presbrey, 2004, p. 333), Catalano et al. (2004, p. 103; also Balsano, Phelps, Theokas, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009; Lerner, 2004, p. xv, 127) argue the promotion of pro-social connections and life-skill outcomes is the most important goal of positive youth development programs.

For all programs, the activity curriculum will have tangible bi-directional links to the theoretical, contextual, operational and outcome characteristics of a program. For a program curriculum the link to theory is evident in whether there is a focus on risks or strengths. For the operational characteristics the curriculum links are evident in the ways it has been structured to support quality youth work practice. Combining a quality curriculum of activities with quality youth work practice will contribute to positive developmental outcomes. Here, Catalano et al. (2004, pp. 102-103), link curriculum and context in their argument that positive youth development programs deliberately address:

- one developmental construct (e.g. pro-social norms) over multiple developmental domains (e.g. individual, peer group, school); or
- multiple developmental constructs (e.g. emotional, cognitive & behavioural skills) over one developmental domain (e.g. family); or
- multiple developmental constructs (e.g. spirituality and moral competence) over multiple developmental domains (e.g. individual, peer group and community).

Providing a diversity of programs with different explicit skill and knowledge outcomes will broaden appeal to a wider range of young people. The importance of this is indicated by Du Bois et al (2011) who found that the developmental outcomes resulting from participation in a mentoring program were strongest when youth were matched with mentors with similar interests. This research points to the importance of young people having access to a diversity
of programs each capable of filling a particular niche in youth interests and needs. A diversity of programs in a community increases the potential for more young people to be able to access, and benefit from participating in, programs that are of interest to them (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, pp. vi, 28; MacCallum & Beltman, 2002, p. 4).

Designing and delivering a program curriculum to cater for the different abilities of each young person in that group is also important because, as Wood (2006, p. 12) explains, in any one group of young people there will be differences in ability ranging from "emotional and physical development... [to] life experiences, literacy levels, first language, culture and learning disabilities." There will also be differences in knowledge (Greene, Lee, Constance, & Hynes, 2013, p. 1559). A flexible curriculum recognises that young people's skills, knowledge and abilities change as they age and develop (Spee, 2008, p. 222; also Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 40; Hill, 2010, p. 102; Foley & Leverett, 2011, p. 5) and provides space for a two way intergenerational dialogue about activity decision making (CPSU, 2004, p. 7; Larson & Angus, 2011, 288; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 3; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 19 Zeldin, Camino, & Mook 2005, p. 122). As McLaughlin (2000, p. 13) states “one generic activity will not fit all youth.” A strength-based curriculum therefore recognises young people’s existing skills, knowledge and interests and provides them with multiple opportunities to strengthen existing and develop new skills and knowledge (ANTU, 2002; Deschenes & McDonald, 2003, p. 2; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, p. 323; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, p. 98; Zeldin, 2004, p. 81).

Different scholars highlight different curriculum elements as most important. Catalano et al. (2004, pp. 102-103), while highlighting 13 life-skill outcomes in their 15 constructs of positive youth development, only specify one
curriculum element – the provision of opportunities for pro-social involvement for young people. Lerner (2004, pp. xv, 127) highlights two curriculum elements in his “Big 3” most important characteristics of quality youth programs: the provision of leadership opportunities and activities which build life-skills. Stearns and Glennie (2010, p. 308) highlight one element arguing that activities must be matched to young people’s interests. Gambone (2001, p. 279) includes in her four key program supports or opportunities the three curriculum elements of: providing challenging and interesting learning experiences; meaningful involvement; and safe activities. Sibthorp and Morgan (2011, pp. 107-108) identify the five most important curriculum design elements as: requiring persistence over time; providing challenge; requiring self-control and attention; and building skills. Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003b, p. 176) highlight four curriculum design elements they argue typify youth development program activities: skill building; real and challenging; horizon broadening; and linked to other domains (family, school, community).

Overall, whichever program elements are highlighted in a curriculum of activities, a strength-based program must be age and developmentally appropriate and have tangible bi-directional links to the program operational and outcome characteristics.

2.3.2. Structured program of activities

The second structural feature of community youth development programs is that they offer a structured curriculum of program activities. Positive developmental outcomes are strongly associated with structured, rather than unstructured, programs or activities (Blomfield Neira & Barber, 2012; Catalano et al. 2004, pp. 115-117; Kirshner, 2008, p. 95; Nelson & Gastic, 2009, p. 3; Persson,
Osgood, Anderson, and Shaffer (2005, p. 49; also Darling, 2005) explain that structured programs can be understood as a curriculum of activities which organises how kids spend their time while they are participating. That is, in a program environment, youth participation in a defined developmentally appropriate curriculum of activities is supported by program leaders in a physically, socially and psychologically safe environment. As Mahoney et al. (2005) explain, a strength-based structured program provides:

…clear, appropriate, and consistent rules and expectations, adult supervision, guidance, and age appropriate monitoring in a predictable social atmosphere where clear boundaries are known and respected (p. 11).

Here, Mahoney et al. (2005) illustrate the bi-directional link between program operational elements (youth work practice) and its structural elements in creating a strength-based structured program environment.

In comparison, Vieno, Nation, Perkins, & Santinello (2007, p. 763) define unstructured activities as those mostly self-directed activities where young people adopt a largely passive role. These, as Mahoney et al. (2005, p. 4) describe, include activities such as watching TV, listening to music, and “hanging out with” or socialising with friends. Osgood et al. (2005, pp. 50-52) argue the difference in outcomes between time spent in structured compared to unstructured activities can be best explained by routine activity theory. Routine activity theory applied at the individual level helps to explain the link between high levels of time spent in unsupervised activities socialising with peers and participation in risky
behaviours. As Osgood et al. (2005, pp. 50-52; also Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004) explain:

Individual-level routine activity theory holds that opportunities for deviance are especially concentrated in activities that combine the three elements of socializing with peers, freedom from adult supervision, and a lack of structure, whereas in isolation, each element is of limited consequence (pp. 116-117).

The example of watching TV by yourself, even if it is unsupervised and unstructured is, therefore, as Osgood et al. (2005, p. 52) note, almost completely absent of situational inducements to problem behaviour. Unstructured time socialising with friends can also be spent in positive ways just as easily as it can be spent in negative ways. Routine activity theory complements the strength-based approach to youth development because, as Osgood et al. (2005) argue, it:

…treats youths as active participants in their own development. This approach portrays environmental influences not as deterministic forces that inevitably produce certain outcomes, but rather as sources of opportunities and inducements that actors take into account in choosing among alternative actions (p. 52).

Codling (2010, pp. 40-41), reports structure was an important element in the success of a program of activities designed for young people disengaged from the formal education system. According to youth workers the program environment was deliberately informal and the delivery approach was flexible. There was, however, a strong underlying program structure that was deliberately designed to support young people’s learning and development, encourage regular attendance and the adoption of a weekly routine.
There are some dissenting viewpoints. Lopes, Flouris, and Lindeman (2013, p. 58) claim that for a youth development program to engage disengaged Indigenous youth, it needs to be “relatively informal and unstructured”. The activities about which this finding was reported are, however, a series of separate diversionary style activities, such as a Friday night disco. While the provision of these activities is important for diversifying the supervised leisure activities available for young people in the community, they do not constitute a youth development program. Trainor, Delfabbro, Anderson, and Winefield (2010) suggest the level of well-being shown by participants in structured as opposed to unstructured activities is more likely to be a feature of the young people who choose to take part. This finding is clarified when the way in which structured and unstructured activities have been defined is examined. Unstructured activities have been defined as activities completed alone such as reading, writing, listening to music and playing computer games. Structured activities have been defined as activities involving other people including: playing sport, playing music and computer games with others, going to clubs, parties and training, riding and hiking. The majority of these ‘structured’ leisure activities are likely to be unstructured activities. This research does not compare structured versus unstructured programs of activities but rather it compares predominantly unstructured leisure time spent alone and in the company of others.

Nevertheless, Mahoney et al. (2005, p. 17; Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004, p. 121) warn that some structured activities do not facilitate positive developmental activities because the way the operational characteristics meld together does not create or sustain a positive program environment. For example, negative outcomes could result from being exposed to a program environment
which does not nurture positive relationships, belonging or confidence. As well, access to some less-structured, youth worker supervised and non-program specific activities may also be beneficial to young people’s well-being (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003; Nolas, 2014). Overall, however, participation in largely structured programs and activities has been shown to lead to better developmental outcomes than participation in largely unstructured activities.

Quality strength-based programs therefore provide opportunities for young people to participate in a deliberate, intentional learning program of activities supported by skilled younger and older people (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 11). They have a coherent programmatic framework that recognises age and developmental phases, takes into account children’s and young adult’s increasing knowledge and challenges them to change and develop as they broaden their skills, competence, experiences and aspirations (Apsler, 2009, pp. 15-16; Bartko & Eccles, 2003; McLaughlin, 2000, Mahoney et al. 2005; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 328; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a; Vieno et al. 2007).

### 2.3.3. Extended involvement

The third structural element of community youth development programs is that they offer kids the opportunity to be involved over an extended period of time. Increasingly, evidence suggests that being involved in youth programs and activities over time can be predictive of positive developmental outcomes (Blomfield & Barber, 2010). In an effort to unpack this evidence, scholars have started to examine different dimensions of time spent in organised activities and programs. Most of this research has explored the developmental impact of the *breadth* or number of distinct programs and activities young people take part in
and their frequency or intensity of participation (Rose-Krasnor, Busseri, Willoughby, & Chalmers, 2006). Frequency or intensity of participation has been explored by examining the number of hours (Busseri & Rose-Krasnor, 2009, p. 908) or the number of times (Palisano et al. 2010) young people participate. Denault and Poulin (2009; also Rose-Krasnor, Busseri, Willoughby, & Chalmers, 2006), for example, found both breadth and intensity of participation in extracurricular activities was related to the positive developmental outcomes of academic orientation and civic engagement. Overall, however, breadth had a greater positive impact than intensity. This, they hypothesise, may be due to the different skills and experiences different activities expose young people to. Gardner, Browning, and Brooks-Gunn (2012, p. 664) found that the more intensive extracurricular activity or afterschool program participation was linked with fewer internalizing problems.

Only a few studies have explored the impact of the length of time or duration of participation on young people's developmental outcomes. Fredricks and Eccles (2006), for example, examined involvement in organised school clubs across one, two and three years and found better developmental outcomes were associated with the longer duration of involvement. Gardner, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn (2008) compared involvement at 1 and 2 years and also found that the longer the duration of engagement in organised activities the better the outcomes into young adulthood. Rhodes, Grossman and Resch (2000, pp. 1668) report that participation in community youth mentoring programs for 12 months or longer is associated with significant self-worth outcomes. In contrast they report that shorter participation in a mentoring program can be harmful; leading to an adverse impact on self-worth. Some scholars discuss these measures in terms of
whether the participation is sporadic or sustained. Good, Willoughby, and Fritjers (2009, p. 1167; also Pema & Mehay, 2010, p. 243), for example, report that sustained compared to sporadic involvement in extra-curricular clubs in high school was associated with significantly more positive outcomes (friendship quality, low substance use, higher marks and intrapersonal wellbeing).

However, most of this research focuses on in-school and out-of-school extra-curricular activities (Burton & Marshall, 2005; Fredricks, 2012; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), out-of-school time programs (Greene, Lee, Constance, & Hynes, 2013), and a mixed range of extracurricular and community organised activities (Denault & Poulin, 2009; Denault, Poulin, & Pedersen, 2009; Gardner, Browning, & Brooks-Gunn, 2012; Gardner, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Rose-Krasnor et al. 2006). None of the studies reviewed specifically focused on exploring the impact of these measures of time spent in community youth development programs on developmental outcomes.

There are also limitations with the measures used which make little differentiation between the different kinds of activities, clubs or structured programs young people might be involved in. This means structured and unstructured activities are often conflated (e.g. Burton & Marshall, 2005) and key characteristic elements of community youth development programs, such as involvement in volunteering and leadership, are examined as separate activities (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Rose-Krasnor et al. 2006; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). Nor do they adequately distinguish between or use consistent definitions to describe different kinds of clubs, activities and/or programs that young people might be involved in (Larson & Angus, 2011, p. 277; Gardner, Browning, & Brooks-Gunn, 2012, p. 663; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2013, p. 2). This
makes it difficult to draw comparative conclusions between studies and the different kinds of organisations, programs and activities that young people take part in.

Roth, Malone, and Brooks-Gunn (2010, p. 321) argue further research using more consistent measures is needed before any firm conclusions can be drawn about the effect of each participation dimension. Nevertheless, the growing evidence exploring the dimensions of time spent in organised programs and activities does suggest that young people who participate tend to do a lot better than young people who do not participate and the greater the involvement the better the outcomes are likely to be.

2.4. Operational characteristics

In the program environment operational characteristics refer to the manner in which programs operate (function or work) and include program processes and youth work practices. Guest and McRee (2009, p. 60; also Lakin & Mahoney, 2006, p. 515), argue the way a program is delivered and the situational setting is significantly more important than the program curriculum. They suggest that programs implemented badly can support negative outcomes such as depression and problematic risk-taking behaviours. Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, pp. 26, 28) echo this finding, stating that the key to providing high quality activities is the ability of program staff to put practices in place that facilitate a positive social and educational environment. In this section, I briefly discuss three key operational elements: the program processes of voluntary participation; universal eligibility; and youth work practice.
2.4.1. Program processes: Voluntary participation

Youth participation in youth organisations, programs and activities can be: voluntary or non-compulsory relying on young people’s intrinsic motivation; mandatory or compulsory relying on young people’s extrinsic motivation to participate; or include a combination of both voluntary and mandatory activities. For community youth development programs, the decision of young people whether or not to take part is voluntary and based on intrinsic motivation. Voluntary participation for young people is the first operational feature of strength-based community youth development programs.

If young people choose to participate in a program or activity, they can also choose when to leave and they can choose which activities or awards they do or do not want to participate in (ANTA, 2008, p. 13; Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003, p. 40; Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 33;). In some community programs, choosing not to participate in a particular activity will limit future choices in that program. For example in the Queensland Surf Life Saving and the Emergency Services Cadet programs, taking part in specified activities to learn specialist skills is essential for taking full advantage of the opportunities in the program (DES, n.d.; B. Lofthouse, personal communication, Dec 18, 2014). However, having the choice whether or not to participate, means when young people do take part they are more likely to do so because they want to and are interested in the program or activity. This means young people will have a higher level of intrinsic motivation to participate, take on challenges and to do their best (Houser-Marko, Curry, Mermelstein, Emery, Pugach, 2011). Voluntary participation provides young people with opportunities to not only demonstrate effort and persistence, but to

Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, pp. 15-16) argue that youth workers need to carefully think about why and how they make extra-curricular program components or activities mandatory. They argue that by making specific kinds of activities mandatory, some young people, who would otherwise participate in the program, may be discouraged from participating. They maintain that using flexible approaches to enrolment in programs can facilitate the participation of more low-income kids who may only be able to participate some of the time. Skattebol, et al. (2012, p. 67) outline how family responsibilities such as caring for siblings, finance and transport issues can all interlink to compound activity inaccessibility and reduce youth choices about how they spend their time.

Weiss et al. (2005, p. 26) suggest that for out-of-school time programs, setting realistic expectations for older youth to attend for fewer days can better support their participation. Weiss et al. (2005, p. 20) suggest that attendance is different to engagement. Engagement, they argue, is necessary for learning and development. Mandatory programs may get young people to attend but they may not get the same level of engagement voluntary programs achieve. Here, Rose-Krasnor (2008, p. 500) suggests that there is a need for more research exploring the participation dimension of psychological engagement and impact on developmental outcomes. Borden, Perkins, and Villarruel et al. (2006, p. 200) found that when participation was mandated young people were not motivated to participate and this effect held regardless who was requiring them to attend (e.g. teachers, police, parents). This may be because the coercive element of mandatory participation can generate resentment (Graff, 2006, p. 19) and be seen as
oppressive (Zambon et al. 2010, p. 94). In mandatory youth programs, Lakin and Mahoney (2006, p. 517) suggest it is possible to mediate the negative impact of coercion on youth empowerment by increasing youth control and responsibility within the program.

2.4.2. Program processes: Universal participation

Youth participation in youth organisations, programs and activities can be universal or targeted. Universal participation is the second operational feature of strength-based community youth development programs. Community youth development programs aim to be available to all young people within a particular population bracket such as all 12-18 year olds, all boys or all girls. Catalano et al. (2004, pp. 115-117) maintain that universal youth programs can be designed for particular groups of young people within these population brackets who have shared social or demographic characteristics and needs. At the program group level this can mean, for example, supporting a program group for all young people in a particular school, suburb or religious group.

Within universal programs there is an ongoing focus on making the activities accessible to all young people meeting the eligibility criteria regardless of their perceived risk status, talent or skill level (Holdsworth et al. 2005, p. 10; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 11; Schulman & Davies, 2007, p. 5; Wilson, Gottfredson, Cross, Rorie, & Connell, 2009, p. 17). Homel (2005a, pp. 2-4) outlines three specific strengths associated with the universal approach to participation. First universal programs are empowering and non-stigmatising because young people considered “most at risk” are not targeted and there is no policy or governance imperative aimed at controlling “risky individuals”. Second, universal programs can lead to
new, and bolster existing, informal support systems (e.g. friendship and family networks) in ways that targeted programs won’t. Third, they have the potential to bring together a diversity of young people avoiding the “deviancy training” effect associated with targeted programs which bring together troubled young people. The “deviancy training” effect, Homel (2005b, pp. 95-96; also Bengtsson, 2012; Bradshaw, et al. 2008, p. 215; Dishion & Tipsord, 2011, p. 206) explains, results from the peer group reinforcing existing and encouraging the development of new problematic behaviours.

Bell, Vromen, and Collin (2008, pp. 9, 67, 101) note that even for universal programs there is a need for targeted participation approaches designed to involve young people with shared experiences or from a specific background. Here, Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, pp. 12-14) argue that targeted recruitment strategies are crucial for reaching young people with specific experiences of exclusion or disadvantage, such as those who need developmental support because they are disengaged from school or have problem behaviours. In their experience, programs have more success at attracting diverse young people when different and more intensive kinds of targeted recruitment strategies are used. Riggs et al. (2010, p. 425) argue that by bringing young people with similar cultural or ethnic backgrounds together, after-school programs can support the positive development of their cultural or ethnic identity. As such, Catalano et al. (2004, pp. 115-117) argue universal programs become targeted programs only when they focus on treating specific problems such as delinquency and drug abuse.
2.4.3. Youth work practices

*Youth work practice* can be defined as the matters that volunteer and paid youth practitioners engage in as they work with young people and the community in the delivery of programs and activities. Quality strength-based youth organisations and programs support volunteer and paid youth workers to develop the skills and knowledge they need to nurture positive developmental outcomes for young people. To do this successfully, youth workers deliver appropriate activities and create a safe and positive structured program environment with clear boundaries, where behaviour is monitored and young people are encouraged to succeed (Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, pp. 335-336; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 18; Rhodes, 2004, p. 158; Rhodes et al. 2000, p. 1668; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011, pp. 19, 21). Greene et al. (2013, p. 1567) found that the success of staff in creating a quality program environment positively influenced youth engagement and retention in programs. Strength-based youth work practice builds participation and collaboration opportunities between youth programs, families, schools and communities. Through these partnerships, young people are supported to develop their own cultural, historic, economic and political self (Abidi-Sheldon, 2010, p. 115; Ausyouth, 2002c, pp. 8-9; Borden et al. 2003, p. 331; Lloyd-Jones, 2010, p. 23; London, 2002, p. 8; Speer, 2008, p. 217; Smith & Akiva, 2008, p. 195; Youngblade et al. 2007; Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005). This links to the argument of Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003b, p. 172) that successful youth work in a program environment nourishes an atmosphere of hope which “resembles...a caring family.” Here, they emphasise the bi-directional link to the program theoretical element with a positive, youth-centred tone created using a strength-based approach to youth development.
Different scholars highlight different youth work practices as being most important for supporting positive developmental outcomes. These illustrate the complex interlinked practice elements that make up effective youth work. In their 15 constructs of positive youth development Catalano et al. (2004, pp. 102-103) highlight one youth work practice element – the active recognition of positive behaviour. Deschenes et al. (2010, pp. 6-7) highlight regular staff meetings because regular staff meetings provide access to opportunities for support, training and problem solving. The most highlighted youth work practice is, however, the nurturing of positive relationships, partnerships and social networks with, around and for young people (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 20; Gambone 2001, p. 279; Mahoney et al. 2005, p. 11; Rhodes, 2004; Walker, 2011). Positive adult-youth relationships is one of Lerner’s (2004, pp. xv, 127) most important “Big 3” program features. Arguably, the two most important relationships for young people that youth work practice can influence in the program environment are those formed with significant non-parental adults associated with the program and with the other kids taking part in the program.

**Non-parental adults**

Youth development programs offer young people *opportunities to interact with significant non-parental adults*. Eccles, Barber, Stone, and Hunt (2003, p. 883) found that involved compared to non-involved kids had significantly more opportunities to interact with a diversity of non-parental adults. When these interactions occur over a long period of time, more meaningful and deeper relationships characterised by trust can be nurtured (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2013, p. 7). Sullivan and Larson (2010) argue these kinds of relationships are highly
beneficial because they link young people with high-resource adults. These kinds of relationships can: increase young people’s belief and hope in their own self-worth (Bowers et al. 2012, pp. 312-313); promote positive development (Jones & Deutsch, 2011, p. 1402); and result in higher levels of positive behaviours (Scales et al. 2006). Walker (2011, pp. 636-637) illustrates the complexity of role relationships which program leaders must balance as they work with young people. She argues that "program leaders share features of roles such as parents and teachers, yet they are distinct from, and in some respects less confined than, these other adults in youth’s lives.” When program leaders are able to adopt practices which enable them to learn about young people’s lives outside of the program environment such as talking with parents and finding out what is happening at school, they are better able to build effective and complete relationships with them (Deschenes et al. 2010, pp. 6-7).

**Peer friendships**

Organised programs and activities provide opportunities for kids to extend their social networks beyond their immediate peer friendship group (Zambon et al. 2010). Nurturing a peer supported program environment and the formation of new peer relationships can: contribute to successful learning (Loder & Hirsch, 2003); nurture a sense of belonging (Fuller et al. 2013, p. 479) and support higher participation and retention rates, especially for older youth (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 17; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 7; Walker, 2011, p. 651). School-based programs and activities can bring together young people of different ages from within the school community who have similar interests but would not otherwise meet or mix with one another (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005, p. 518). In contrast,
community programs provide opportunities for youth to extend their peer network beyond the school community. They can bring together diverse youth from across the community including those from different schools and those who have left school (Quane & Rankin, 2006, p. 1243; Skattebol, et al. 2012, p. 67). Location can, however, as previously discussed, make it difficult for young people to move outside their community and to mix with new groups of young people (Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1999, p. 192).

Opportunities to form new peer friendships outside of school may be, as Mahoney, Eccles, and Larson (2004, pp. 126-127) hypothesise, particularly important for young people who experience rejection from their peers in school. Here, Bradshaw, et al. (2008, p. 217) suggest that negative expectations from peers and teachers can be reversed in youth development programs. Quane and Rankin (2006, p. 1239) suggest the importance of participation may also be in the way it shapes the quality of friendship networks. That is, through youth development programs young people are able to build friendships with pro-social and engaged young people. Fredricks and Eccles (2005, p. 517; also Fredricks & Eccles, 2008, p. 1041) research may support this argument. They found that youth involved in extracurricular activities reported more prosocial and academic friends than non-participants. The significance of this finding is illustrated by emerging research summarised by Feldman Farb and Matjasko (2012) which suggests there is a link between a young person’s peer group and developmental outcomes. While, this research may simply illustrate the selection effect discussed previously, Sieving, Perry, and Williams (2000, p. 33) suggest otherwise. They found that risk-taking activity and behavioural decision-making may be related more to the peer influence processes than to the peer selection processes. Meldrum and Hay (2012,
p. 699) also found that peer associations can significantly influence self-control. They report that when young people start to associate with pro-social peers they experience “a moderate shift upward in their level of self-control”. This effect is especially pronounced when the friends are best or reciprocal friends (Cheung & Wing-ling Tse, 2011, p. 1791). Kaufman, Wyman, Forbes-Jones, and Barry (2007, pp. 429-430) research also suggests that this may be the case, except for aggression which they argue is more entrenched due to earlier family experiences. Bradshaw, et al. (2008, p. 216) argue that universal programs can support young people with problems, such as aggression, set early in life if their program participation is complemented by more targeted and intensive assistance.

Of specific relevance to youth development program work is Kaufman et al. (2007, pp. 429-430) finding that participation in organised activities reduces the adverse influence of anti-social peers. Overall, youth work practices that nurture the formation of positive relationships feature: warm, caring, and mutually respectful socialisation opportunities (Bowers et al. 2012); support kids to develop and model their own pro-social skills (Bolzan & Gale, 2011, p. 278; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 5; Wood 2006, p. 8); and provide opportunities for one-on-one and group-based positive interactions (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, pp. 20, 24).

2.5. Outcome characteristics

In the program context outcome characteristics are the end results of youth development program participation. Developmental outcomes are strongly linked with the theoretical, contextual, structural and operational program characteristics and can range from life-skills (e.g. confidence) and physical skills (e.g. running) to practical and specialist skills (e.g. meeting procedures and first-aid knowledge).
Sometimes scholars use involvement in positive or problem behaviours or activities (e.g. educational or criminal activities) as examples of program outcomes and sometimes these are used to illustrate life-skills (e.g. volunteering as an indicator of caring). Overall, the activity and program literature focuses on exploring young people’s life-skills and their behaviours and activities as indicators of positive youth development.

There are two limitations in the outcome research conducted to date. The first limitation is that while many studies include measures or components to investigate the outcomes related to activity involvement, very few studies focus on community youth development programs. Second, as discussed previously, these studies do not adequately distinguish between or use consistent definitions to describe different kinds of clubs, programs and/or activities that young people might participate in. This makes it difficult to draw comparative conclusions.

Diverse programs have similarities and differences in the impact they have on young people’s lives. Some of these differences can be traced back to the context, structure and quality of the program activity curriculum (Gage, Overpeck, Nansel, & Kogan, 2005, p. 517; Riggs & Greenberg, 2004, p. 180). For example some research suggests there can be common core positive life-skill outcomes (e.g. pro-social relationship building) (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 28), different life-skill outcomes (e.g. civic skills, self-esteem) (Gambone, Yu, Lewis-Charp, Sipe, & Lacoe, 2004; Kort-Butler & Hagewen, 2011), different behavioural outcomes (e.g. increased healthy eating or alcohol consumption) (Gardner, Roth, Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Vieno et al. 2007; Zambon et al. 2010, p. 93) and different specialist skills outcomes (e.g. gliding and flying) (Chan & Short, 2011). Some of these findings are linked back to the operational curriculum or structural characteristic of time spent
engaged. This suggests engagement in a diversity of extra-curricular activities or a program which provides diverse activity experiences can widen and strengthen the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes and influence behaviour through the provision of a wider range of learning experiences.

The best known framework which is inclusive of these broad developmental outcomes is the Five or Six C’s (characteristics) of desired outcomes of youth development: Competence (knowledge; skills; behaviour); Character (responsibility and autonomy; spirituality); Connections (safety and structure; membership and belonging); Confidence (self-worth; mastery and future); Caring (sympathy and empathy); and Contribution (participation; influence). This framework is strongly associated with Lerner (e.g. Lerner, Ostrum, & Freel, 1995; Lerner, Fisher, & Weinburg, 2000; Lerner, 2004; Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi et al. 2005; Lerner, 2011). Its development has, however, been influenced by a diversity of practitioners and academics (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Little, 1993 cited in Lerner, 1995, Lerner, Ostrum, & Freel, 1995, and Lerner, Almerigi, et al. 2005, p. 23; Perkins, Borden, & Villarruel, 2001, p. 50; Pittman et al. 2001; Pittman et al. 2003; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b, p. 173; Scales et al. 2000).

Catalano et al. (2004, pp. 102-103), also detail 13 broad developmental outcome characteristics in their framework of 15 constructs. These are: resilience (capacity to adapt); self-determination (think and act for oneself); spirituality (moral reasoning, commitment and belief); self-efficacy (achieve goals); clear and positive identity (coherent sense of self); a belief in the future (hope and optimism); pro-social norms (healthy beliefs and behaviour standards); and the promotion of: bonding and social (interpersonal skills); emotional (identify and respond to feelings); cognitive (cognitive skills and academic achievement); behavioural
(verbal and non-verbal communication); and moral competence (ethical, affective and social justice understanding).

Underpinning these broad developmental outcomes is, however, the specific promotion of life-skills. Life-skills have been conceptualised in a variety of different ways. There are many clear synergistic and bidirectional linkages and overlaps between life-skills which can make it difficult to categorise and to measure them (Bailey & Dean, 2002, p. 140). The Jacobs Foundation (2011, pp. 12, 31-32) describes life-skills as crossing four core skill areas (a) critical thinking and cognitive skills; (b) coping and self-management skills; (c) social and moral skills and (d) communication skills. This model defines:

- **critical thinking and cognitive life-skills**, as encompassing skills in problem solving, decision-making, autonomy, self-reflection, and flexible and creative thinking.

- **coping and self-management skills**, as encompassing skills in regulating emotion, self-esteem, self-confidence and awareness, and managing stress.

- **social and moral skills**, as encompassing skills in social responsibility and helpfulness, caring and having empathy for others, positive and constructive relationships and respecting and valuing others.

- **communication skills**, as encompassing skills in expressing thoughts, feelings, emotions, values and motives and being assertive.

A growing body of research suggests there is a link between participation in organised youth activities and programs and the development of life-skills across these four core skill areas. Examples of **critical thinking and cognitive life-skills**, that have been linked with activity and program participation, include young people’s ability to think reflectively and critically (Johnson Nicholson, Collins, & Holmer, 2004, p. 67), to set goals (Mueller, et al. 2011, p. 1123), problem solve (Hansen et
al. 2003), make decisions (Crean, 2012; Kirshner, 2008, p. 92) and have high concentration (Larson, 2000; Riggs et al. 2010). Examples of coping and self-management skills that have been linked with activity and program participation include higher levels of self-esteem (Blomfield, & Barber, 2009; Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Kort-Butler & Hagewen, 2011), managing stress (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003, p. 48) and regulation skills (O’Donnell et al. 1999; Riggs et al. 2010). Examples of social and moral skills that have been linked with activity and program participation include compassion and empathy (Anderson et al. 2007, p. 36; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006, p. 526), ability to maintain positive relationships and friendships (McGee et al. 2006; Rhodes, 2004; Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000) and to be socially responsible (Bowers et al. 2012, p. 312). Examples of communication skills that have been linked with activity and program participation include the ability to lead and be part of a team (Holdsworth et al. 2005, p. 5; Kirshner, 2008, p. 92) resolve conflict (Fuller et al. 2013, p. 476) and to communicate effectively (Kirshner, 2008, p. 92).

Importantly, when young people are equipped with life-skills they are more able to maintain positive social connections and be happy, active, confident, healthy, and contributing family, peer group and community members (Deschenes & McDonald, 2003, p. 4; Harris, Rogers, & Smith, 2010, p. xiv; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). They are also as, Catalano et al. (2004, p. 103) note, more likely to reach their full intellectual potential.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced an analytical tool comprised of the five interlinking program elements of theory, context, structure, operation and
outcomes. I argued that while each of these elements is distinctly different, there are many clear synergistic and bi-directional linkages and effects between them. Overall, this new way of bringing together practitioner, scholarly and youth expertise to look at youth programs supports a better understanding of program and activity characteristics. This work also sets the background for understanding the characteristics of community youth development programs and their young members.

I explored both the risk-based and strength-based theoretical characteristics of youth program work approaches. My analysis focused on the strength-based approach underpinning the work of community youth development programs. I outlined how the strength-based approach while recognising the contextual characteristics of youth problems, inequalities and vulnerabilities, challenges the negativity, counter-productivity and stigmatism associated with the deficit approach.

I examined the contextual program characteristics and showed how the reasons young people do or do not participate in youth programs are complex. To engage with diverse young people community youth development programs have to negotiate complex interlinked contextual and operational incentives and barriers to participation. Young people have different experiences of exclusion and inclusion and these are inter-linked with location and the effect of their socio-demographic characteristics. Community youth development organisations and programs are uniquely positioned to bring together young people with different class, race, age, sex and ability characteristics and to help address young people’s experiences of exclusion.
In the program environment I showed that community youth development programs have three key structural characteristics. These relate to the program curriculum which is designed to be age and developmentally appropriate; structured rather than unstructured; and delivered sequentially over an extended period of time. The community youth development program curriculum supports kids and young adult’s participation and focuses on physical, practical, specialist and life-skills. While there is little research focusing on community programs, overall, the evidence suggests that being involved in organised programs is more likely to be predictive of positive than negative developmental outcomes.

In exploring community youth development program operational characteristics, I identified three key elements: voluntary participation, universal eligibility and youth work practices. I show how these interlink to support a youth-inclusive and strength-based program environment. Voluntary participation encourages young people to explore their own responsibility, autonomy and identity. Universal eligibility focuses on making activities accessible to all young people who meet the age, sex or group eligibility criteria regardless of their perceived risk status, talent or skill level. While different scholars highlight different youth work practices as being most important for supporting positive developmental outcomes. A key theme is the nurturing of positive relationships with non-parental adults and peers in the program environment which is viewed by many as the most important practice and outcome linked characteristic of strength-based youth work practice.

In the program context outcome characteristics are the end results of youth development program participation. Research suggests that diverse programs have some similar and some different outcomes. Some of these differences can be
traced back to the context, structure and quality of the program activity curriculum illustrating the strong bi-directional link between positive developmental outcomes and the theoretical, contextual, structural and operational characteristics of a program.

The analysis of these five interlinking elements explore and illustrate the argument of Guest and McRee (2009, p. 53) that it is most likely the dynamic interaction of the multiplicity of program parts, rather than one single element, which has the overall effect on young people’s development. To better understand these characteristics and how they operate there is a need for further research on program quality and content issues and the interlinked structures and systems necessary for delivering positive outcomes (Emslie, 2013, p. 130; MacNeil & McClean, 2006, p. 100).

In the next two chapters, I explore what strength-based youth inclusive research might look like through an examination of the theoretical, ethical and practical issues associated with engaging young people in the research process. In Chapter 3, I discuss the re-conceptualisation of the roles young people can play in youth research and the emergence of specialised youth participation methodologies and practices. I examine a diversity of viewpoints on the methodologies of working with kids and young adults and explore power, consent, privacy and incentive use as interlinked participation issues which researchers must address when conducting youth inclusive research. In Chapter 4, I draw out these themes as I introduce the adult-led and intergenerational participatory approaches used across Studies One and Two to explore: the characteristics of community youth development programs; the characteristics of young members; and the impact of participation on their lives.
Chapter 3. Youth-inclusive research

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I addressed the intersection between theory and practice by examining how risk and strength-based youth development theories have influenced youth program policy and practice. I proposed the use of an analytical tool comprised of five key youth program elements (theory, context, structure, operation and outcomes) to better describe and understand the specific characteristics of programs. I argued that while each of these elements is distinctly different, there are many clear synergistic and bi-directional linkages and effects between them. Overall, this new way of bringing together practitioner, scholarly and youth expertise to look at youth programs supports a better understanding of program and activity characteristics. This work also sets the background for understanding the characteristics of community youth development programs and their young members. I explored the conceptual shift away from a focus on deficit-based practice towards a focus on strength-based practice, influenced by positive youth development theory and the social theory and sociological analyses of childhood.

In this chapter, I explore the research impact of this conceptual shift and the growing recognition that young people’s viewpoints are essential for gaining deeper understandings about their lives (Cairns, 2009; Davis, 2009, p. 163; Endicott & Liossis, 2005; France & Homel, 2007, p. 10; Libby & Sedonaen, 2006, p. 20). For researchers exploring young people’s lives, a dialogue with adults continues to be necessary, but a dialogue with kids and young adults has become

The growing emphasis on conducting youth-inclusive research has led to a diversity of viewpoints on the methodologies of working with young people in research (Bessant, 2006; Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010; Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson, & Fitzgerald, 2013; Heath, Brooks, Cleaver, & Ireland, 2009; Lundy & McEvoy, 2011; Morrow, 2008; Tisdall, Davis, & Gallagher, 2009). By exploring these viewpoints, this chapter contextualises the methodological approach discussed in Chapter 4 used to explore my two central research questions: what are the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs through Study One; and what are the characteristics of young people who participate in these programs through Study Two. In this chapter I examine the diversity of viewpoints about youth-inclusive research across three complex interlinked research issues: methodology, participation and results.

In Part 3.2, I focus on exploring scholarly opinion about youth-inclusive research methodologies. I examine a range of methods used for including young people in research and introduce the idea that there is no single right way to do youth-inclusive research. This work reveals youth-inclusive research is not just about improving research; it is also about bringing benefits to scholars, young people and the community through youth development.

In Part 3.3, I explore scholarly opinion about youth participation in research as subjects and as researchers. I argue that encouraging and supporting participation is critical for successful research. This work shows there are four
key interlinked participation issues - power, consent, privacy and incentive use – which can shape and influence youth participation.

In Part 3.4, I focus on exploring scholarly opinion about the ways in which young people receive information about the results of research they participate in and challenges in the distribution of results that are specific to child and youth research. This work reveals the importance of considering how to implement what Tisdall (2009, p. 195) describes as knowledge transfer or engagement activities at the planning phase of any youth-inclusive research project.

Overall, the work presented in this chapter reveals how the complexity of research projects, ethical considerations and the diversity of research subjects necessarily preclude simple solutions. It supports the idea that there is no single right way to do youth-inclusive research. Indeed, project and context-specific complexities will shape the ways in which methodology, participation and results are realised in research projects.

3.2. Youth-inclusive methodologies: diverse opportunities, multiple approaches

Research involving children and young adults represents a move away from a traditional approach in which young people are viewed as objects to a more inclusive approach where they are viewed as subjects and actors (Burns & Schubotz, 2009; Case, 2006; Jardine & James, 2012; Mason & Danby, 2011; Percy-Smith & Weil, 2003, p. 71). The emergence of youth-inclusive research has led to debate amongst scholars about the purpose, benefits, professional conduct and rigor of research involving children and young adults as participants and researchers (Schubotz, 2011; Sharpe, 2011, p. 165). In this part, I briefly discuss
the three key influences shaping youth-inclusive research: its historical origins, identified benefits and debate on its core characteristics.

The first key influence shaping youth-inclusive research methodologies is its historical origin. Although the concept of youth-inclusive research has deep historical origins, its emergence and development as a distinct methodological approach is relatively recent (London, 2002; Sharpe, 2011, p. 162; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, p. 194). Many researchers credit the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (OHCHR, 1989) as the reason new methodologies in child and youth research have emerged (Bell, 2008; Burns & Schubotz, 2009, p. 310; Christensen & Prout, 2002; Claveirole, 2004; Cocks, 2006; Graham, Phelps, Ha Thi Tuyet Nhung, & Geeves, 2014, p. 39; Kellett, 2011; Kirk, 2007; Morrow & Richards, 1996; Powell, 2011; Tisdall, Davis, & Gallagher, 2009). Some only acknowledge Article 12, but Articles 12 to 15 all have important provisions for engagement in leadership and decision-making. These Articles emphasise the rights of children to be involved, informed, to have their own opinion, to express their views and to be heard. Some scholars demonstrate that even this focus is limited, arguing that child and youth research needs to be understood within the context of the entire Convention (Alderson, 2012, Lundy, McEvoy & Byrne, 2011; Lundy & McEvoy, 2011). London (2002) argues the convention influenced the development of youth research methodology through the convergence of two fields of theory and practice: youth development with its focus on youth as resources, leaders and community builders and evaluation or participatory action research, with its focus on inclusive, participatory-oriented approaches.
The second key influence shaping youth-inclusive research is the growing understanding about the benefits it can bring. Underpinning the emergence of youth-inclusive research is the growing understanding that by actively involving young people in research, scholars support positive developmental outcomes and are therefore accomplishing more than just recognising individual agency or rights. Increasingly, scholars argue the creation of new methodologies and research roles for kids and young adults brings more benefits to research than disadvantages (Heath et al. 2009, p. 74; Klau, 2006; London, 2002, p. 7; Rosen-Reynoso et al. 2010, p. s182; Woodman & Tyler, 2007; Wyn, 2002). Ozer and Wright (2012, pp. 277, 281) argue these benefits extend to both participating individuals and the research process and outcomes.

When young people are supported to be active researchers the ways in which they view themselves, and are viewed by the people around them, can positively change (Ozer & Wright, 2012, pp. 277, 281). Other scholars suggest child and youth-centred research can lead to new intergenerational relationships being fostered as older and younger people work together, gain a mutual understanding and become resources for one another (Bolzan & Gale, 2011; Maguire, 2005; Olitsky & Weathers, 2005; Smith, Bratini & Appio, 2012, pp. 9-10). For some young people, the opportunity to be a researcher will transform the way they are viewed from being a problem to being respected for their knowledge and competences (Ozer & Wright, 2012, pp. 277, 281). Other young people see themselves developing confidence in their capacity to be decision makers, to be leaders and to contribute to the world around them (Alfonso, Bogues, Russo, & McCormack Brown, 2008; London, 2002, p. 4; Sharpe, 2011, p. 162).
Empowering young people to be active participants can lead to improved research tools, data and outcomes. When young people are able to share their point of view and experience, they contribute new understandings and meanings to research (Adam & Wieman, 2003; Eckersley et al. 2006; Heath et al. 2009, p. 74; Maguire, 2005; Rosen-Reynoso et al. 2010; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, p. 193; Wyn, 2002). As Maguire (2005) explains:

[children] can be competent and valuable "informants"; they have the capacity to express in various ways what is important to them and frequently have different interests and views of situations than adults (para. 5).

The lesson from this and other studies is that practitioners, researchers and policy makers need to use reflective practice to ensure they do not make assumptions about what young people need and think based on their own understandings (Klau, 2006; also Graham, Phelps, et al. 2014, p. 39; Woodman & Tyler, 2007). Significantly, the insights kids and young adults share can be used to shed light on the ways in which older people (Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010, p.607; Smith et al. 2012, p. 10) and the community (Goodwin & Young, 2013) are shaped and defined. More young people are therefore playing a role in determining the questions to be researched, how the knowledge generated is used and who benefits from it (London, 2002, p. 3).

The third key influence shaping youth research methodologies is the debate about what its core characteristics are. The debate about the core characteristics of youth-inclusive research has underpinned the development of new child and youth-inclusive methodologies. Much of this debate focuses on seeking the right way to do youth-inclusive research. There are models of youth-inclusive
research conducted by young people (it is youth-led) (Cairns, 2009; Burns & Schubotz, 2009; Jardine & James, 2012), by older people with and informed by young people (it is adult-led) (Case, 2006; Percy-Smith & Weil, 2003, p. 71; Wyn, 2002) or by older and younger people working together as co-researchers (it is intergenerational) (Checkoway, 2011, p. 341; McLaughlin, 2005, p. 214).

London (2002, p. 4) uses Hart’s (1992) ladder of participation to contribute to our understanding of the characteristics of youth-centred research. While there are general values guiding scholars, he argues there is no single right way to engage with young people. In essence, he suggests it is not possible to examine youth participation in research and to classify it on a gradient from high or excellent to low or poor. This is because the process of engaging with kids in research is multidimensional and researchers must consider both the scope (how many roles/tasks?) and the scale of engagement (how much responsibility/authority?). Clearly the greater the engagement across both the scale and scope of a research project the more inclusive the methodology and outcomes will be. Because of this complexity, he contends researchers are presented with a range of engagement possibilities to consider when designing research. London (2002) explains:

*In some cases, youth may have a limited scope of involvement (e.g., only creating the data collection instruments) but a deep scale of leadership (e.g., they have exclusive say over the wording of the survey). In other cases, youth may have a broad scope of involvement (participating in all of the research process) but a more limited scale (e.g., informal advisory versus decision-making roles) (p. 4).*
Sharpe (2011, p. 162) expands on London’s ideas, suggesting it is a mistake to only focus on achieving the highest levels of engagement - both scope and scale - because there are many opportunities to engage with young people between the two extremes of active researchers and passive objects. In his experience a focus on extremes can lead organisations and researchers to fail to engage at any level with young people in research. Instead, Sharpe advocates the development of flexible, ethical and innovative approaches which can facilitate “different ways of working and different patterns of participation.” This, Davis (2009) argues, is a sensible approach to doing research because:

*Budgets, time limits, the requirements of ethics committees, the intended outcomes of your project, and the expectations of funders and colleagues will all have an effect on the nature and extent of participation that is achievable (p. 155).*

These operational and structural characteristics can be just as influential as the contextual characteristics - cultural, economic, historical, political and social – which also need to be considered when developing methodologies (Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010, pp. 604-605; Graham, Powell, & Taylor, 2014, p. 2; Graham, Phelps, et al. 2014; Tisdall, Davis, & Gallagher, 2009, p. 7).

Working with young people in research requires careful consideration of methodologies to ensure they are suitable (Bessant, 2006; Burns & Schubotz, 2009; Kirk, 2007; Rice & Broome, 2004; Tisdall, Davis, & Gallagher, 2009, p. 7). Gibson (2007; also Gibson, 2012) for example, adapted her focus group method to ensure there was only a small difference in age (1-2 years) between the youngest and oldest child participating. This, she argued better recognised differences in abilities, capacities and interests at different developmental
phases. Graham, Phelps, et al. (2014, p. 39) used visual photo-elicitation interviewing methodologies because they found young people aged 9-10 years could easily use photography to explore what is important and meaningful to them. Similarly, Smith et al. (2012) used photography with young people aged 14-18 years and Lundy, McEvoy, and Byrne (2011) used visual and kinaesthetic methods to work with very young children aged 4-5 years. Shakya et al. (2010) worked with young people aged 16-24 years to develop youth-friendly data collection instruments. Finally, Kirk (2007) argues it is the adaptation of participatory approaches to work with children and young adults that is the most significant innovation in youth-inclusive research methodologies.

To ensure successful youth-inclusive research some scholars point to the importance of including a relevant and targeted formal and informal education strategy within the methodology. Adopting an education approach suitable for everyone who is active in the team and on the periphery will support better outcomes (Alder & Sandor, 2010, p. 118-119; Alfonso et al. 2008, pp. 37-38; Graham, Phelps, et al. 2014, p. 46; Kellett, 2009, p. 53; McLaughlin, 2005, pp. 214,216).

Within this debate on which methodologies are the most appropriate in youth-inclusive research there is an emerging voice arguing for methodological pluralism (France & Homel, 2007, pp. 12, 24; Olitsky & Weathers, 2005; Smith, Monaghan & Broad, 2002, p. 194). For these scholars, it is important to use a diversity of new and traditional qualitative and quantitative approaches. This, they assert, helps ensure youth-centred research stands up to broad scrutiny. The idea of methodological pluralism is supported by Schubotz's (2011, p. 105) observation that there are some types of questions which lend themselves to
being explored using traditional methodologies and other questions which are better explored using new methodologies. As argued here, there is no single right way to do youth-inclusive research. The methodologies used must necessarily be shaped by the project and its context-specific complexities.

3.3. Developing a youth participation strategy: Power, consent, privacy and incentives.

Scholars conducting social research projects with young people generate quality outcomes because they are able to encourage and support participation. In this part, I discuss the process of developing an ethical participation strategy to address individual and research related participation issues. Getting the participation strategy right will help ensure more effective research design and outcomes (Gyll, Spoth, & Redmond, 2003) including limiting completion delays and increased resource costs associated with recruitment delays (McCormick et al. 1999). An ethical participation strategy can reduce methodological limitations such as recruitment bias (Singer & Bossarte, 2006, p. 412; Williams, Entwistle, Haddow, & Wells, 2008) and poor participation and retention (Rice & Broom, 2004, p. 167; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, pp. 195-196). It can also reduce ethical limitations by supporting the inclusion of particular groups of people who would otherwise be excluded (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008) and ensuring participants understand the research topic (Kirk, 2007, p. 1259).

Developing an effective participation strategy does require a high level of personal commitment, time, and financial resources (Bessant, 2006, p. 54; Alder & Sandor, 2010, p. 121; Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010, p. 608; Harlow, 2009; Rosen-Reynoso et al. 2010, p. s182; Sharpe, 2011, p. 162). Project and context-
specific complexities mean researchers must take time to supplement any
institutional ethical guidance offered with additional ethical reflection on each
aspect of their participation strategy (G. Allen, personal communication, 27 April
2012; also Graham, Powell, & Taylor, 2014, p. 4). Developing a successful and
ethical participation strategy is therefore a significant challenge. This is true for
engaging young people as researchers (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008; Smith,
Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, pp. 195-196) and as subjects (Brown & Powell, 2011;
Campbell, 2008; Ely & Coleman, 2007; Leakey, Lunde, Koga, & Glanz, 2004).
Researchers must, therefore, consider and mediate the four key participation
issues of power, consent, privacy and incentive use in order to implement a
successful and ethical participation strategy. In these next four sections, I
examine how researchers have worked with the challenges presented by these
four participation issues. I then build on this analysis in Chapter 4 by exploring
how power, consent, privacy and incentive use were negotiated in the
Queensland Youth Development Research Project (YDRP).

3.3.1. The exercise of power

The way in which power is exercised is at the heart of much of the debate
about quality youth-centred research. In this section I discuss ethical and
methodological issues linked to the ways in which power is mediated in and
through research. For Checkoway (2011, p. 341) it does not matter whether the
research process is child, young adult or older adult-led or intergenerational. He
argues the real measure of quality youth participation rests in how much power
young people have to influence outcomes for themselves, their community or the
project itself. At the very least this means being able to make an informed choice
whether to take part or not in the roles of subjects and researchers as discussed in Section 2.

The way in which power is exercised and mediated around young people in roles as subjects and researchers brings specific challenges. When young people participate as researchers this does, however, bring additional levels of complexity (Maguire, 2005; Ozer & Wright, 2012, p. 269; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002). Since young people have been largely excluded from playing active roles in youth research, France and Homel (2007, p. 24; also Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008) argue more needs “to be done to develop methods that encourage the inclusion of those most excluded”. By acting to transform traditional power relationships in child and youth research, scholars are changing the ways in which they engage with young people.

The challenge to mediate and change the way in which power is used intentionally and unintentionally has led to a growing exploration of the use of participatory research methods. Participatory research is considered an effective method to change the balance of power between and amongst older and younger people and to better recognise existing knowledge and skills (Alfonso et al. 2008; Bell, 2008, p. 7; Burns & Schubotz, 2009; Cieslik, 2003, p. 5; Kellett, 2011; Ozer & Wright, 2012; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, p. 192). Clavering and McLaughlin (2010, pp. 608,609) note that participatory research works because power is shared as it shifts between and amongst young and older people. While older people often determine how and when this occurs, this is not always the case.

Nevertheless, Schäfer and Yarwood (2008, p. 132) warn power can remain an issue because even participatory research can “reproduce forms of
marginalisation and exclusion”. Participatory methodologies are most effective, when: researchers have spent time ensuring meaningful involvement (Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010, p. 608); there is an acceptance that not everyone will have the time, capacity, desire or resources to participate (Alderson, 2012, p. 237); and reflective practice is used (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008, p. 132). Reflective practice, discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, is an effective tool which can be adopted to help mediate the negative effect of differential power. When young people and researchers are aware of their own and each other’s needs and interests within the research context, they can more readily recognise and challenge the use of power which excludes or marginalises (Ozer & Wright, 2012, pp. 278, 280; also Bergmark & Kostenius, 2009, pp. 254-255; Carter, 2009; Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010, p. 608; Rice & Broome, 2004).

3.3.2. Informed consent & working with significant adults

The use of power, discussed in Section 1, is also exercised throughout the researcher and subject consent process. In this section, I discuss ethical and methodological issues associated with ensuring participants in research are fully informed and can exercise their right to choose to participate or not. While the issues surrounding these decisions are always complicated, they are doubly so in child and youth research and the younger the participants the more complex the issues become (Bessant, 2006; Coyne, 2010; Field & Behrman, 2005, p. 48; Whiting & Forbes, 2009, p. 35). In designing their participation approach and ensuring participation decisions are voluntary and informed, researchers must grapple with two ethical and methodological constraints. First, they must address a child’s status as the legal responsibility of their parent or guardian

The effect of these constraints is that researchers must actively work with and through significant adults and institutions to facilitate the participation of young people. This mediation role played by significant adults and institutions has led to them being labelled *gatekeepers* (Campbell, 2008; Gallagher, 2009, p. 60; Maguire, 2005; Morrow & Richards, 1996). The gatekeeper role has been heavily criticised because of the control over young people that is invested in it. Some suggest this control can lead to individuals being intentionally or unintentionally pressured to take part or denied the opportunity to participate (Billett, 2012; Daley, 2013). This can result in sampling bias (Dockett & Perry, 2011, p. 236). The act of gatekeeping does have implications for a researcher’s ability to ensure each young person can exercise their right to voluntarily choose to take part or not.

Researchers must also, therefore, pay attention to the information needs and understandings of significant adults who: play important roles in the research project; act as gatekeepers; control access to youth and their spaces; and support young people to participate (Rice & Broome, 2004; also Alderson, 2007, p. 2278). These significant adults include parents and guardians (Smith, Bratini et al. 2012), public servants (Cairns, 2009), school teachers (Graham, Phelps, et al. 2014, p. 51; Robinson & Taylor, 2013; Rosen-Reynoso et al. 2010), ethics committee members (Daley, 2013; Harlow, 2009, p. 214), community
group members (Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, pp. 195-196) and youth workers (Bolzan & Gale, 2011).

Significant adults can act to facilitate or block research. Dockett and Perry (2011, p. 236; also Graham, Powell, & Taylor, 2014, p. 7) observe that gatekeepers provide essential information about “social and cultural contexts, language or cultural protocols” necessary for successful research. Often young people need support from significant adults to participate. Cairns (2009, p. 171) argues parental support can be crucial for kids to exercise their right to participate. Without it, as Coyne (2010, p. 232) notes, some children who want to take part will not be able to do so. Others have reported that gaining the support of significant adults is necessary for youth to be active researchers in schools (Åkerström, Aytar, & Brunnberg, 2013; Bergmark & Kostenius, 2009), their local community (Ford, Rasmus, & Allen, 2012) and unfamiliar environments (Alfonso et al. 2008, pp. 36, 38; Kellett, 2011, p. 213; McLaughlin, 2005, p. 217; Schubotz, 2011).

Some scholars are exploring the ideas of assent, consent and dissent in an attempt to develop decision-making mechanisms that will better support young people’s decision-making (Dockett & Perry, 2011; Field & Behrman, 2005; Maguire, 2005). Generally the concepts of assent and consent are used to describe the decision to take part in a research project and dissent is used to describe a decision to not take part. Some advocate mechanisms of assent rather than consent for children because they are under the legal age of adulthood and are considered to not be able to provide consent (Dockett & Perry, 2011, p. 232; Field & Behrman, 2005, p. 48). Others argue that neither the legal capacity nor the age of a child or youth should determine whether the mechanism for seeking
participation is based on a consent or assent model. Rather, they contend the focus should be on a young person’s ability to make ethically competent decisions (Bessant, 2006; Claveirole, 2004; Valentine, 1999). As Alderson (2007) explains:

*Childhood and youth tend to be associated with being ignorant, volatile, foolish, over-emotional, needy and helplessly dependent. Conversely, adulthood tends to be identified with being informed, stable, wise, rational, reliable and above all competent. However, at times many children can be wise and many adults can be foolish* (p. 2276).

A growing body of research suggests even very young children can have a considered opinion, and can make important decisions on issues that affect them when provided with accessible information (Clavering & McLaughlin, 2010; Lundy, McEvoy, & Byrne, 2011, p. 720). It is, however, as Maguire (2005) reminds us, important that scholars avoid adopting “an idealized romantic view of children that leaves all responsibilities to them”. As discussed in Chapter 4, significant adults play a crucial role in supporting young people in their decision-making (Burns & Schubotz, 2009, p. 323; Gibson, 2007, p. 477; Ozer & Wright, 2012, p. 269) and a failure to respect and recognise this can leave them unsupported and set them up for a negative experience (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2009, p. 256; Wierenga, 2003, pp. 13, 43). Here, McLaughlin (2006, p. 1408) argues that if time and resources are not available to properly support young people, then researchers have a duty of care not to adopt a child or youth-centred collaborative research model.
3.3.3. Protecting privacy: Anonymity and confidentiality

The emergence of new child and youth research methodologies brings both old and new dilemmas to ethical concerns on the protection of research participants’ anonymity and confidentiality. In many countries, addressing anonymity and confidentiality issues in research requires attention to legal, regulatory and ethical issues. In this section I describe a range of privacy issues which illustrate the diversity of challenges researchers face as they negotiate the complexities of their research projects. While the larger body of work relates to participation as research subjects, these issues impact on working with young people as subjects and as researchers.

Ford et al. (2012) reveal it is not always possible to de-identify data when research is conducted in small communities. In their project working with young people as subjects and researchers they chose to seek consent from young people before they shared data with parents or guardians who then gave permission to share the data with the wider community. Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson (2010, p. 180) warn both researchers and children will need to mediate parental or guardian curiosity about confidential interview content.

Wiles, Coffey, Robinson, and Heath (2012) describe the privacy challenges associated with the use of visual data, such as photos, in research. They found researchers need to balance an individual’s agency to choose how their image can be used and their ethical responsibility as researchers to protect participants from harm. This, they argue, is particularly fraught when there is the potential for future harm. Daley (2013), faced a parallel ethical dilemma in her work documenting vulnerable young people’s stories. While affording vulnerable young people the right to attach their names to their stories of trauma and
survival she wondered “whether they would be so open to attaching their names to these experiences were they older, working in politics, or had something – anything – to lose.” Sometimes when the subject matter is particularly sensitive, scholars must, as Alderson (2012, p. 237) notes, “conceal [young people’s] identities from people connected with the research (parents, friends and teachers) as well as from those who are unconnected with it.” In some cases not to do so would put them in danger of harm.

Valentine, Butler, and Skelton (2001) reveal how these issues also flow into the places where research is conducted with young people. In their research with young 16-25 year old lesbian and gay youth they reveal how common research contact points, such as the home or school, are not always safe places for young people to talk about their sexuality. In this research, concerns about protecting privacy are intersected by complex legal, social and contextual issues which made anonymity of the young people who shared their story essential. Valentine (1999; also Billett, 2012) notes how place impacts on the kinds of information that children and young people are willing to share. Conducting interviews in places which ensured privacy elicited more honest and open answers. In an important variation on this theme, Shakya et al. (2010, p. 74) found, in their work with young refugees aged 16-24, that the need to ensure confidentiality of information extended to concerns about negative or stigmatising political repercussions. In this case their concerns centred on migration and process status disclosures. In other cases, it is the challenge associated with mediating disclosures of child abuse and the promise of confidentiality that concern researchers (Fargas-Malet et al. 2010, p. 180; Powell, 2011, p. 28).
In different research contexts, for less vulnerable young people and for non-sensitive stories, making identifiable data publicly available can lead to positive outcomes. Ford et al. (2012, p. 5), for example, found there can be an increase in positive perceptions about youth in the community when young people’s reflections on well-being and healthy living are made publicly available. In their photo research on attitudes towards tobacco use with grade 9-12 students, Jardine and James (2012) found that young people wanted to be publicly recognised for their contribution. To provide this recognition, they printed a photo of each student in the final report.

Discussions around privacy issues which may arise when working with young researchers tend to focus on the importance of equipping them with knowledge and skills so they understand their role in conducting ethical research and protecting privacy. For young people, this is usually provided through targeted training (Carrington, Bland, & Brady, 2010, p. 454; Sharpe, 2011, p. 175; Schubotz, 2011, p. 109; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, p. 201). An important subject, raised by Coad and Evans (2008, p. 50), is the need to address the ethics of privacy when young researchers are engaged in analysing data. They suggest training can be supplemented with setting group rules on privacy and providing young people with debriefing support so they can talk through issues as they arise with older team members without breeching the privacy of research subjects.

3.3.4. Using incentives to enhance participation

Young and older people decide whether or not to support or take part in research as subjects, supporters or researchers for many different reasons
(Seymour, 2012b). These reasons can range from research specific factors (such as liking or disliking the methodology being used) to person specific factors (such as having or not having time to participate) (Guyll et al. 2003, p. 37; Leakey et al. 2004; Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008). For some young people it is as simple as wanting to have their voice heard so they can have an impact and create change (Bolzan & Gale, 2011, p. 280). In this section, I address the process of identifying and addressing incentives or disincentives for young and older people’s participation in, or support of, research as an important part of research planning (Heath et al. 2009, p. 36; Singer & Bossarte, 2006, p. 412). Addressing these factors can include changing or modifying the research design and adopting targeted incentives which remove or redress identified research and person specific disincentives to participate (Seymour, 2012b).

Discussions around incentive use in child and youth research have tended to focus on the efficacy and ethics of payments in medical and clinical research. The explicit use of incentives in other fields of youth research has not received as much attention (Cooper-Robbins et al. 2011; Head, 2009; Powell, 2011). When incentives are discussed in youth literature, the incentive effect is not always recognised (Seymour, 2012b). Incentives can operate extrinsically, intrinsically, or in both of these modes. Extrinsic (or external to the person) incentives operate when rewards such as payments are offered to subjects for participating (Powell, 2011; Scherer et al. 2005; Fargas-Malet et al. 2010). Intrinsic (or internal to the person) incentives by contrast, operate when the research participation is motivated by the subject’s altruism, own values or commitment to the research topic (Cooper-Robbins et al. 2011, p. 12; Powers, 2007; Singer & Bossarte, 2006; Williams et al. 2008, p. 1453).
The kinds of matters not always recognised as having an incentive effect include relationships (Ely & Coleman, 2007), refreshments (Leakey et al. 2004; Truman, 2003), tokens or gifts (Gibson, 2007), compensation (Kahan & Al-Tamimi, 2009), inducements (Rice & Broome, 2004), reimbursements (Gibson, 2007), field trips (Cairns, 2009, p. 172), altruism (Cooper-Robbins et al. 2011), participating (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2009, p. 256), public recognition (Cooper-Robbins et al. 2011), allowances (Cairns, 2009, p. 171), connections (Sanders & Munford, 2005) and participation awards (Hill, Gallagher & Whiting, 2009, p. 131).

An emerging practice adopted by some researchers is to not tell young people until they have finished participating that they will be receiving a gift, payment or reward (Seymour, 2012b). This approach is thought to address concerns of coercion or undue influence (Powell, 2011). This approach is, however, only useful if the purpose is for the gift, payment or reward to say thank you because as Head (2009, p. 341) notes it cannot be used to encourage participation. As a strategy it is also not without controversy. Ely and Coleman (2007) contend that benefits must be revealed at the outset of research. Wiles, Crow, Charles, and Heath (2007) observe that once a gift, payment or reward has been offered word can pass around and nullify the surprise effect. Sime (2008, p. 69) concludes that non-disclosure at the outset may create obligation to participate in further project stages.

The complexity of research projects, ethical considerations and the diversity of research subjects necessarily preclude simple solutions. I have shown how the four key interlinked participation issues - power, consent, privacy and incentive use - can shape and influence youth participation. I have
argued that successful research relies on the careful and ethical mediation of power, consent, privacy and incentives to encourage and support young people and significant adults in the roles of researcher, subject and supporter.

3.4. Discussing, analysing and disseminating results

There is an increasing focus on using research based evidence to inform youth practice, program and policy development (Axford & Morpeth, 2013; Silliman, 2004; Yohalem, Wilson-Ahlstrom, Fischer, & Shinn, 2007; Zeldin, 1995, p. 454). There is also an increasing practice of young people (Alderson, 2012, p. 238; Davis, 2009, p. 161) and professionals (France, 2007, p. 164) actively engaging in a dialogue about how their ideas and contributions will shape practice and policy outcomes. In this part, I discuss what Tisdall (2009, p. 195) describes as knowledge transfer or engagement activities. As she explains:

Researchers are increasingly expected to share their research with others beyond the research community. Passive dissemination... is not considered enough; more active and interactive means of dissemination are now required. The term ‘engagement activities’ may better describe what is expected of researchers today (Tisdall, 2009, p. 194).

Scholars have experimented with various techniques to try to meet the need for effective analysis and communication on research outcomes by involving key stakeholders in some or all of the various phases of discussion, analysis and dissemination of results (Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, pp. 193, 200; Tisdall, Davis, & Gallagher, 2009). Some research has involved young people in various roles as individual or collaborative interpreters, authors and publicists (Åkerström, Aytar, & Brunnberg, 2013; Davis, 2009, p. 157). Other
projects have accessed the knowledge and expertise provided by young people who are in the research subject group to help interpret their results (Olitsky & Weathers, 2005; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002, p. 193). Scholars face two key challenges in doing this successfully. First, developing and employing appropriate and effective methods tailored to the age group involved (Maguire, 2005) and, second, ensuring scholarly research expertise is valued and applied (Alderson, 2012, p. 237; McLaughlin, 2006, p. 1407). Scholarly expertise, Alderson (2012, p. 237) argues, is necessary to “develop deeper new insights through sustained theoretical analysis, to synthesise systematic reviews or to conduct statistical analysis, beyond collating data and describing events.” Here, Graham, Phelps, et al. (2014, pp. 53-54) argue scholars need to carefully and purposefully consider how they will maintain the integrity of children’s views when undertaking this analysis.

There are also questions raised about how to best present research findings and successfully disseminate them to achieve maximum positive effect (Alderson, 2007, p. 2279; Alderson, 2012, p. 238). Concerns have been raised about the ways youth research has been used to vilify young people, and particularly vulnerable young people (Morrow, 2008, p. 58; Olitsky & Weathers, 2005). France (2007, pp. 161-163) notes the challenge scholars face in countering the ways political ideology and objectives can negatively impact on the ways youth research is, or is not, used. Academics and practitioners are therefore cautioned to reflect on how they package their work to ensure they do not cause harm when it is publicly released. On this issue Olitsky and Weathers (2005) write:
...in participatory research involving youth, a concern is not only the reporting of the research and whether it effectively achieves particular ends involving social justice... but ...[also] how the process facilitates youth participants' agency to represent themselves in ways that they would like (para. 2).

A challenge facing scholars is to build sufficient time, resources and mechanisms into the design of their projects to support reporting back to young participants, youth workers and the community. Strategies can include: allocating funding to ensure proper dissemination of research outcomes at a project's conclusion (Tisdall, 2009, pp. 202, 204); building in a mid-project commitment to distributing interim research outcomes to young participants before they grow up and move away (Mitchell, 2009, p. 55); and making full use of partner agencies' internal and external networks to distribute research outcome information (Tisdall, 2009, pp. 194, 204).

Graham, Phelps, et al. (2014, p. 54) chose to distribute their research findings on learning in a children's book which included pictures children had taken. Davey, Dwyer, and McAlister (2009, p. 37; also Mitchell, 2009, p. 55) distributed their research outcomes in a number of forms including journal articles, a full formal practitioner report, a young child's version and a youth version. They distributed hard and electronic copies and gave verbal presentations of their findings directly to young people as well as to groups of practitioners, policy makers and academics. Whiting and Forbes (2009, p. 35) suggest using a poster format. Gallagher (2009, pp. 62, 63) produced a leaflet for each student which outlined his key findings. He also provided a copy of his thesis to the school which he hoped students, staff and parents would access.
Ford et al. (2012, p. 3) employed young people to co-facilitate research dissemination activities. They argued that this acted to shift power in their project because youth, instead of professional adults, disseminated the research outcomes to their peers. Kay (2009, p. 46), in comparison, discusses a study about parental HIV where concerns about research sensitivity and privacy meant young people could not be involved in disseminating results. This concern about protecting young people’s identity links back to the anonymity and confidentiality issues discussed in Part 2, Section 3.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the complex, interlinked ethical, practical and methodological challenges and responsibilities of doing youth-inclusive research. I examined the impact of the changing views about young people which acknowledges them as active agents in their own development and as competent interpreters of their lives. This conceptual shift has seen the roles young people play in youth research reconsidered and the emergence of specialised youth participation methodologies and practices. I have argued that well designed youth-inclusive research can bring benefits to the research, researchers, young people and the wider community. This requires paying attention to the complexity of challenges characteristic of youth research, recognising there is no one way to do youth-inclusive research and shaping the research design to fit the project. I outlined the four key research participation issues of power, consent, privacy and incentive use which shape the professional and ethical nature of youth-inclusive research. Finally, I discussed the increasing expectation that research based evidence will be used to inform and influence youth practice,
program and policy development and that young people will always receive
feedback on the outcomes of their ideas and contributions.

In the next chapter I explore how these complex challenges were
addressed throughout the development and implementation of the YDRP. I
present five case-studies of adult-led and intergenerational models of older and
younger people working together. I show how these case-studies highlight
research factors which influence the development, scope, implementation,
failures and successes of youth-inclusive research. I show how using a mix of
participation strategies for everyone involved can better motivate, support and
recognise their participation as researchers, subjects and supporters. I argue that
research with young people in the role of subjects will be more successful if a
targeted and contextually relevant range of information and incentives are
developed for young people and the significant adults who surround them.
Chapter 4. Youth-inclusive research in the Youth Development Research Project

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the changing roles young people can play in research about their lives and the complex ethical, methodological and practical challenges of doing youth-centred research were discussed. In this chapter, I outline the youth-inclusive research approach adopted for the Queensland Youth Development Research Project (YDRP). I explore the ways in which the complex research challenges outlined in the previous chapter were negotiated during Study One and Study Two while I researched my two central questions: What are the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs? What are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs?

A key goal of the YDRP has been to explore a range of methods for actively engaging with young and older people. Both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives were used to ethically motivate, support and recognise participation. Adopting a youth-inclusive approach has been integral to the YDRP because of the research focus on young people’s lives. While a wholly youth-led research approach was not used, the five different collaborative studies described in this chapter engaged in different ways with older and younger practitioners, scholars, public servants and youth development organisation and program (YDOP) members. They illustrate the practical application of the adult-led (older people working with and informed by young people) and intergenerational (older and younger people working together)
models of research described in Chapter 3. These examples also illustrate the complexities of government, community and university collaborative research partnerships. The challenges and benefits of working with largely volunteer youth organisations and programs are highlighted.

This chapter is divided into six parts. First, I briefly describe the project management model designed to support the governance of the YDRP. Second, I discuss the engagement with young people (aged 19-25), policy makers and practitioners in the in-depth intergenerational participatory action research (PAR) project adopted for Study One. Together we explored strength-based program practices and developed a new practice framework. In triangulating three different sources of data (practitioner, scholar and young member expertise), this PAR project illustrates the use of multiple checks or testing points. This addresses Piggot-Irvine and Bartlett’s (2008, p. 24) concern about the adverse effects of self-limiting reflection where a reliance on private assumptions can lead to biased findings. Third, I describe the Study Two mini-project working with my industry supervisor, Paul (Impact) and John, a student intern³ (aged 19-25), to detail the type of young member data fields collected by each organisation and program. This mini-project revealed similar results to earlier work conducted by Ausyouth (2003b) with few socio-demographic data fields collected. Fourth, I discuss working with four university students, Karen, Zoe, Jonathan and Ashleigh (predominantly aged 19-25), as co-researchers in the YDRP team and the contribution a group of young people (aged 12-18) made to the development of the questionnaire in Study Two. This illustrated how careful planning is necessary to develop a successful recruitment, training and support strategy for working with

³ John is a pseudonym. For ethical and privacy reasons his name cannot be disclosed as he left the project before consent could be obtained.
young people as co-researchers. Fifth, I discuss working with young people (aged 12-18) using questionnaires and interviews to explore their opinions about their program (what actually happens, the most and least favourite program characteristics, and why they stay engaged) and how participation may have influenced their lives. This work conducted for Study Two revealed that research with young people will be more successful if time is taken to develop a range of ethical and targeted information and incentives for young people and the significant adults who surround them. Lastly, I discuss the importance of paying due attention to the practices of processing, analysing and disseminating research results. I argue there is a need for researchers to pay more deliberate and conscious attention to how they disseminate their research findings. Since young people’s lives change rapidly they are likely to have moved away from the research site by the time many research projects are completed.

4.2. Project management model

In Chapter 1, I presented the diverse group of stakeholders who supported the YDRP. As I illustrate throughout this chapter, successfully working with this relatively large and diverse stakeholder group was complex and brought a mix of benefits and challenges. Overall, the key benefits I experienced flowed from having access to a large network of people, knowledge, skills and financial resources; supported access to research participants; and a high level of stakeholder commitment to the research. Linked to these benefits were a number of key challenges. These challenges included learning how to negotiate competing scholarly and practitioner priorities; managing effective communication across a
diverse group of stakeholders and working with differently resourced groups. The impact of these benefits and challenges are shown throughout this chapter.

While I did not fully appreciate the exact nature of these benefits and challenges at the outset of the YDRP, I did understand the importance of project planning. In the first few months of planning the YDRP, I therefore developed a project management model. This ensured a governance framework would be in place before the research commenced. To develop this framework, I reviewed the partner project contract and the ARC project grant application and extracted all details relating to project management. This detail was then used as the basis for discussions with stakeholders to confirm roles, responsibilities and anticipated outcomes. Through this process, I developed a governance framework (Appendix-2) and a memorandum of understanding (Appendix-2).

The governance framework detailed the project relationship between Impact, Griffith University and the Queensland Department of Communities (DOC) and complemented the existing legal contract. The framework established the working title of the research project as the Queensland Youth Development Research Project and addressed a range of governance issues including project partner roles, the overarching funding and the partnership risk management approach.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) clarified the roles and responsibilities of Impact, the researchers and the YDOPs. The MOU was a symbolic expression of intent and recorded the aims and purpose of the project. The memorandum addressed a range of overarching governance issues including the roles and responsibilities of the YDOP nominated project contact or research
coordinator and the terms governing withdrawal from the project. The memorandum also addressed communication protocols and conflict resolution.

4.3. Understanding quality strength-based youth program practice

In Study One I adopted a participatory action research (PAR) approach to work with young leaders, public servants and practitioners to examine youth program practice. As described in Chapter 3, participatory research is considered an effective way to challenge how power is exercised in traditional research methodologies and to better recognise existing knowledge and skills. Study One was informed by an extensive two-phased review of the Australian and International interdisciplinary youth work literature.

While working with Impact and the YDOPs helped to widen the diversity of people involved in Study One, participation relied on the intrinsic motivation of each participant’s interest in and commitment to the research. While I ensured each participant received formal recognition (name in publication), they were regularly thanked for their contribution, and all group face-to-face meetings were catered, no other extrinsic incentives were used to motivate, support and recognise participation in the PAR.

I adopted an adult-led, youth-inclusive, PAR methodological approach which developed organically over three cycles of reflection and review. Each PAR cycle occurred over a six to eight month period. These cycles, each involving spin-off cycles, are summarised in Table 4.1 below and discussed in more detail in the following three sections.

---

4 Ethics approval and all necessary variations to conduct this study were obtained from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU Reference: CCJ/08/06/HREC).
Table 4.1. Cycles of participatory action research in the YDRP project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Involving</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Working-group</td>
<td>Identified core practices underpinning quality programs starting with the Ausyouth (2001e) PYD program framework.</td>
<td>Practitioners; young leaders; public servants; Impact.</td>
<td>5 separate exercises over 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face meeting</td>
<td>Celebrated working together, reflected on results and discussed next cycle of development.</td>
<td>Practitioners; public servants; Impact.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In depth face-to-face consults &amp; review process</td>
<td>Evaluated first cycle results. Incorporated review of Australian youth literature. Preliminary test of key features against young member opinion in Study Two interviews and questionnaires.</td>
<td>Research Coordinators &amp; interested persons; Impact; young people.</td>
<td>Numerous meetings &amp; research over 7 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A second edition was launched in September 2012. This was developed using a reduced consultation process involving Impact and QYA. A wider content consultation process was not utilised as the integrity of the first edition framework developed through the above PAR process was maintained. Additional content refinement has further tested the integrity of the original framework which continues to remain intact.

The diversity of people taking part in each PAR cycle was an important strength. This diversity also, however, presented challenges to working together effectively. Each person had a different level of availability because some members participated in their work-time and others in their discretionary-time. There was also a diversity of geographical locations and a few members did not have easy access to the internet. As described in section 4.3 adopting a flexible method of working and facilitating communication through each cycle was essential to ensure meaningful participation. Whole group face-to-face meetings were kept to a minimum. Small group and individual face-to-face meetings, e-mail, postal mail and the telephone were used extensively. Other researchers also struggling with accessibility issues have similarly opted for combinations of flexible off and on-line

4.3.1. Cycle one: Working-Group discussion

Throughout the first cycle of PAR I used a Working-Group methodology, bringing together practitioner, public servant and young leader expertise to examine the characteristics of program practice. We used the Ausyouth (2001e) framework of 2 overarching principles, 14 underpinning principles and 166 indicators as the starting point as it was the only detailed Australian youth development program practice framework identified.

Ten people from seven different organisations participated. Over a six month period (August 2006-February 2007) I worked with my industry supervisor Paul (Impact), Tegan (Dukes young member), Will (Dukes program leader), Olivia (Leos young member), John (Lions District Leo chairman), Lana (PCYC young member), Louise (ESC public servant), Jennifer (Guides young member), Mary (Guides program leader) and Jan (independent member, public servant) to complete the work for cycle one. Originally, the PAR evaluation was to be completed within three months. The exercise was, however, more difficult and time intensive than originally anticipated with Working-Group members finding it challenging to complete within the shorter timeframe.

Following discussions with Jan, Paul and my two academic supervisors Professor Ross Homel and Associate Professor Melissa Bull, I chose to set the Working-Group two main tasks. First, because the Ausyouth (2001e) suite of indicators was too extensive to easily use, I asked members to identify and prioritise the core operational indicators. This work involved ranking from most to
least important each set of organisation and program indicators. Second, I asked the Working-Group to consider gaps in content, areas for revision (including language and tone), and examples of action to illustrate the meaning of each indicator. Participants were asked to approach these tasks through the aspirational lens of better practice rather than the constraints of what we do. I also asked participants to identify an example of action for each indicator to address the criticism that good practice frameworks are difficult to use because it is not clear how they can be translated into action (Delgado, 2004, p. 25).

To best manage this evaluative discussion, I divided the 14 Ausyouth principles and their underpinning indicators into five separate exercises. As the Working-Group undertook each exercise reviewing two to three principles at a time, I analysed the previous exercise results (rankings and comments) and sent the combined group results back to each member for further comment. While very few additional comments were received, distributing the group results in this way provided the group with tangible evidence of task completion.

As the Working-Group progressed through each set of principles there was a growing awareness that the task was not as simple as originally conceptualised. First, evaluating each indicator and discussing the kinds of actions which might demonstrate action under that indicator, resulted in the discovery that there was repetition across the Ausyouth (2001e) framework. Second, there was an increasing realisation that the project was changing and we were embarking on the development of a new good practice framework. These two challenges led to a high level of frustration amongst Working-Group members which I had to mediate through each PAR cycle.
Once the cycle one review work was completed, I collated all responses, analysed them further, and refined them to develop the first draft of a new framework. This review process resulted in the retention of the two overarching Ausyouth principles of empowerment and conscious enterprise and a priority list of nine principles (from the original 14) (Table 4.2). A priority list of 55 indicators

Table 4.2. PAR cycle one: Evolution from original Ausyouth principles to new principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Ausyouth (2001e) principles</th>
<th>New draft overarching principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Empowerment</td>
<td>1. Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conscious enterprise</td>
<td>2. Conscious enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpinning Ausyouth (2001e) principles</td>
<td>New draft underpinning principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A commitment to:</td>
<td>A commitment to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Strength-based, positive youth development as the foundation for policy and program development.</td>
<td>1. Positive youth development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making.</td>
<td>2. Young people as active partners in decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases.</td>
<td>4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Quality outcomes.</td>
<td>Merged into new Principles 2, 3, 6, 7 &amp; 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders.</td>
<td>7. Encouraging the contribution of staff and young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising.</td>
<td>8. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Providing opportunities for service to the community that are meaningful for both young people and the community.</td>
<td>5. Providing opportunities for service to the community and encouraging communities to value and engage with young people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(from the original 166) were also developed (Table 4.3). The priority list of indicators included four new indicators addressing physical safety, emotional safety, decision making, social and moral skills. The review process also resulted in the development of 237 examples of action. These examples of action illustrating the meaning and intent of each indicator were either new examples put forward by the Working-Group or existing Ausyouth (2001e) indicators.

Table 4.3. PAR cycle one: New principles, indicators and examples of action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New draft underpinning principles</th>
<th>Priority Indicators (n)</th>
<th>Examples of action (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Positive youth development.</td>
<td>3 organisation 2 program</td>
<td>9 organisation 4 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Young people as active partners in decision making.</td>
<td>3 organisation 2 program</td>
<td>14 organisation 11 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
<td>4 organisation 4 program</td>
<td>16 organisation 34 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases.</td>
<td>3 organisation 3 program</td>
<td>13 organisation 16 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing opportunities for service to the community and encouraging communities to value and engage with young people.</td>
<td>4 organisation 3 program</td>
<td>11 organisation 10 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Strengthening partnerships and social networks.</td>
<td>4 organisation 5 program</td>
<td>14 organisation 29 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Encouraging the contribution of staff and young people.</td>
<td>4 organisation 3 program</td>
<td>18 organisation 9 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising.</td>
<td>2 organisation 1 program</td>
<td>7 organisation 7 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Maximising formal and community recognition of learning outcomes.</td>
<td>3 organisation, 2 program</td>
<td>8 organisation 8 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(30 organisation 25 program) (109 organisation 128 program)

4.3.2. Cycle two: In depth consultations and Australian literature

A collaborative consultation model combined with a review of Australian youth development practitioner literature was used to evaluate and refine the
priority list of indicators and principles documented during cycle one. Cycle two took place over a seven month period (October 2007-April 2008) and involved the YDOP Research Coordinators, three of whom had also been involved in cycle one. During this cycle the Research Coordinators were Rod (BB), Melissa (SLS), Jason and Anne (Dukes), Louise (ESC), Chris (PCYC), Sue (Guides) and John (Lions). Two other Working-Group members, Mary (Guides program leader) and Paul also continued their involvement. Young members were directly involved in this cycle through Study Two where they were asked about their program experience. Study Two is described in Parts 4.5 and 4.6 of this chapter.

The cycle two literature review examined Australian practitioner and scholarly work and young people’s opinion expressed in the literature providing an important testing point for the newly evolving good practice framework. This work included a full examination of the Ausyouth (2000–2003) suite of research reports which explored the program practice issues encapsulated in the Ausyouth (2001e) framework. The collaborative consultation process involved a series of in-depth, face-to-face individual meetings with Impact and each YDOP. Each in-depth discussion lasted an average of four hours and subjected the new draft framework to a further content review. This process also enabled me to continually assess the usability and applicability of the developing framework across the diverse program environments represented by the participating YDOPs.

Throughout this second cycle I also held a number of additional one-on-one and small group meetings to discuss and work through specific and often unexpected issues raised during the organisational meetings. These spin-off cycles of discussion and reflection are typical of the dynamic nature of participatory action research (Piggot-Irvine & Bartlett, 2008, pp. 19, 20). Many of these meetings
were passionate discussions, exploring different viewpoints and struggling with the meaning and intent of the indicators and principles. Each discussion centred on how to best represent youth practice within the new evolving framework in a non-prescriptive and strength-based way. This was considered an important goal because as Paul (Wright, personal communication, 4 February, 2008) explained:

*By using prescriptive language, the suggestion is reinforced that the principles provide a framework for an audit, rather than a creative tool which can be used by the organisations and by government for reflection and strategic improvement.*

I arranged one of these additional in-depth group discussions in response to both Chris (PCYC) and Louise (ESC) raising similar concerns about the cycle one draft Principles Four and Nine on education and learning issues. Separately they had argued there was a level of inflexibility around the Ausyouth (2001e) expectation of formal accreditation of training which had remained in the cycle one framework. While they agreed it was important for accredited training options to be accessible they felt there needed to be a stronger recognition of a diversity of formal and informal learning and development options and greater respect for the informal education role youth development programs play. This debate is also reflected in the ANTA report (2002) on recognition of skills gained through YDOP participation. I therefore convened an additional meeting with Chris (PCYC) and Louise (ESC) to work through these concerns. Following this meeting I made significant content revisions and merged these two principles to form the new Principle One, *Learning and Development*, presented in detail in Chapter 7.

Every discussion led to an increased understanding by and between each participant about the meaning, intent and structure of the framework. Sometimes
the understanding I negotiated was an agreement to disagree and the focus of discussion was on delivering outcomes that would best satisfy all parties. I used this understanding to revise the developing framework which was then subjected to a further spin-off cycle of PAR. Often discussion in the following spin-off cycles would return to peel apart these types of difficult issues until the right words had been found to express everyone’s aspirations and understanding of that particular aspect of youth program work. For example, the ethical and value judgements involved in accessing different sources of funding, such as the food, gambling and alcohol industries, the potential or real impact on young people’s wellbeing and how this should be represented in the new framework was hotly debated. The results from this discussion are presented in Chapter 6.

Throughout this second cycle of PAR, responses from each discussion were continuously collated and analysed in the context of the new framework as a whole. This resulted in a number of further refinements. As illustrated in Table 4.4, the number of principles was further reduced from the nine adopted during PAR cycle one to six principles. The two overarching Ausyouth principles of employment and conscious enterprise were merged across the framework. The overwhelming view was that these overarching principles complicated the framework too much and were not easily accessible in their current format as overarching principles. Along with other concepts which underpin the positive youth development approach, such as respect and care, empowerment and conscious enterprise were instead embedded across the framework into the new principles and indicators. This made these concepts a more accessible part of the framework and more likely to result in intentional action.
Table 4.4. PAR cycle two: Evolution from original Ausyouth principles to new principles through cycle one and cycle two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Ausyouth (2001e) principles</th>
<th>New draft overarching principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Empowerment</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conscious enterprise</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underpinning Ausyouth (2001e) principles</th>
<th>New draft principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A commitment to:</td>
<td>A commitment to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Strength-based, positive youth</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development as the foundation for policy and program development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making.</td>
<td>2. Leadership and decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases.</td>
<td>1. Learning and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Respecting community voice and identity.</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 3, 4 &amp; 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Encouraging communities to value and engage young people.</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Quality outcomes.</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders.</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising.</td>
<td>6. Ethical promotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Providing opportunities for service to the community that are meaningful for both young people and the community.</td>
<td>4. Community service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Strengthening the interconnectedness of social networks.</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 3 &amp; 5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows the three principles from the PAR cycle one which were merged during this second cycle of PAR. These were Principle One (positive youth development), Principle Seven (encouraging the contribution of staff and young people) and Principle Nine (maximising formal and community recognition of learning outcomes). Principle One was dropped following an attempt to develop
examples of action representative of diverse youth programs. This process made it clear that the concept of positive youth development was illustrated across the entire new framework. Principles Seven and Nine were dropped due to a high level of repetition and were merged across the framework. This cycle also resulted in the principle on learning and development being moved to the front of the suite of principles to acknowledge the key education role youth development organisations and programs play.

Table 4.5. PAR cycle two: Evolution of new principles from cycle one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New draft overarching principles cycle one</th>
<th>New draft overarching principles cycle two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Empowerment</td>
<td>Merged into new Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conscious enterprise</td>
<td>Merged into new Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New draft underpinning principles cycle one</th>
<th>New draft principles cycle two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Positive youth development.</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Young people as active partners in decision making.</td>
<td>2. Leadership and decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases.</td>
<td>1. Learning and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing opportunities for service to the community and encouraging communities to value and engage with young people.</td>
<td>4. Community service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Encouraging the contribution of staff and young people.</td>
<td>Merged into new principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising.</td>
<td>6. Ethical promotion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This second cycle of PAR also resulted in a widening of the concepts covered. In particular, good practices in volunteering and succession planning were introduced as new indicators and examples of action in recognition of their
important contribution to program and organisational sustainability. The
importance of youth having opportunities to develop leadership skills was also
significantly expanded and embedded into the framework at both the principle and
indicator level. This second iteration of the framework also included an increased
emphasis on positive promotion and the introduction of individual development
plans as tools for positive learning and development.

Table 4.6. PAR cycle two: New framework principles, indicators and examples of
action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New draft underpinning principles (name)</th>
<th>Priority Indicators (n)</th>
<th>Examples of action (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning and development.</td>
<td>5 organisation 5 program</td>
<td>41 organisation 38 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leadership and decision making.</td>
<td>3 organisation 2 program</td>
<td>33 organisation 17 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
<td>4 organisation 4 program</td>
<td>46 organisation 55 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community service.</td>
<td>3 organisation 3 program</td>
<td>22 organisation 24 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Partnerships and social networks.</td>
<td>3 organisation 4 program</td>
<td>37 organisation 28 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ethical promotion.</td>
<td>3 organisation 2 program</td>
<td>27 organisation 12 program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41 (21 organisation 20 program)</td>
<td>380 (206 organisation 174 program)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, however, Table 4.6 shows this second cycle of PAR resulted in a
further reduction of priority indicators from 55 to 41. Despite the increase in
concepts covered by the new framework described above, this reduction in
indicators was possible due to the reclassification of some indicators to examples
of action. These examples of action, developed to illustrate the intent and meaning
of each indicator, increased to 380 in this cycle.
4.3.3. Cycle three: Roundtable discussion and International literature

Once the second draft of the framework had been completed the content was subjected to a final PAR cycle of review, reflection and revision. The bulk of this work was completed over an eight month period (May-December 2010) and involved Paul (Impact), Rod (BB), Brenda (SLS), Louise (Dukes), Henk (ESC), Chris (PCYC), Sue and Mary (Guides) and John (Lions).

First, I commenced a detailed check of the draft framework against current scholarly and practitioner youth development literature and made content revisions. This work involved a broader focus on both Australian and international scholarship and included young people’s opinion expressed in the literature and the YDRP. This revision process was then followed by a Roundtable discussion involving the Research Coordinators and interested YDOP staff. We discussed each of the principles, indicators and examples of action using the same series of questions used across the previous two PAR cycles (exploring language, gaps, accuracy, usability and applicability of content across diverse program environments). Key comments resulting in important changes came from Mary (Guides) who suggested the Ausyouth (2001e) policy operating environment indicators should also be included in this final stage of analysis; Chris (PCYC) who felt there was still too much repetition across the framework and suggested reducing the examples of action to address this problem and Henk (ESC) who suggested issues to do with safe social media use should be included. Following this consultation I again revised the framework. The Study One related stories provided by young people through Study Two and this final Roundtable discussion with the youth development sector participants also provided an important check against self-limiting reflection (Piggot-Irvine & Bartlett, 2008, p. 24). This process
ensured that important elements of youth practice were identified, addressed and supported by the literature, practitioners and young members. By widening the final PAR cycle in this way it was possible to examine the new practitioner framework by triangulating these three different sources of data.

The analysis of young people’s opinion provided through the interviews and questionnaires (see Chapters 5-7) and final practitioner consultation validated the structure of the framework leaving the six key principles unchanged. The indicators and examples of action did, however, go through another cycle of change. While some indicators still retained a program or organisation focus this cycle of consultation also resulted in the explicit organised division of indicators into the operating environments of program, organisation and policy being abandoned to further simplify the framework structure. This resulted in a number of indicators being merged, becoming more generic and losing their specific organisation or program focus.

The high level of repetition still remaining illustrated the challenges entailed in distilling a clear, defined understanding of program practices and a distinct content separation across the framework. The many clear bi-directional linkages between each principle, their underlying indicators and the concepts which support them made this a time consuming and difficult task. This is clearly a common problem experienced by many practitioners and is illustrated in the repetition across the Ausyouth (2001e) and Wierenga and Wyn (2011) frameworks.

The general consensus was that part of the problem lay in the examples of action being too extensive. This led to a decision to provide a smaller range of examples which would help youth workers understand the intent of each
indicator; look at their practice; and cater for diversity in program and youth worker skill level, opportunity and aspiration. As shown in Table 4.7, this PAR cycle led to the number of indicators being further reduced from 41 to 36 and the number of examples of action being reduced from 380 to 288.

Table 4.7. PAR cycle three: New framework principles, indicators and examples of action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New draft underpinning principles (name)</th>
<th>Priority Indicators (n)</th>
<th>Examples of action (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning and development.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leadership and decision making.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An inclusive ethos.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community service.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Partnerships and social networks.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ethical promotion.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This final cycle of PAR also led to a number of refinements in language and content. Key decisions included replacing the term ‘staff’ with ‘paid and volunteer staff’ to ensure volunteer youth workers were explicitly included across the framework. A number of new concepts also emerged from this third and final cycle of PAR. These were embedded across the framework in new indicators and examples of action and included lifelong learning, community-university research partnerships, framing mistakes as opportunities for learning, succession planning for young leaders, encouraging intergenerational activities, the safe and constructive use of social media and the full and proper evaluation of new ideas.

These three cycles of PAR supported the development of the new strengths-based approach to youth program practice presented in Chapters 5 to 7. Overall, the process of debating the meaning and importance of each indicator through cycles one to three supported the development of a consensus based framework which has received wide support from practitioners and public servants (e.g.
V. Dominello, Minister for Citizenship and Communities, NSW State Government, personal communication to P. Wright, November 22, 2012; R. McSweeney, Minister for Youth, WA State Government, personal communication to P. Wright, November 1, 2012; J. Downey, Ballarat Youth Services, personal communication to K. Seymour, December 10, 2013).

4.4. YDOP membership data and young member demographic characteristics

Socio-demographic data illustrates the contextual characteristics of a sample or population of people. Participant program data can contribute to a better understanding about program practices. To understand and access participant data, I conducted two small mini-projects. First, a scoping exercise was undertaken in 2006, identifying types of data collected. The demographic data fields examined are shown in Table 4.8 and program data fields are shown in Table 4.9. These were based on the Ausyouth (2003b) recommended minimum participant demographic set (date of birth; gender; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background (ATSI); disability; Language Other Than English (LOTE); home postcode) and participant information data set (program group; commencement date; exit date and reason; awards, certificates and vocational modules).

This scoping exercise was undertaken in partnership with Impact and John, a student intern. I designed the scoping exercise as a self-contained study to complement his internship work program and Paul supported him on-site. I

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5 Ethics approval was obtained from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU Ref No: CCJ/08/06/HREC).
6 John is a pseudonym. For ethical and privacy reasons his name cannot be disclosed as he left the project before consent could be obtained.
developed a number of documents to brief and support John which included a briefing paper outlining the research assistant role and the project, a script to support him collect information and a briefing paper for each organisation (Appendix-3). Many researchers have documented the importance of support off-site and on-site to ensure young researchers are always supported, properly equipped to undertake the research, collect the right information, understand expectations and feel confident in the task (Alder & Sandor, 2010, pp. 118-119; Kellett, 2009, p. 53; McLaughlin, 2005, pp. 214, 216). The intern took responsibility for organising, conducting and documenting meetings. Paul provided support at these meetings and I took responsibility for analysing the information collected.

This mini-study revealed that at the time of the study no YDOP collected all seven demographic or six program data fields. As shown in Table 4.8, three of the demographic data fields (age, sex and primary home postcode), were commonly collected. Two YDOPs reported collecting data on disability and none reported collecting data on ATSI or LOTE background. One collected additional demographic data (parent occupation).

| Table 4.8. Demographic data collected by YDOP, 2006 (n) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Demographic data | Organisations collecting data (n=7) |
| Age/date of birth | 7 |
| Sex | 7 |
| Disability | 2 |
| ATSI | 0 |
| LOTE spoken at home | 0 |
| Born overseas in LOTE country | 0 |
| Primary home postcode | 7 |
| Other socio-demographic data | - Parent occupation | 1 |
Similarly, Table 4.9, shows three of the recommended program data fields (group name, commencement date, active or inactive status) were commonly collected. Two YDOPs reported keeping centralised data on young member formal learning and development achievements. For most YDOPs, only program leaders had access to this data. Three collected additional program data (high level award/level completion). At the time, six reported they also kept detailed program leader educational data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant program data</th>
<th>Organisations collecting data (n=7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program group name</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commencement date</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit date</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for exiting</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active or inactive</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards, certificates and vocational modules</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achieved through the YDOP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other program data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- High level award/level completion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YDOP capacity to collect and maintain valuable up-to-date centralised data about their members hinged on a number of issues including volunteer and paid staff capacity, financial resources and program management strategies and priorities. At the time of conducting this mini-study, three of these organisations relied on paper based decentralised systems, with the local clubs or groups managing program group member records. For these YDOPs, program leaders only reported to the head office data necessary for financial and insurance accountability.

The second mini-project, conducted in 2007, collected a set of common demographic data at the individual case level. Due to the disparate and limited nature of membership data collected by the YDOPs, I refined the scope of this
exercise to focus only on age, sex and residential postcode. The disparate nature of data management, the time constraints each Research Coordinator faced negotiating the YDRP work within their existing work-load or their discretionary time, and the existing organisational work-loads, meant I was unable to negotiate a common snapshot date. YDOP young member data in excel or word format was therefore provided over a four month period in 2007. One organisation, the PCYC, was unable to provide young member data for 14 (48.6%) of their youth management teams (YMT’s).

Understanding young member population demographic characteristics supported the development of the sampling strategy for Study Two. It also supplemented data collected from the sample of young people participating in Study Two, enabling the comparative analysis presented in Chapter 5. Details about program practices gathered through this mini-study are limited. This mini-study did, however, reveal low demographic and program data use for profiling, monitoring and evaluation.

4.5. Young people as researchers

Using an intergenerational model where older and younger people work together, a group of mostly young, university students were recruited to work as co-researchers in the YDRP. The decision to prioritise working with young people as co-researchers was allowable under section 104 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)7 (Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, personal communication, April 15, 2008).

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7 Section 104 states “A person may do an act to benefit the members of a group of people with an attribute for whose welfare the act was designed if the purpose of the act is not inconsistent with this Act.”
The strategy for fostering an intergenerational research team was developed in discussion with my academic supervisors, Ross and Melissa, my industry supervisor, Paul, and the YDOP Research Coordinators, Rod (BB), Brenda (SLS), Jason and Anne (Dukes), Louise (ESC), Chris (PCYC), Sue (Guides) and John (Lions). As discussed below, Associate Professor Malcolm Alexander, Griffith University sociology department, also provided essential support; ensuring the intergenerational research team strategy was viable.

The YDRP research team was funded through the university, community and government research partnership described in Chapter 1. The success of this approach required addressing a number of methodological, practical and ethical issues centring on successfully accessing, recruiting, training and supporting a group of young researchers. In section 4.5, I discuss key establishment decisions including setting the age parameters for recruitment and designing an incentive package. I also discuss team building processes adopted to mediate power, provide support and nurture professional research practices.

4.5.1. Determining the target age group

The development of a participation strategy, supporting the access, recruitment, and retention of up to eight young people as researchers, first required setting the age parameters of the target group. We considered the option of working with children and young adults as researchers. After discussing a range of practical and methodological issues, we decided to focus on young people aged 19-25 years.

There were distinct advantages linked with the nature of the YDRP and with choosing to work with young adults. These ranged from: not needing to negotiate
parental consent and active support for their child’s ongoing participation; issues to do with the legal age for employing young people; not needing to negotiate eligibility to participate as subjects and as researchers; the sensitivity of the issues to be researched; the resources available to support young people in the role of researcher; and the practical skill and knowledge requirements older youth were more likely to have. Kellet (2011), argues the need for specific skills and knowledge is not a reason for excluding children because training can address this issue. An assessment of the skill knowledge and time requirements needed for the YDRP, however, suggested these would be difficult to negotiate with the younger age groups without a high level of active significant adult support. These issues included the need for skills and knowledge to travel independently across extensive geographical distances, to negotiate arrangements with a diversity of stakeholders, to cope with intensive periods of data collection and to problem solve difficult situations.

4.5.2. Using incentives: Encouraging and supporting participation

Both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives were used to ethically motivate and support participation. We considered a mix of incentives to attract a group of young people aged 19-25, mediate disincentives to participate and support the voluntary nature of participation. We decided that the intrinsic incentive of the youth focus of the topic, and the three extrinsic incentives of employment as a casual research assistant, training and development, and travel to diverse locations would be an attractive incentive package. Offering paid employment was justified since a level of time, commitment, skill and knowledge was required which would, as other researchers have recognised, usually attract remuneration (Alder &
4.5.3. Targeting recruitment efforts: Considering two options

Two different groups of young people aged 19-25 were considered for a targeted recruitment campaign (Appendix-4). Option A focused on recruiting young people from the participating youth organisations. Option B focused on recruiting from the Griffith University student cohort.

Originally option A was pursued, but this approach was abandoned when an expression of interest (EOI) call resulted in only one nomination from a young woman working part-time and located one hours travel from my campus. This highlighted the challenge involved in negotiating different young member commitments and locations to organise regular meetings and to team up for field work. In reflecting on this and my previous experience in working with the resource and time-stretched YDOPs, it was clear the recruitment of young members through the Research Coordinators would mean further significant time delays. Option B was therefore adopted when Malcolm offered the opportunity to recruit from a cohort of sociology students studying his third year Research in Sociology course.

While there was disappointment associated with this decision, all parties recognised that the opportunity to work with this student cohort was the only option if young people were to be involved as researchers. Option B also came with significant benefits including the students’ existing skills in research methodology and their access to further interview skills training and support through their course. The experience gained when conducting interviews for their course...
assessment would also reduce the amount of additional training needed. The complementary timing of their Research in Sociology course with the YDRP data collection timetable and the ease of student accessibility for recruitment, training and development were also significant considerations.

The decision to recruit directly from this student cohort did pose unique challenges. Not least of these was the need to identify appropriate and ethical linkages between the YDRP and the course assessment. This included ensuring the participating students were not overly advantaged or disadvantaged compared to their non-participating fellow students. In practice this meant the students participating in the YDRP would be required to do the same work as other students enrolled in the sociology course and, despite the strong team based nature of the YDRP work, they would individually prepare and submit each course work assignment (Appendix-4).

It was also important to clearly define the boundaries between the paid research work completed for the YDRP and the unpaid research work completed to pass their course. This work included time spent developing their draft interview schedule and conducting three interviews for their course assessment, participating in team meetings during scheduled class time and time spent in interview skills training. These interviews doubled as pilot interviews for the YDRP and are discussed in section 4.6 of this chapter. The time taken to travel, prepare, and complete the field work reporting was remunerated as the YDRP requirements were more time intensive than the course assessment.
4.5.4. Applying to be a researcher

A key aim of the YDRP application process was to design an application process which would model a real-world employment application process (Blake & Worsdale, 2009). Following detailed discussions with Malcolm, we developed a semi-formal application process requiring a cover letter, a curriculum vitae addressing a small number of criteria and an informal conversational interview (Appendix-4). Malcolm suggested the target age range should only be listed as desirable criteria to ensure applicants outside the preferred age range were not precluded from applying. Listing the age range as desirable criteria meant it would only come into consideration if over eight applications were received and application 8 and 9 were equally ranked on the essential criteria.

With support from Malcolm, all students enrolled in his first semester course (Social Networks, Community and Cooperation) who would proceed into his second semester course (Research in Sociology) were encouraged to apply. Announcements were made during class time and notices posted on the course noticeboard. Four applications were received and each applicant met the essential criteria. Referee reports for all four applicants confirmed the students’ self-assessment (evidenced through the application and interview) and their capability to undertake the required work. Karen, Zoe, Caylee and Jonathan were appointed. Significantly, the decision to list age criteria as desirable enabled the appointment of Karen, who was outside the target age range.

Unfortunately Caylee withdrew soon after her appointment stating an overload of personal, study, work and extra-curricular commitments. Anecdotal feedback from a number of young people who did not apply and yet felt passionate

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8 Caylee is a pseudonym. For ethical and privacy reasons her name cannot be disclosed as she left the project before consent could be obtained.
enough about the project to approach me after the research team had been appointed, revealed this was a common issue. Despite having a keen interest in the research project, the juggling of multiple responsibilities was a major barrier. Other researchers have also found this to be the case, reporting young people’s lack of discretionary time impacted on their recruitment efforts (Burns & Schubotz, 2009, p. 312). In the second year of data collection Jonathan left, Karen maintained a high level of commitment, Zoe reduced her involvement and Ashleigh, a young woman (19-25 years), joined the team. Ashleigh was recruited through her Griffith University work integrated learning program placement at Impact and was involved as a co-researcher. She supported a number of program site visits and processed a large amount of data using the Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS).

4.5.5. Building a team: Education, collaboration and support

Chapter 3 details a range of issues raised by scholars about the professional conduct and rigor of research involving young people as researchers. For the YDRP field work team a high level of professional conduct and rigor was supported through the adoption of four key strategies: active learning and development practices; a collaborative participation model; a range of individual and group support mechanisms; and a professional protocol to support the practical implementation of these strategies. I discuss each of these four key strategies below.

**Strategy 1. Learning and development**

I designed the researcher education program to supplement the formal university research training and to support the development of specific skills and
knowledge needed for the YDRP. The learning and development sessions were interspersed with working sessions which, while including learning components and outcomes, focused on developing the research methodology. The formal program took place over five half days and two full days spread over a six week period. Each session was catered (morning tea, lunch and/or afternoon tea). The program included an induction session on employment issues, expectations and group norms, university policies and procedures, how to keep a professional journal and documenting field work. A number of sessions focused on research material development. Two half day training sessions focused on interviewing techniques and skills to supplement the Research in Sociology course. One of these interview skills building sessions was facilitated by a senior academic colleague, Dr Merrelyn Bates. Since my industry supervisor, Paul (Impact), was providing back up support for the field work he also attended a number of these sessions. A range of learning methodologies were used including group discussion, direct information provision and experiential learning using role-play exercises developed collaboratively with Merrelyn (Bates, personal communication, August, 2008). These sessions were, as Johnson and Macleod Clarke (2006, p. 214) also found, essential for ensuring success individually and as a team.

**Strategy 2. Collaborative participation**

Similarly to the PAR work, a predominantly participatory team model using reflection and team decision making was adopted. This model helped avoid a traditional older person top-down team structure and fostered a supportive team environment underpinned by shared decision making, leadership and respectful working relationships. We worked together to develop a group norm agreement
which addressed how we wanted to be treated and operate within the group. This agreement acknowledged the voluntary nature of participation and the right of any member to withdraw at any time. This ensured that each team member knew they had choices about the times and tasks they were involved in (Davis, 2009, p. 164).

We worked collaboratively to develop and refine the research materials (information and consent pack, questionnaire and interview schedule), manage the site visits and administer the questionnaire to groups of young members. We each took sole responsibility for arranging, managing and conducting interviews with young members.

Nevertheless, because the YDRP was being undertaken to inform my doctoral thesis and the research took longer than originally planned, I took responsibility for the preparation, the majority of the non-field work administration tasks, the final decision making and all completion phases. I was also responsible for ensuring team member safety, signing off on time sheets and reimbursement forms. This meant some residual power differential remained. The subject matter of the research originated from the YDOPs and was refined through a collaborative process involving Impact, Griffith University and the YDOPs.

**Strategy 3. Support**

Ensuring everyone had access to personal and professional support through team meetings, peer and professional support was a critical strategy for building confidence and ensuring individual and team success. I ensured the team met, and knew how to contact my academic supervisors, Ross, and Melissa, my industry supervisor, Paul, and key administration staff. Paul provided supplementary
professional support and stepped in on a number of occasions when I was unavailable.

We met regularly during the first six months of working together (July-December 2008) to discuss the research project. During the semester this involved meeting every week for an hour after each sociology class. Following their field work, team members documented their reflections to discuss individually with me or with the group. Using a team and individual debriefing approach enabled me to provide ongoing recognition and support and to gain an understanding of each person’s progress. With the development of higher confidence and skill levels, by the second six months (February-July 2009), the support focus had changed from a predominantly group focused approach to a predominantly individual focused approach.

This increased confidence and skill is also reflected in the evolving approach to the field work. Initially, questionnaire site visits were undertaken in teams of at least two people. Teaming up for the initial field work helped to share the learning experience and provided a high level of peer support. Once all members felt confident, individual members started to work by themselves with the smaller program groups and over time this method of conducting site visits increased. Overall for the first period of data collection (September-December 2008), 61.1% (22 sites) were conducted in teams and 38.9% (14 sites) were conducted individually. For the second period of data collection (February-July 2009), this pattern was reversed with only 29.4% (5 sites) conducted in teams and 70.6% (12 sites) conducted individually. Other methods included using phone calls to offer support and to debrief and using email to provide feedback and information updates.
These support strategies supported the development of a strong team morale and ethic. Together we brought a diversity of skills, knowledge, backgrounds, capabilities and experience to apply to the work described in this chapter. As other researchers have also reported, I found a small team supported full participation, the purposeful sharing of power, and a personal sense of ownership of the work (Alder & Sandor, 2010, pp. 117, 122; Alderson, 2007, p. 2277; London, 2002, p. 6; Ozer & Wright, 2012, p. 269). These outcomes are reflected in feedback provided by Jonathan, Zoe and Karen (Karen, personal communication, November 24, 2008; Jonathan, personal communication, November 19, 2008; Zoe, personal communication, November 19, 2008).

**Strategy 4. Professional protocol framework**

I developed a professional protocol framework underpinned by a range of policies and practical resources to support professional research practices. These included field work guidelines, planning and site visit checklist, interview and questionnaire record of contacts guide, team member reflections form and an incident report form (Appendix-5). The content of these resources was informed by a detailed risk analysis. Potential adverse risks were identified, assessed and practical strategies developed to reduce their impact and likelihood of occurrence. For example to support researcher safety, all site visit arrangements were formally documented and each team member had a safety plan in place. Some of the content was amended following feedback from Karen, Zoe and Jonathan.

The professional protocol also enabled clear professional standards and expectations to be set. The field work guidelines were developed to help each team member professionally manage a site visit, be aware of what they needed to do to
protect their own health and safety and understand their duty of care towards others. The guidelines addressed issues likely to be encountered while organising and conducting interviews and questionnaire site visits. These included keeping professional notes; setting up a field site; safety issues; and privacy obligations. Promoting and supporting professional conduct in the field was an essential element of the training and development program. The importance of taking extra care is simply elucidated by Olitsky and Weathers (2005):

In terms of ethical conduct, we believe it is important to recognize that publications may not have as direct or as large an effect on society as a whole as our research does on the individuals who are directly involved...

Therefore, it is especially important to focus on both the possible negative and positive outcomes of interpersonal interactions over which we as the university-based researchers have some control (n.p.).

We each maintained professional notes documenting our field work experience. This included recording details of contact with parents, leaders and young people including who we spoke to, when and the decisions made and reflections on our experience. The use of the reflections tool developed for the interviews for the questionnaire program site visits was a significant change suggested by Karen.

The professional supporting documents also included an incident protocol (Appendix-5). This ensured any issues which arose were acknowledged and dealt with immediately. Recording and reporting all incidents helped the team constructively address problems. If the incident was assessed as serious, a formal incident form was completed to inform stakeholders. This protocol was utilised to manage a number of incidents including leader concern about privacy, the non-
distribution of consent forms and the researcher safety incidents discussed in section 4.6 of this chapter.

Together these resources, the active learning and development practices, the collaborative participation model and the range of individual and group support mechanisms helped to facilitate a successful team field work experience. Spending time in the initial development phase to consider these complex issues was vindicated twice. First, when feedback from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee was received. Among the range of questions asked, the Committee could be assured that the separation of paid work and course credits, the age parameters, and the skills and capacity to do the required work had been well considered. Second, when we were out in the field and the training and protocols were put into practice. Everyone acted with a high level of professional conduct, responded quickly and effectively to challenges and maintained a collaborative and supportive team environment.

4.5.6. Developing the research instruments

The YDRP team, in partnership with the YDOP's and Impact, developed two research instruments to support engagement with young people as subjects through Study Two. In this section, I will first discuss the development of the questionnaire designed to collect a range of mostly quantitative data (Appendix-6). I will then discuss the development of the semi-structured interview schedule designed to collect mostly qualitative data (Appendix-7).

4.5.6.1. Questionnaire

The predominantly structured questionnaire incorporated design elements to support and encourage young people to tell us about their lives and to recognise
their efforts in doing so. Through the questionnaire, young people were asked about their socio-demographic characteristics, their involvement in youth programs, their internal and external developmental assets and the decisions they, their friends and family had made about risky and healthy behaviours (Appendix-6). A large amount of data was collected to provide an insight into youth development beyond this thesis. As discussed in 4.7, consent was sought from young people and their parents for the data to be used beyond my PhD thesis. A detailed discussion of questionnaire development and content is provided below.

**Process 1. Design, testing and evaluation**

Over the course of its development, the utility of the questionnaire was subjected to a number of intensive cycles of design, evaluation and change. In collaboration with Karen, Zoe and Jonathan, I led the overarching development process. During an intensive three month period we worked with Ross and Melissa; Paul; the YDOP Research Coordinators, Rod (BB), Brenda (SLS), Jason and Anne (Dukes), Louise (ESC), Chris (PCYC), Sue (Guides) and John (Lions); and a group of program leaders and young male members. A range of consultation methods were used including e-mail and face-to-face individual and focus group meetings.

We used the indicative questions which I had compiled for the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU HREC) as the starting point. This draft included a new measure regarding involvement in youth programs which drew on the good practice framework of principles and indicators developed through Study One PAR cycles one to two. It also included attitudinal,

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9 Due to ethical concerns about the protection of individual privacy it is not possible to disclose the names of the significant adults, young people or program group who piloted the questionnaire.
behavioural and activity measures used in the Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey (AHWS) (Melbourne Centre for Adolescent Health (2005)). The AHWS measures had been adapted for the Australian context (Beyers, Toumborou, Catalano, Arthur, & Hawkins, 2004, pp. 6-7; Bond, Thomas, Toumbourou, Patton, & Catalano, 2000) from the American Communities that Care Youth Survey (Arthur, Hawkins, Pollard, Catalano, & Baglioni, 2002; Arthur, Briney, Hawkins, Abbott, Brooke-Weiss, & Catalano, 2007; Glaser, Van Horn, Arthur, Hawkins, & Catalano, 2005; Feinberg, Ridenour, & Greenberg, 2007). Standard measures from the AHWS were adopted following a suggestion from Ross that this would enable a comparative analysis with a more representative sample of youth including a mix of involved and non-involved young people. Comparison points are available for Queensland 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS samples across a range of measures. The points of comparison are described in more detail in the summary of questionnaire content. The comparative analysis of a selection of life-skills is described in Chapter 5.

The YDRP team subjected the indicative questions and measures which I had compiled for the GU HREC to an intensive examination. We explored and debated the issues included, how they were included and any gaps or unnecessary inclusions. By continuously referring back to the YDRP aims and key questions for Studies One and Two we evaluated and refined the questionnaire content. These discussions led me to realise that the measures on program experience I had originally drafted needed to be expanded from a focus on what happens and the

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10 The Melbourne Centre for Adolescent Health (MCAH) is an initiative of the Royal Children's Hospital, with strong links to the University of Melbourne and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. The Adolescent Health and Wellbeing (AHW) data was collected as part of a collaborative research project between MCAH (through Murdoch Children's Research Institute), Griffith University Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Western Australia. The use of AHWS data for comparison purposes in the YDRP is within the terms of the agreement between Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Griffith University.
program peer culture to also include the reasons young people want to be engaged and program outcomes. These are discussed in Chapters 5 to 7. This team based discussion process also helped us to refine the measures adopted from the AHWS which were largely risk or deficit focused. Where possible we added new measures of positive healthy behaviour (e.g. volunteering, reading). To enable clear points of comparison between the two samples of young people, the inclusion of new measures of positive healthy behaviour or adaptation of the existing measure towards a more strength-based approach was not always possible. Five risky behaviours (stealing, fighting, tobacco, drug and alcohol misuse) and two protective factors which could be translated into a strength-based developmental framework (friends and parental relationships), supported comparison points.

In consultation with the Research Coordinators we also examined the structure of the questionnaire measures, the words used, their meaning and clarity, appeal to young people and ease of completion. Following the style of layout used in the AHWS and the design approach outlined by Brace (2004, p. 155; also Cox & Cox, 2008, pp. 23-24) we divided the questions into clear sections with subject headings, adopted a vertical listing style, wrote the instructions for each section using plain English and adopted a large font size and spacing to facilitate accessibility. When Chris (PCYC) remained concerned about the length of the questionnaire, I addressed his concern by inserting a number of motivational and recognition statements to encourage completion such as “Thank you for letting us know what you think! ☺ ☺ ☺” and “Keep going that’s the first section finished!” (Seymour, 2012b).

Once I was satisfied we had completed the penultimate draft we evaluated the questionnaire with a group of young male members in a focus group.
environment. These young members did not participate in the formal questionnaire or interviews. While it would have been preferable to also evaluate the questionnaire with a group of young female program participants, no other YDOP could arrange this in the available time. To an extent, the lack of testing by female program participants was offset by the predominantly female YDRP team. For the focus group process, young members were divided into two groups. One group was asked to read through the questionnaire and instruction sheet, the other group was asked to read the instruction sheet and complete the questionnaire. Both groups were then asked to provide their opinion and discuss in the group how the process made them feel and what they thought about the design and content.

The group who completed the questionnaire had more comments to make than the group who read it. Overall, suggestions were made to improve a number of question items and the design. These changes included adding more encouraging comments and putting pictures throughout the questionnaire, moving age to the first set of question items and expanding a number of the scales. A more detailed analysis of the use of visual motivational props as incentives is provided in Seymour (2012b; 2013a). These changes are further described in the next section on overview of questionnaire content. The young members who shared their expertise and helped improve the questionnaire received a personal letter and a certificate of participation to say “thank you”. They were also entered into the $20 gift voucher draw.

Each evaluation round led to improvements in content and design. The range and number of suggested changes decreased at each consultation point until

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11 Due to ethical concerns about the protection of individual privacy it is not possible to disclose the names of the significant adults, young people or program group who piloted the questionnaire.
a consensus had been reached. Overall, while some YDOPs were able to participate more than others in the questionnaire development, each YDOP commented on at least one draft version and all YDOPs approved the final version.

Lastly, the utility of the questionnaire instructions were field tested during the first data collection site visit which took place at an ESC program camp involving 40 young people. The YDRP team recorded questions asked as members completed the questionnaire. A number of problem areas were identified resulting in two types of changes. First, despite emphasising privacy and confidentiality in the information and consent pack, there was a high level of anxiety about the questions. This resulted in an additional statement about confidentiality being added to the first page and to the instruction sheet. This anxiety should not have been surprising because while social context (Strange, Forest, Oakley, & The Ripple Study Team, 2003) and belief in the equity of incentives can affect willingness to answer questions (Boeije, 2010, p. 54), trust in the confidentiality of those answers is essential (Cox & Cox, 2008, p. 24). Second the instructions for four items (8, 24, 28 & 35) were adjusted to address the most commonly asked questions. Future questions asked by young members suggested these adjustments to the instructions improved the clarity of the questionnaire.

The average item response and completion rate (97.0%) and our field reports suggest the questionnaire design enhanced young people’s motivation to complete the questionnaire. Participants, depending on their age, took an average 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire and this would have raised the temptation to skip through or miss the final sections. Arguably the design of the questionnaire helped achieve this high item and completion response rate. Overall, this in-depth development process ensured stakeholder agreement was reached.
about the information to be collected and how it was to be collected (Boynton & Greenhalgh, 2004, p. 1312). It also, helped achieve content validity and ensured the questionnaire design was professional, accessible and encouraging (Cox & Cox, 2008, p. 38).

**Process 2. Overview of questionnaire content**

The YDRP questionnaire is divided into ten sections (Appendix-6). Part 1 on *About You* collects the first set of demographic data on sex, age, residential name and postcode. Often, this type of demographic data is recommended for inclusion at the end of the questionnaire (Cox & Cox, 2008, p. 28). Feedback from young people during the piloting process, however, made it clear they would prefer to state their age before they answer aged based questions like those in section 6 (see below). An analysis of this data is presented in Chapter 5 and contributes to the Study Two question exploring the young member characteristics.

Part 2 on *Your Experiences in Your Program Group* supports Study One and asks young people about their involvement in their YDOP. Young people were asked about their program experience, what made them want to belong and what difference being involved made. These measures were largely influenced by the content of the new good practice framework developed through Study One PAR cycles one to two. The measure on program peer group attitudes was adapted for the program environment from the AHWS school-focused measure. Analysis of a selection of this data is discussed in Chapters 5 to 7. This section also included a number of items to identify young people answering the questions inconsistently using one positive question (I want to stay involved for as long as I can) and one negative question (I wish I didn't have to take part in [program] anymore). The
inconsistent question measure was used to assess the validity of self-report data which is described later in section 4.6.3.

Part 2 and Part 3 on Other Youth Clubs, Programs and Sports Groups include a number of items which explore the program structural time characteristics of engagement: length, breadth, depth and intensity. These items were influenced by the AHWS and scholarly work exploring the effects of structural characteristics of programs discussed in Chapter 2. Two AHWS items address breadth of activity involvement but the questions were not fully adopted in the YDRP because they were considered too general to enable separation of youth development program involvement from other activities.\textsuperscript{12} A descriptive analysis of breadth is presented in Chapter 5. Future analysis of the structural characteristics of involvement will add to our understanding about how different dimensions of involvement can impact on program outcomes.

Part 4 on Religion and Spirituality also contributes to Study Two by adding to our understanding about the characteristics of young members. These items were adopted from the AHWS. A descriptive analysis is provided in Chapter 5. Future analysis of these items will add to our understanding of the impact of religion or spirituality on opinion, behavioural and activity choices.

Part 5, on Your Friends, explores the peer group. This section explores the places where youth spend time and the activities their friends participate in. A small subset of four risky behaviour items is directly comparable to those used in the AHWS. Five new items on positive behaviours (volunteering, helping others, sports, dancing and reading) and four new items on negative behaviours (psychological and physical bullying, spitting, doing dangerous things) were

\textsuperscript{12} AHWS activity questions in full: “all sports, clubs, organisations or other activities inside school’ and ‘all sports, clubs, organisations or other activities outside school.”
added. This data will contribute to future analyses of young member behaviour and activity portfolios and their peer group role as external developmental assets.

Part 6 on *Your Opinion About Things* asks young people to share their opinion about the wrongness of nine risky behaviours. Five of these items are directly comparable to those used in the AHWS. Items on bullying, illegal street racing, gambling and spitting were added. Future analysis of these items will add to our understanding of young member behaviour and activity portfolios and attitudes towards problem behaviours.

Parts 7 and 8 seek to gain a better understanding about the home domain. Part 7 on *Your Opinion About the Young People You Live With* focuses on young people aged up to 17 years and asks a range of questions on age, sex, relationship and types of activities they participate in. Four of these were negative and four were positive activity items. Two of these negative items, if answered for a brother or sister, offer a point of comparison to the AHWS. Future analysis of these items will add to our understanding of younger family members as external developmental assets.

Part 8 on *Your Opinion About the Adults You Live With* focuses on adults aged 18 or older and includes a range of items on age, relationship, sex, workforce or education activity and level of participation in five risky behaviours. This section also asks what each young person thinks their parents opinion would be on a range of positive and negative items and seeks to understand parental interaction with the young person. A range of variables across these measures offer a point of comparison to the AHWS sample. Future analysis of these items will add to our understanding of significant adults as external developmental assets.
Part 9 on *About You, Your Experience and How You Feel* asks young people to answer a range of questions about their lives. In particular it focuses on the activities they participate in, their strengths and weaknesses, their sense of personal mental health and problem solving. This section also collects the second set of demographic data on disability, cultural background, ethnicity and engagement in the formal education sector. A range of these variables offer a point of comparison to the AHWS sample. A descriptive analysis of a selection of this data is presented in Chapter 5. Future analysis of these items will contribute to our understanding of the link between opinion, skills, activity and behavioural choices and activity participation.

Finally Part 10 on *Survey Summary* uses measures adopted from the AHWS to ask young people how important the questions were to them and how often they told the truth. The honesty question measure was used to assess the validity of self-report data which is described in section 4.6.3.

### 4.5.6.2. Interview schedule

The semi structured interview schedule (Appendix-7) was developed to build on the issues explored in the questionnaire. The interview schedule focused on exploring program experiences, positive and problem behaviours and the influence of program group, peers, and family on behaviour and activity choices. A detailed discussion of the development and design of the interview schedule is provided below.

*Process 1. Design, testing and evaluation*

The utility of the interview schedule was subjected to an intensive cycle of design, testing and redrafting over three phases of development. The first phase of
development commenced with each team member independently producing a draft schedule. I developed one version with indicative questions for the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee application (GU Ref No: CCJ/10/08/HREC). Jonathan, Karen and Zoe each produced a version for their Research in Sociology course assessment. These four schedules were discussed and those questions we agreed would be useful for the YDRP were highlighted. I then drew these questions together to produce a draft new schedule which we refined over two weeks of intensive discussion. Keeping the interview schedule balanced between the positive and the negative was a key concern because we did not want young people leaving their interview feeling judged by the questions asked or with the opinion that we were only interested in hearing about ‘bad things’.

The second stage of development involved a wider consultation process. Once we were happy with our draft interview schedule, associated academic colleagues and advisors, Impact and the participating youth organisations had an opportunity to comment before it was used in the pilot interviews. This resulted in a number of further refinements including reordering the introductory content and refining the questions on risky and healthy behaviour. The final phase of development involved reflecting on Zoe, Jonathan and Karen’s experience in using the interview schedule to conduct their pilot interviews. While each young leader interviewed was asked for their views on the schedule they did not suggest any changes.
Process 2. Overview of interview schedule content

The interview schedule is divided into 5 themed sections (Appendix-7). The first section focused on ethical, safety and practical issues, restating key points from the information and consent pack (confidentiality, voluntary nature of participation, the purpose and conduct of the interview). This was also an opportunity for the young person to ask any questions and for us to record some basic demographic data about the young person (age, gender and residential suburb) to provide a demographic profile of interview participants.

Section 2 explored the young person’s youth program. The first two questions were designed to be icebreaker questions by focusing on exploring how the young person became involved in their program and the kinds of activities they took part in. These questions were followed by an exploration of program aspects they liked most, those they liked least and the most important thing learnt so far. The final question explored the social networks involved in and around the program.

Section 3 focused on exploring positive and risky behaviour. Each young interviewee was asked to explore the kinds of activities they thought may have a positive or negative effect on people and to reflect on some of their own recent choices. They were asked to discuss the ways in which their friends, family and program influence their behavioural choices.

Section 4 concluded the formal interview by returning to discuss the young person’s views on their future engagement with their YDOP. This touched on leadership opportunities, encouraging other people to join and their engagement vision for their own future family.
The final section focused on concluding housekeeping matters. Young people were asked how the interview felt for them and if they had any questions. Details about the $20 gift voucher and any arrangements made with parents were clarified and followed through. A thematic analysis of the interview data is presented in Chapter 7.

4.6. Young people as research subjects

The strategy for engaging with young people as subjects in the Study Two questionnaire and interviews was developed in consultation with Impact, the YDOPs, the YDRP team and associated academic colleagues and advisors. Like the participation strategy for the YDRP team, the development of a participation strategy for young people as subjects involved a number of methodological, practical and ethical decisions. These decisions addressed the sampling approach, age, region, program group parameters and the mediation of power, incentive use, consent and privacy participation issues.

4.6.1. Questionnaire sampling approach

I used a modified cluster stratified sampling approach (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 112; Tranter, 2010, p. 128) to facilitate the participation of a geographically and demographically diverse sample of 440 young people and 51 program sites in the questionnaire. While 53 program sites were visited, one program group did not participate due to non-distribution of consent forms and another was excluded due to the program leader’s conduct influencing young people’s responses. In this section, I describe the development of the sampling

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13 Ethics approval and all necessary variations to conduct this study was obtained from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU Ref No: CCJ/09/08/HREC; GU Ref No: CCJ/10/08/HREC) and the Queensland Government, Department of Education, Training and Employment (Ref 550/27/761).
approach for the YDRP questionnaire and the definition of age, regional target sampling area and the program group parameters. These parameters also influenced the sample of young people (aged 12-18) who participated in the interviews.

4.6.1.1. Age parameters

For practical and ethical purposes using an age parameter to define young people was an important part of designing the method for Study Two. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is also a methodological issue other researchers have addressed. An exploration of the definitional and conceptual meanings of the terms children, kids, youth, teenagers, young people, young adults and adolescence, raised in Chapter 1, revealed these are contested terms influenced by a diversity of social, political, community and cultural categories and contexts. This tension is reflected in the ways age parameters are used by various Australian non-government and government institutions for the purposes of conducting research, delivering services or engaging with young people. For example, at the time Study Two was being conceptualised, the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies defined young people as aged 10 to 24 years. For them, this category was chosen to be “as inclusive as possible in covering not only adolescence but also the overlapping issues that lead to and follow adolescence” (Allison, 1999, p. 2). More recently, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth (2010, p. 12) stated that it would not “unnecessarily confine its considerations to a narrow or prescribed age group.” How this was acted on was unclear because the age parameter 12 to 24 years is prominently used to inform its work.
While both the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) most commonly use the age range of 12 to 25 to discuss young people, they do not have a standard definition. The age range utilised by both the ABS (Trewin, 2005, p. 22) and the AIHW (2007, 2011) to define ‘youth’, ‘young people’ or ‘young adults’ is influenced by the data source and subject being studied. More recently, the Australian Government Youth Forum defined young people as those individuals aged between 15 to 24 years (Australian Youth Forum, 2013).

As this research focused on young people in Queensland an analysis of Queensland Government age definitions was also conducted. In Queensland 12-17 year olds are legally considered children and 18 year olds are legally considered adults. While the Queensland Government did not have a specific definition of youth or young people it largely utilised the age range used by the ABS. At the time, the Queensland Government stated in its youth charter that it “recognises its obligation to involve young people aged 12 to 25 years in the development of policies, programs and services that affect them” (DOC, 2006, p. 1). More recently, the Queensland Government (2013) released its new youth strategy with a focus on young people aged 12-21.

As shown in Table 4.10 there are also distinct differences across the participating youth programs in the target age groups. At the time of designing a sampling strategy for Study Two, the participating YDOPs were shown to cater for a wide range of ages and to offer a range of targeted program curricula for young people according to their age and developmental phase.
Table 4.10. Youth organisation by age eligibility and YDRP target age group, 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program (name)</th>
<th>Age groups targeted by program(^1)</th>
<th>Target groups for YDRP(^2)</th>
<th>Defining features</th>
<th>Age range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Boys’ Brigade (BB)</td>
<td>Anchor Boys is for ages 5-7, No 1 Section is for ages 8-12 and No 2 Section is for ages 12-18.</td>
<td>No 2 Section</td>
<td></td>
<td>12-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (Dukes)</td>
<td>Young people aged 14-25 years.</td>
<td>School based youth groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>14-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Services Cadet Program (ESC)</td>
<td>ESC is for youth aged up to 16 years who have commenced high school (year 8).</td>
<td>All youth members</td>
<td></td>
<td>12-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Guides Queensland (Guides)</td>
<td>Guides is for ages 5-18. The Olave program is ages 18-30. Policy requires no more than 4 years difference between the oldest and youngest in each group.</td>
<td>Groups that fit the target age range e.g. 12-16; 14-18; 13-17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lions Clubs International Leo Clubs (Leos)</td>
<td>School based clubs (Alpha) are for ages 12-18. Community based clubs (Omega) are for ages 18-30.</td>
<td>Alpha clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td>12-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC)</td>
<td>Activities and programs are aimed at kids aged 2-12, teenagers aged 13-17 and young adults aged 18-25.</td>
<td>Youth Management Teams</td>
<td></td>
<td>12-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLS)</td>
<td>Nippers is for ages 5-13; Active Cadets is for ages 13-15; Active Juniors is for ages 15-18.</td>
<td>Active Cadets</td>
<td></td>
<td>13-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active Juniors</td>
<td></td>
<td>15-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Detail about programs sourced from membership materials available on each YDOP website (accessed 17 July 2007).

Table 4.10 shows that SLS, BB and Guides target both kids and young adults. These YDOPs provide age based groups through which young children can transition to young adulthood. In contrast, the ESC, Dukes and Leos provide age based groups through which adolescents can transition to young adulthood. Both Guides and Leos have an older upper age limit of 30 years for their young members. The programs offered by the PCYC are also different. While they have age eligibility criteria for groups, they also offer a range of drop in activities, sports related and youth programs targeted at different ages.

After completing the scoping exercise outlined above, the target age range for participation as subjects in the Study Two questionnaire and interviews was
set at young people aged 12-18 years. Kids aged 11 years or younger were excluded from this study. Young adults aged 19 or older were excluded from the questionnaire. A small group of young adults did, however, participate as researchers and in the young leader interviews.

Choosing the 12-18 year age range to predominantly define eligibility did restrict participation. This did not impact on the questionnaire field work with programs that fit the chosen age range but it did impact on our work with programs which had a broader age range of participants. Despite the clearly stated eligibility in the consent and information pack, in these programs we had to address the disappointment of kids (under 12 years) and young adults (19+ years) who wanted to participate but found they could not. Most of these individuals who were turned away had completed parental and/or individual consent forms (Appendix-6). Unfortunately, three of these young people (two aged 11 and one aged 19) slipped through the consent checks and participated in the questionnaire. Their data has had to be excluded from the analysis presented in this thesis.

4.6.1.2. Regional parameters

Under the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (ABS, 2007), used from 1984-2011, Queensland had 14 statistical divisions (Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, West Moreton, Wide Bay Burnett, Darling Downs, South West, Fitzroy, Central West, Mackay, Northern, Far North, North West and Off-Shore Areas and Migratory) (AIHW, 2004). Initially the data collection focused on the four statistical divisions of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and West Moreton in the South East Queensland region. The location of program groups outside of South East Queensland who expressed an interest in participating led to
the inclusion of the Wide Bay Burnett and Darling Downs statistical divisions. Expanding the data collection zone increased the likelihood of reaching an acceptable sample size.

It also meant a broader range of geographically diverse program groups and young people could participate. The decision to limit data collection to these six statistical divisions was based on the practical issue of negotiating the distances involved in travelling to regional and rural locations. Including the Wide Bay Burnett and Darling Downs statistical regions stretched the capacity of the team because travelling time by car was over 2 hours. Graham, Phelps, et al. (2014, p. 47) also found that travel time considerations shaped their sampling decisions. Population data available at the time revealed an estimated three quarters (78.5% at 30 June 2008) of young people in Queensland aged between 15-24 years lived in these statistical divisions (OESR, 2009).

4.6.1.3. Program group location parameters

The program group location parameters were set using the YDOP’s young member postcode data collected in the mini-study described previously. The analysis process involved two steps. First the postcode data was converted to statistical local government area (LGA) using the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing concordance guidelines. These LGAs were then classified using the ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Advantage and Disadvantage (ABS, 2006a, 2006b) into disadvantaged, middle-advantaged and advantaged communities. Using a modified cluster stratified sampling approach the target sample was to include at least six
program groups from each participating YDOP located across the three community advantage levels.

This approach had two key challenges. First, as previously described, many of the participating organisations found it difficult to provide membership data. For the PCYC, 14 program groups failed to provide any membership data. Six of these were located within the sampling region. In these cases the LGA was extrapolated from the physical location of the program group. Second, the SLS clubs were usually located along the coast. These clubs, however, also draw young members from inner, non-coastal regions. Despite these challenges, for the purposes of identifying clusters, this method did provide an approximation of location to inform the overall program group sampling process. There were also unanticipated opportunities to involve young people living within the regional sampling parameters who attended two SLS and one ESC program camp.

Overall, as detailed in Table 4.11, fifteen statistical local area clusters representing five *disadvantaged*, five *middle-advantaged* and five *advantaged* communities across the six statistical regions outlined above were deliberately sampled during phase one (September-December 2008) and phase two (March-July 2009) of the questionnaire data collection. Each participating YDOP was asked to nominate suitable program groups located in, or neighbouring, the nominated clusters.
Table 4.11. LGA sampling cluster groups, postcode, community advantage ranking and statistical division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Postcodes</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Statistical division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Inala, Richlands, Durack, Wacol</td>
<td>4076, 4077</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Brisbane (south)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Beenleigh, Eagleby</td>
<td>4207</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Brisbane (outer south)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deception Bay, Morayfield and Bribie Island</td>
<td>4507, 4506, 4508</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Brisbane (outer north)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Warwick and Stanthorpe</td>
<td>4370, 4380</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Darling Downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bundaberg, Harvey Bay, Maryborough</td>
<td>4650, 4655, 4670</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Wide Bay-Burnett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wynnum, Manly West, Capalaba, Alexandra Hills, Cleveland, Redland</td>
<td>4157, 4159, 4161, 4164, 4165</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Brisbane (south east)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strathpine, Lawnton, Kallangur</td>
<td>4500, 4501, 4503</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Brisbane (north)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alderley, Stafford, Mitchelton, Keperra</td>
<td>4051, 4053, 4054</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Brisbane (north-west)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nerang, Mermaid Waters, Merrimac, Burleigh Waters</td>
<td>4211, 4218</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Moreton Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Toowoomba</td>
<td>4350</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Darling Downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Brisbane City, Spring Hill, Newstead, Ascot, Hamilton, Hendra, Clayfield</td>
<td>4000, 4006, 4007, 4011</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Brisbane (inner city)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hawthorne, Morningside, Holland Park, Wishart, Coorparoo, Carindale, Calamvale</td>
<td>4170, 4171, 4121, 4122, 4151, 4152, 4116</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Brisbane (south)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Albany Creek, Enoggera, Alderley, Everton Hills, Ferny Hills, Ashgrove</td>
<td>4035, 4051, 4053, 4055, 4060</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Brisbane (north)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Indooroopilly, Chapel Hill</td>
<td>4068, 4069</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Brisbane (west)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Main Beach, Broadwater Lobina, Surfers Paradise,</td>
<td>4217, 4226</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Moreton Bay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.2. Questionnaire recruitment approach: Working with adults to support and facilitate youth participation

The success of the subject recruitment process relied on the active support of each participating YDOP at the central office and local program level.\textsuperscript{14} The Research Coordinators, Rod (BB), Brenda (SLS), Anne (Dukes), Louise (ESC), Chris (PCYC), Sue (Guides) and John (Lions), were asked to identify appropriate program groups to take part in the research, and to gain consent from program leaders to release their contact details. Written consent from school principals was also required before any arrangements could be discussed with school based Leos and Dukes groups. Once consent was provided, I worked with each program leader to organise the questionnaire site visit. Discussions focused on the purpose of the research project, requirements for the site visit and the ethical recruitment of young people as subjects. Once arrangements for the site visit had been finalised, I sent the agreed number of information and consent kits to the program leader and a written outline of the agreed arrangements to each stakeholder (Appendix-6). This negotiation process was time consuming and for a number of groups it took months from first contact to the actual site visit. Originally the aim had been to complete the questionnaire data collection in the four month period September-December 2008. This proved to be impossible for some YDOPs and the data collection had to continue into the first six months of 2009.

Throughout this process, program leaders played an essential role, distributing information and consent packs to young people and their parents and collecting signed consent forms (Appendix-6). My preferred distribution method had been through direct mail-out to young people and their parents. The YDOPs

\textsuperscript{14} Due to ethical concerns about the protection of individual privacy it is not possible to disclose the names of the wider group of significant adults, young people or program groups who supported the YDRP.
advised, however, that it was not possible for me to access their mailing lists because this would breach member confidentiality and they did not have additional staffing resources available to take responsibility for a mail-out.

The program leader distribution method did, however, have a number of strengths. First, it meant the invitation to take part came personally from each program group leader. This was important because trust in the research can also affect willingness to participate (Boeije, 2010, p. 54; Cox & Cox, 2008, p. 24; Ford, Rasmus, & Allen, 2012). Second, it meant leaders were more likely to be actively engaged in ensuring the success of the site visit and third, it reduced the workload of the YDRP team.

There were, however, two main limitations associated with this reliance on program leaders to publicise the research. First, there was no researcher control over the distribution of the information and consent pack. This meant potential participant numbers, calculated by the number of packs requested, may have been overinflated. Second, the success of the YDRP relied heavily on the efforts leaders made to support participation. While our field work experience showed that some leaders failed to effectively distribute the information and consent packs, others did distribute them effectively. Some personally contacted parents, answering questions and encouraging them to read the information sheet and return signed consent forms. When leaders actively supported the YDRP the participation rate was higher. The frustrations of the experience when program leaders did not actively engage, despite voluntarily consenting to help, were described by Karen (personal communication, November 24, 2008) as disappointing because:

[there was] a lack of courtesy from some programs leaders who failed to properly read the information supplied to them regarding the distribution
of consent forms. This resulted in some participants only having one consent form. When this was brought to the attention of the group leaders some responded with an attitude that made me feel like we were a nuisance.

This “lack of courtesy” and a failure to distribute consent forms resulted in a number of incident forms being issued. On one occasion, for example, four of us were expecting to work with about 68 youth on a program site which required one day of travel to get to and an overnight stay. Since consent forms had not been distributed we were only able to work with 6 young people, who had parents present or were aged 18. This was a frustrating experience because this site visit could have been managed by two team members. On another occasion, young people were not able to participate because consent forms had not been distributed.

Although young people were the main focus of the participation strategy, we also considered the information needs of significant adults. Anecdotal feedback, particularly from program leaders in disadvantaged communities, suggests more active and targeted support strategies, combined with extrinsic incentive measures, would have increased youth participation. This anecdotal evidence suggests by relying solely on intrinsic incentives (appealing to their altruistic connection and commitment to their YDOP and research) the best participation results were not achieved. More recently, Shaw, Cross, Thomas and Zubrick (2014) also found this to be the case and argue for the use of stepped active and passive consent processes.

These types of issues, Billett (2012, p. 45; also Dockett & Perry, 2011, pp. 242-243) notes, are often neglected by researchers due to the resource, time, ethical and practical constraints of conducting social research. Yet by neglecting
them, researchers end up excluding people from their research. Given the role
significant adults often play in facilitating child and young adult participation in
research, any future projects would benefit from a more targeted, active and
detailed significant adult participation strategy. This would add new ethical and
resource challenges to be carefully and systematically considered.

4.6.3. Questionnaire sampling, recruitment and validity

Table 4.12 shows an estimated 8,210 eligible young members aged 12 to 18
lived in the sampling statistical divisions. Of these, 440 completed a questionnaire
and 426 questionnaires were assessed as valid. Young people providing valid
questionnaires represented 5.2% of the defined YDOP population.

Table 4.12. YDOP 12-18 year old population and sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program group</th>
<th>YDOP population (n)</th>
<th>Questionnaire sample</th>
<th>Proportion of YDOP population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collected (n)</td>
<td>Excluded (n) (%)</td>
<td>Valid (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dukes</td>
<td>2166</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lions</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCYC</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLS</td>
<td>4004</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8210</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The YDOP population data estimates the total 12-18 year old membership population in 2007 in specific programs or program levels across six Statistical Divisions (Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, West Moreton, Wide Bay Burnett and Darling Downs). This data estimates young members in the seven participating YDOPs. The 14 exclusions are: 1 subject (0.2% of sample) who ‘never’ answered the questions honestly; 7 subjects (1.6% of sample) who only ‘some of the time’ answered the questions honestly; 3 subjects (0.7% of sample) who answered questions in a logically inconsistent way; 3 subjects who were outside the eligible age range.

Overall, 14 youth were excluded from the final sample based on their self-reported decision to not answer the questions honestly, patterns of logically inconsistent answers and age ineligibility (Table 4.12). These exclusions were
evenly distributed (range 2-3 exclusions) across the program groups, except for SLS where there were no exclusions. Table 4.12 shows these exclusions had the most impact on the Guides and BB samples.

Table 4.13 shows young people participated in questionnaires across 51 program site locations. Of these program site locations, 48 (94.1%) were single program groups and three (5.9%) were camps involving a mix of different program groups from a range of locations. This table also shows that the number of site visits for each YDOP ranged from two for ESC to ten for Guides. The majority of single program groups were located in middle-advantaged communities (49.0%), followed by groups located in disadvantaged (23.5%) and advantaged (21.6%) communities.

Table 4.13. Contextual characteristics: Program group sample base location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YDOP</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D (n)</td>
<td>M (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leos</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCYC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n(%))</td>
<td>12 (23.5)</td>
<td>25 (49.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. This table does not include two program groups (One group had zero youth participation due to parent consent not being sought by program leader. One group was excluded due to program leader opinion leading to biased responses. Both of these groups were from disadvantaged communities). a. The groups in this category were attending program camps. It is therefore not possible to determine their base location.
While the location of a program group will not always correspond to a young member’s residential suburb there was a similar pattern of community advantage distribution. Table 4.14 shows young people who participated in the questionnaire predominantly lived in *middle-advantaged* communities (50.2%) followed by *disadvantaged* (29.6%) and *advantaged* (20.2%) communities.

4.6.4. Interview sampling and recruitment approach

Convenience (Cohen et al. 2007, pp. 113-114) and quota sampling (Cooksey, 2007, p. 187) approaches were used to facilitate the participation of thirty eight young members aged 12 to 30 in an interview. In this section, I first discuss the convenience sampling and recruitment approach used for the pilot interviews conducted with young leaders (n=9) aged 19 to 30 years. For these interviews, the age range was extended to be inclusive of the young people aged 19 to 30 years participating in the Guides Olave program and Leos Community Clubs. This will then be followed by a discussion of the quota sampling and recruitment approach used for the interviews conducted with young members (n=29) aged 12 to 18 years.
4.6.1. Young leaders

A convenience sampling and recruitment process (Cohen et al. 2007, pp. 113-114) was used to recruit young leaders aged 19 to 25 to participate in an interview. A total of nine interviews were conducted. Only two sampling criteria were used. Each volunteer interviewee had to be aged between 19-30 years and active in their YDOP. Each YDOP was asked to identify young leaders who may be interested in taking part in an interview and to seek consent for us to contact them. Once consent had been verified an information and consent pack was sent and, following verified receipt, Karen, Zoe, Jonathan or I negotiated the interview arrangements. These interviews enabled each team member to practice their interview skills and to meet their study requirements. They also enabled us to test the interview schedule and to gain valuable insights about young leaders. A thematic analysis of the interview data is presented in Chapter 7.

4.6.2. Young members

The interview sampling and recruitment approach for youth aged 12-18 years involved a two stage recruitment process. Program leaders did not play a role in facilitating youth participation in an interview. The first stage of recruitment took part during the questionnaire site visit. Here, all young members were given a green coloured EOI form with the questionnaire materials (Appendix-6). They were asked to complete this form if they were interested in having information about taking part in an interview posted to them and, if they were under 18 years of age, to their parent.

As shown in Table 4.15, a total of 117 EOI (representing 26.6% of the questionnaire sample) were received. For the program sample these ranged from a
minimum of 10 from ESC young members to a maximum of 20 from PCYC, Leos, BB and Guides young members. More females (58.1%) than males (41.9%) expressed an interest in taking part in an interview. The distribution of young members in this sample across communities was highest in middle-advantaged communities (57.3%), followed by disadvantaged (39.7%) and advantaged (19.7%) communities. Once EOI forms had been received, the second stage involved using quota sampling (Cooksey, 2007, p. 187) to select a sample of young people.

The sampling frame was stratified across program group, sex and residential location, allocating six interviews with young members from each YDOP. For mixed sex programs (ESC, Dukes, Leos, PCYC, SLS) this equated to three interviews with female and three with male members. Using residential location the sampling frame allocated 14 interviews to advantaged, middle-advantaged and disadvantaged communities.

Table 4.15. Contextual characteristics of youth expressing an interest in participating in an interview (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YDOP</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCYC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leos</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dukes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D = disadvantaged community. M = middle-advantaged community. A = advantaged community

The total target sample was 42 interviews with youth aged 12-18. An information and consent pack was sent to 55 potential young participants chosen
from this sample. For youth aged under 18, an information and consent pack was also sent to the nominated parent. Initially an opt-in approach was used which was not successful. This left the initial contact, after receiving information, up to the parent and young person. Unfortunately, this approach was used to target youth living in a specific disadvantaged community. Since we were unable to then recontact these young people and their parents this had a detrimental impact on the sample of young people from disadvantaged communities participating in the interviews.

Following this failed method we adopted an opt-out approach. This approach involved contacting the participants one week following the distribution of these packs. If the potential participant was not aged 18, we would first call their parent. If permission was given to discuss the interview with their child we would then seek to talk to the young person. Once both a parent and young person agreed that an interview could occur, the arrangements were negotiated. If the young person was aged 18 years, parental approval was not needed and we called them direct to seek an interview.

4.6.3. Interview sampling and recruitment results

As shown in Table 4.15, EOI were received from 26.6% (n=117) of the questionnaire sample. Of these young people who submitted an EOI form, 55 (47.0%) were contacted by letter. As shown in Table 4.16, of those young people approached by a letter, 29 (52.7%) proceeded to an interview. For the program sampling there was mixed success from a minimum of two interviews with Dukes members to a maximum of five with SLS, BB and Guides members.
Table 4.16. Contextual characteristics of youth participating in an interview (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YDOP</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCYC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leos</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dukes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D = disadvantaged community. M = middle-advantaged community. A = advantaged community.

The majority of interviewees came from middle-advantaged communities (62.1%), followed by advantaged (27.6%), and disadvantaged (10.3%). This data reveals the interview participation rate of youth from disadvantaged communities was significantly lower than the EOI rate shown in Table 4.15. Table 4.16 also shows more females (58.6%) than males (41.4%) participated in an interview. This distribution closely reflected the proportion of young people who completed an EOI form (Table 4.15).

A higher level of youth and parents actively or passively declined to participate in the interviews than had been anticipated. Passive dissent included disconnected telephone numbers, non-return of phone calls, unanswered phone calls and the passing of consent or dissent decisions between male and female parents and their children. Once it was clear there was no real interest, we ceased the interview recruitment process. Active dissent included parent and young people declining to participate because a suitable time could not be negotiated, young people withdrawing their interest and parents stating they did not want their child to participate.
While we did not have the opportunity to talk to youth who wanted to participate but whose parent did not want them to, we did have the opportunity to talk with frustrated parents whose child no longer wanted to participate. When this occurred, we stressed the voluntary nature of participation and reiterated it was ok for their child to say no.

4.6.5. Using incentives: Encouraging and supporting participation

The strategy to motivate young people to participate as research subjects was more detailed than the strategy developed to encourage significant adults to participate. A mix of intrinsic and extrinsic ethical incentives was used to motivate and support participation. Appealing to young people’s altruistic commitment to their program and interest in the subject was a key feature of this strategy. A range of ethical extrinsic incentives were, however, also used to motivate, support and recognise participation (Seymour, 2012b).

The ethical incentives adopted to support the questionnaire included a gift voucher prize draw, a certificate of appreciation, a small gift of temporary tattoos or stickers, participation points for their YDOP award scheme, saying thank you in person and including thank you messages and motivational statements throughout the questionnaire. Enhancing motivation to complete the questionnaire with the use of design incentives and changes to some of the questionnaire wording and structure was extensively discussed with key stakeholders. These incentives were funded through the university, government and community research partnership described in Chapter 1.

When developing the suite of extrinsic incentives, a variety of ethical issues centring on the health, safety and well-being of participants were discussed. The
issues discussed included appropriately recognising time spent participating, not using unhealthy or allergy-likely food as an incentive, and being conscious that incentives needed to be age relevant (Seymour, 2012b). Karen, Zoe and Jonathan also helped to ensure the incentives offered were appealing to different age groups. For example, the thank you gifts of stickers which I had originally chosen were replaced with a wider range of stickers and a new range of temporary tattoos.

For participation in an interview, young people were offered a thank you gift of a $20 gift voucher. At the point of first contact (during the questionnaire) young people were only informed they would receive a small gift to thank them for their time. Keeping the nature of the gift a secret during the first phase of recruitment until disclosing the details in the consent phase was influenced by concerns raised by the Griffith University HREC. These concerns revolved around the potential coercive effect of the $20 gift voucher on kids and the potential negative impact of high numbers of young people completing EOI forms and not being offered an interview. By keeping the nature of the gift a secret we hoped to increase the intrinsic incentive effect of having the opportunity to tell their story and reduce the extrinsic incentive effect of the gift. When discussing which gift voucher they wanted, a number of young people expressed sentiments, such as “that’s not the reason I did this”. These responses and the high level of active and passive dissent may suggest the intrinsic incentives were more important than the $20 gift voucher in determining participation.

4.6.6. Using a formal consent process

To seek the involvement of young people as subjects, we used targeted information and consent packs. These packs supported a formal consent process
requiring young people and significant adults to sign a consent form. Access to all young people, including young adults, was negotiated through significant adults. Written parental consent was required for each young person under 18. Similarly, either written or verbal consent was required to participate in an interview. Where the data collection was to take place in a school, both the school principal and the involved teacher were required to sign a consent form (Appendix-6).

Strategies were adopted to help youth exercise their right to choose to participate or not. This involved emphasising the voluntary nature of participation in the consent and information packs. Young members were informed they could withdraw at any stage from the research without penalty and this right was emphasised to program leaders. We discussed optional activities for youth not participating, including those who were not eligible to take part, and asked leaders if they were aware of any barriers that may affect the capacity of young people or parents to understand the information. According to Luthar and Becker (2002) adopting active support methods to mediate the impact of low levels of literacy is an important feature of inclusive research. Where issues for participants in the YDRP were identified, we provided one-on-one support.

Detailed data was not collected on young people’s dissent. Maguire (2005) notes this is an area scholars have not paid enough attention to. She writes:

*I am not aware of any studies of groups of children that report on children’s dissent in the research activity and how if it does occur it gets dealt with.*

*Sheer peer pressure may prevent children from feeling they can actually resist a researcher’s agenda and say, ‘NO, I don’t want to’ (n.p.)*

It is possible some young people felt pressured to take part in the questionnaire. This is perhaps supported by Jonathan’s (personal communication,
November 19, 2008) reflection. He felt sometimes there was a level of “scorn/negativity from participants (even though it’s voluntary they sometimes make out like it’s a huge chore).” The young people, discussed in section 4.6.3, who chose not to complete their questionnaire accurately or honestly may have chosen this as their method of protest. It is less likely young people felt pressured to take part in the interview because participation was largely driven by young people and it did not take place in a peer group environment. It is also possible that some youth who wanted to take part in the questionnaire or the interviews could not because their parent did not want them to.

Future research projects would benefit from understanding more about participant decision making in research (Mapstone, Elbourne, & Roberts, 2007). There is a need to more actively seek out and document young people’s opinion about why they do or do not choose to take part in research and what it feels like for them. Given the role significant adults often play as gatekeepers a better understanding from their perspective may also help to improve future youth research. On this issue Gallagher (2009) provides an argument that contextualising research within the intergenerational relations that surround each child may be a possible solution. He explains:

...there is something of a blind spot, both in literature and in practice, about the role of adults in research with children. It is easy to see how this has come about: children have traditionally been marginalized in social research, and much current and recent activity is a response to that. However, it does not seem that marginalizing the adults is an effective solution to the problem (p. 60).
Contextualising research within intergenerational relationships which may impact on participation will bring new insights. These insights will help researchers gain a better understanding about the decision making process from a range of viewpoints and help improve child and youth research outcomes (Bower et al. 2009; Head, 2009; Kassam-Adams & Newman, 2002; Storms & Loosveldt, 2004).

4.6.7. Protecting privacy: Anonymity and confidentiality

As the questionnaire and the interview explored sensitive topics, design and field work strategies were used to protect privacy, encourage honesty in answering the questions and increase research validity. All information and consent packs included a commitment to protect confidentiality of personal information. Zoe, Karen and Jonathan received training in the ethics of conducting research and were familiar with the Griffith University human research ethical guidelines, the YDRP professional guidelines and how these two documents related to the field work. This process ensured all team members knew how to protect participant privacy and confidentiality.

Before starting the questionnaire young people were reminded the questionnaire was confidential and no other person would know what they answered unless they chose. This message was provided during the verbal introduction, in the questionnaire instruction sheet and also on the first page of the questionnaire. As discussed previously, testing of the questionnaire revealed how important it was that young people were reassured about the questionnaire anonymity. We also reminded young people not to write their name on their
questionnaire. A blank white self-sealing envelope was provided for each completed questionnaire.

Young people were encouraged, and in some cases asked, to spread out to increase their privacy. As Zoe (2008, reflections, 21 November) said after one site visit “The church had plenty of room for the boys to spread out, which allowed them to complete the questionnaire without distraction”. In two program groups facilitated by Karen and myself, young people chose to engage in discussion about the meaning of questions and their answers with their peers. This was monitored and on close analysis of the interactions and the questionnaires from these groups we did not feel that the honesty of answers was compromised. In contrast, one entire program group (facilitated by me) was discounted from the research due to concerns their answers were influenced by their program leader.

The personal stories young people shared in their interviews were not linked with the information provided in their questionnaire. Given the sensitive nature of some of the interview questions, no identifiable links were made between the interview, the transcript and the young person. In recognition that it could be possible to recognise someone by their voice, the audio files were destroyed after transcripts were verified as accurate. Professional notes regarding the conduct and timing of each interview ensured a record of the interview process was retained.

Each interview was conducted one-on-one in a neutral, community based location negotiated with each young person and their parent. The interview sites ranged from library study rooms to community halls and church meeting rooms. Negotiating the interview space with each young person helped ensure they would feel comfortable in the interview space. Other significant adults or young people...
were not allowed to be present during the interviews. No other names were linked to the interviews and if the young person accidentally mentioned another person’s name this detail was deleted from the transcript. Close attention has been paid to the data used and reported in Chapter 7 to reduce the likelihood an interviewee will be identified.

4.6.8. Taking care of emotional health

Young people participating in the questionnaire also received a blue information sheet providing completion instructions on one side and a list of emotional health services on the other. These two kinds of sensitive and non-sensitive information were combined onto one A4 page to reduce any embarrassment associated with taking it away. The support page was titled Need to talk to someone ASAP? and provided important information for youth in the event the questionnaire triggered an emotional response (Appendix-6).

4.7. Processing, analysing and disseminating research

In 2009, I commenced working with Ashleigh, Karen and Zoe to process 440 questionnaires into SPSS. Each questionnaire comprised up to 400 variables with the total number to be processed dependant on how many questions were answered. To support this work I developed a guide explaining the data interrogation and entry process and we used a Questionnaire Log to record any interpretations made, problems or questions (Appendix-8).

Consent was sought from young people and their parents for the data to be used beyond my PhD thesis. This means the data can be further explored in the future. The process of analysing, discussing and disseminating the research outcomes with each YDOP, their program leaders and young members has not
been as extensive or regular as originally planned. A challenge which rapidly became clear was the need to negotiate between the competing demands of managing a large research project, producing a scholarly doctoral thesis and meeting the information needs of a largely practitioner and industry audience. Rosen-Reynoso et al. (2010, p. 182) also describe a similar tension they experienced between the non-scholarly service component and the academic research imperative of their Opening Doors project. The opportunity to work more closely with each YDOP to analyse the data collected and to co-author publications has been discussed but not yet actioned.

At the commencement of the project, Impact agreed to host a number of pages on their website to profile the YDRP. Since Impact lost funding in 2012, as a result of a general round of budget saving measures and different priorities introduced by the newly elected Queensland Government, these pages are no longer available. A number of information bulletins were produced for the participating youth organisations to distribute within their organisation. These information bulletins focused on providing information about each research stage. Once the data collection phase started in full it was difficult to find the time to continue to produce these, and instead emails, individual face-to-face meetings and formal presentations at group meetings were used as the main method for disseminating and discussing information about the project, the methodology and outcomes. BB members who helped to develop the final questionnaire received a personal letter informing them how their feedback was used.

To date I have delivered a number of papers about the YDRP at state, national and international conferences. The majority have been delivered at
scholarly conferences; however, two papers were delivered to a mixed practitioner, scholar and youth audience and two were delivered to non-government audiences.

With significant practical support from my industry supervisor, Paul and Impact, the framework of good practice principles for youth development organisations was first released in 2011 as an electronic publication (Seymour, 2011). In 2012 an updated second edition was released, again with significant practical support from Paul, in both electronic and hard copy versions (Seymour, 2012a). This was publicised and distributed as widely as possible using the participating YDOP networks and a national distribution list produced in consultation with Paul, QYA and the Research Coordinators. The main audience for this publication has been scholars, practitioners and policy makers. While this includes young people who are working as program leaders, it is acknowledged that the format and content is unlikely to appeal to young members.

Each participating YDOP, Jonathan, Karen, Zoe and Paul have read and have had the opportunity to comment on pieces of my writing to ensure their stories are accurately represented. The defunding of Impact has and will continue to impact negatively on the capacity to release and widely distribute research outcomes.

To date these methods of discussing, analysing, and disseminating the results have mostly met the information needs of a scholarly and practitioner audience. Producing information suitable for young people adds another layer of complexity which has yet to be fully addressed. I have discussed options for packaging and distributing key results with a number of the YDOPs. The ideal process would be to involve young people in this decision making process. It is, however, unlikely that YDRP participants will be involved because many will have moved on.
4.8. Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the youth-inclusive research approach I adopted for the YDRP and the complex ethical, methodological and practical challenges of doing youth centred research. I explored the practical application of adult-led and intergenerational models of working with young people across five different collaborative research projects. Each of these projects contributed to the Study One research exploring program characteristics, which resulted in the development of a new good practice framework, and the Study Two research on young member characteristics, which resulted in the collection of young people’s life-skill and program experience stories through questionnaires and interviews.

These five examples of adult-led and intergenerational models of older and younger people working together illustrate the complexities of government, community and university collaborative research partnerships. Many contextual and practical factors influence the development, scope, implementation, failures and successes of research. This chapter demonstrates how some of these factors shaped the YDRP. In particular, I have shown the commitment of the YDOPs sustained over a long period of time, their willingness to support access to diverse people, networks and resources and the practical outcomes resulting from the partnership which are already having an impact.

In discussing Study One, I have shown how the collaborative PAR project evolved in a way that was highly organic. It delivered actual outcomes vastly different to the anticipated outcomes with which the research process for Study One originally started. Numerous ongoing, sometimes passionate, sometimes confusing and often exhausting conversations about the evolving framework contributed to the development of a better understanding about strength-based
program practice. The commitment of each person to share their experiences and knowledge by taking part in this exploratory journey led to the development of the new good practice framework (Seymour, 2012a) discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

In discussing Study Two, I provide evidence that youth-inclusive, intergenerational participatory research can bring significant benefits. The research described in this chapter reveals the importance of using a mix of measures for both young and older people to motivate, support and recognise their participation as researchers, subjects and supporters. Engaging youth in research will be more successful if a targeted range of information and incentives are developed for young people and the significant adults who surround them.

The work presented in this chapter demonstrates that working with young people as co-researchers requires careful planning. While resource intensive, I have argued the intergenerational method of working with young people as co-researchers described in this chapter resulted in two beneficial outcomes. First, the collaborative team structure actively worked to empower each member to be active participants. The project was owned by the team, evidenced by commitment, energy and enthusiasm (Karen, personal communication, November 24, 2008; Jonathan, personal communication, November 19, 2008; Zoe, personal communication, November 19, 2008). Each team member influenced the direction of the YDRP and provided different perspectives and ideas. This resulted in a more meaningful research project with tailored methods and tools. Second, the training, professional protocol and team meetings provided support and helped each team member build skills and knowledge. This meant each team member was able to confidently problem solve, manage site visits, professionally represent the team, collect high quality data, work within the agreed protocols and remain safe.
Overall, the research experience documented in this chapter and the experience of other researchers discussed in Chapter 3, show the effectiveness of a methodology or outcomes is not determined by the extent of youth engagement which will differ from project to project. In some projects the emphasis is on how to most effectively engage with young people as subjects so they experience the research process positively. In others, like the YDRP, there is a broader emphasis on how to best use diverse methods to actively and positively engage with youth as subjects and as researchers in partnership with older people.

In the following three chapters, I present a selection of results from the research conducted in the two studies I outlined in this chapter. In Chapter 5, I explore youth perspectives on a range of contextual, structural involvement and life-skill outcome characteristics in the program and individual domains. This work suggests young members are similar to the general population on a range of indicators, have breadth in their activity involvement and high levels of life-skills. In Chapter 6, I summarise the new good practice strength-based approach to youth program practice. This framework describes six principles and 36 indicators. I reference some of the 288 examples of action which illustrate the core characteristics of community youth development programs and their practical application in the program environment. Finally, in Chapter 7, I present a case study of the first principle, Learning and Development, as an illustration of the program level complexity of issues. I illustrate the complex synergistic and bidirectional theoretical, contextual, structural, operational and outcome characteristics of community youth development programs.
Chapter 5. Youth characteristics

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the youth inclusive research approach adopted for the Queensland Youth Development Research Project (YDRP). I discussed how I worked with a diverse group of young and older people in adult-led and intergenerational youth-inclusive research to ensure this work was ethical, professional, youth-inclusive and methodologically rigorous. I demonstrated the challenges, such as negotiating diverse viewpoints and commitment levels, and benefits, such as supported access to diverse people, networks and resources, which can result from university-community research partnerships. This work showed how many contextual and practical factors influence the development, scope, implementation, failures and successes of research. I outlined the methodology adopted for Study One, resulting in the documenting of program characteristics in a new good practice framework, and Study Two, resulting in young people sharing their program and life experiences through interviews and questionnaires.

This Chapter is the first of three results chapters. In this chapter, I present a summary of quantitative results from Study Two on the characteristics of youth who participate in Queensland-based community programs. This work explores the three socio-demographic, structural involvement and life-skill outcome dimensions of young member characteristics across the program and individual domains and addresses my second core research question: What are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs? The second core research question on the
characteristics of community youth development programs is explored in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, I explore the complex intersection between the program theoretical, operational, structural, contextual, and outcome characteristics explored in this chapter and in Chapter 6. This work addresses the lack of research involving Australian community youth development organisations and programs (YDOPs) and their young members.

Youth perspectives are drawn from young members in seven Queensland-based community programs: The Boys’ Brigade (BB); The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award (Dukes); The Emergency Services Cadets Program (ESC); Girl Guides Queensland (Guides); Lions Clubs International Leo Clubs (Leos); The Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) and Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLS). The research presented in this chapter focuses on the YDOP population of young members aged 12 to 18 from these seven programs, the YDRP sample aged 12 to 18, and two sub-samples of 12 to 13 year olds from the YDRP and the Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey (AHWS). The two sub-samples enable a comparative analysis between a sample of young members and a sample of more representative youth. As discussed in Chapter 4, young people aged 12 to 13 provide the only comparison point across the AHWS and the YDRP samples.

In this chapter, I present the key findings on these young member characteristics within and between the YDOP population, the YDRP sample and the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples in three parts:

In section 5.2, I explore the socio-demographic dimension of young member characteristics. The socio-demographic indicators used indicate that a diversity of young people with a similar cultural diversity profile to the Australian and
Queensland population take part in community programs. This analysis does, however, also show there is a lower participation of youth who live in disadvantaged and advantaged communities, younger males, older youth, especially older females, and females with a disability.

In section 5.3, I examine activity portfolios to illustrate the *structural involvement dimension* of young member *characteristics*. The analysis presented in The structural involvement analysis reveals that the majority of young people in the YDRP and each of the two sub-samples are involved in a range of organised programs and activities. This analysis also reveals age, sex and community advantage can influence involvement. Section 5.2 and section 5.3 also describe the socio-demographic and structural involvement characteristics of the analytic sample and sub-samples to better contextualise the analysis presented in section 5.4.

In section 5.4, I explore the *life-skill* dimensions of young member characteristics across the program and individual domains exploring the socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex and community. This analysis shows that while the majority of young people credit their program with supporting their life-skill development, their program is more likely to have helped them learn how to work things out than to share their feelings and thoughts or learn to control their temper. This analysis also shows that 12 to 13 year old young members have a significantly higher level of volunteering and significantly better problem solving skills, temper control, and communication skills than their peers in the more representative AHWS sub-sample.
5.2. Socio-demographic characteristics

In this section, I use socio-demographic data to illustrate the contextual dimension of young member characteristics. The analysis presented here complements the research presented in section 5.3 on the structural activity involvement dimension and section 5.4 on the life-skill outcome dimension of young member characteristics. In section 5.2.1, I provide a brief summary of the YDOP population and the YDRP sample of young members across sex, age and community advantage. This section also summarises the socio-demographic characteristics for the YDRP sample collected through the questionnaire. Indigenous and language other than English (LOTE) background, education level and grades, religiosity, disability, and lone-parent family status are examined. In section 5.2.2, provides a comparative analysis of the two 12 to 13 old YDRP and AHWS sub-samples on seven socio-demographic categories: sex, age, cultural diversity, education, lone-parent household, religiosity and community advantage.

5.2.1. Young members: YDOP population and YDRP sample

In this section, the socio-demographic variables of sex, age and community advantage are used to illustrate the contextual dimension of young member characteristics across the 12 to 18 year old YDOP young member population from which the YDRP sample was drawn. Young people’s sex, age and community provide a comparative point between the YDOP population and the YDRP sample of young members. This section also presents a richer description of the contextual dimension of 12 to 18 year old young member characteristics in the YDRP sample using sex, age, Indigenous and LOTE background, education level and grades, residential community, religiosity and lone-parent family status.
Table 5.1. Contextual characteristics of 12-18 year olds in YDOP population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Female (%(n))</th>
<th>Male (%(n))</th>
<th>Difference (%)</th>
<th>Total (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>55.8 (286)</td>
<td>44.2 (227)</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>100.0 (513)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>60.4 (733)</td>
<td>39.6 (480)</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>100.0 (1213)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>56.1 (775)</td>
<td>43.9 (607)</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>100.0 (1382)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>52.2 (644)</td>
<td>47.8 (589)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>100.0 (1233)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>50.8 (611)</td>
<td>49.2 (592)</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.0 (1203)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>49.3 (527)</td>
<td>50.7 (541)</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>100.0 (1068)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>49.0 (398)</td>
<td>51.0 (415)</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>100.0 (813)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>57.5 (715)</td>
<td>42.5 (528)</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>100.0 (1243)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>52.0 (2455)</td>
<td>48.0 (2263)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0 (4718)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>54.9 (805)</td>
<td>45.1 (660)</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>100.0 (1465)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53.5 (3975)</td>
<td>46.5 (3451)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>100.0 (7426)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This data represents an estimation of 2007 membership aged 12-18 in specific programs or levels. It does not represent the total QLD population of young members (see Chapter 4). D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community.

Table 5.1 shows a higher proportion of 12 to 18 year old females (53.5%) than males (46.5%) take part in community programs. Table 5.2 shows this pattern is replicated in the YDRP sample. The level of female participation in the YDRP sample is, however, slightly higher than in the YDOP population. Overall, Table 5.2 shows the youth membership population peaked at the age of 14 (18.6%) and then progressively fell. Similarly in the YDRP sample participation peaked for youth aged 14 (23.2%) and 15 (23.2%). Analysis of the YDOP program population age by sex reveals that both male and female participation peaked at age 14. As females age, however, their participation reduces at a significantly higher rate than for males ($x^2 (6, N = 7425) = 46.662, p = .000$). This participation pattern is partly replicated within the YDRP sample. Table 5.3 shows that female participation peaks at age 14 and male participation peaks at age 15, after which participation for both sexes decreases. Similarly to the YDOP, female participation decreases at a significantly higher rate than male participation ($x^2 (4, N = 426) = 10.768, p = .029$).
Table 5.2 shows the highest proportion of YDOP youth is drawn from middle-advantaged communities followed by advantaged and disadvantaged communities. Table 5.1 shows that a significantly higher proportion of females than males in the YDOP population live in these differently advantaged communities \( (x^2(2, N = 7426) = 13.389, p = .001) \). Similarly in the YDRP sample, Table 5.2 shows youth living in middle-advantaged communities had the highest participation rate, followed by youth living in disadvantaged and then advantaged communities.

Table 5.2. Contextual characteristics of 12-18 year olds in YDOP population and YDRP sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>YDOP (%(n))</th>
<th>YDRP (%(n))</th>
<th>Difference (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex^a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46.5 (3451)^a</td>
<td>43.0 (183)^b</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53.5 (3974)^a</td>
<td>57.0 (243)^b</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age^b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.9 (513)^a</td>
<td>7.5 (32)^b</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.3 (1213)^a</td>
<td>15.3 (65)^b</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.6 (1382)^a</td>
<td>23.2 (99)^b</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.6 (1233)^a</td>
<td>23.2 (99)^b</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.2 (1203)^a</td>
<td>18.1 (77)^b</td>
<td>-7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.4 (1068)^a</td>
<td>10.3 (44)^b</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10.9 (813)^a</td>
<td>2.3 (10)^b</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>16.7 (1243)^c</td>
<td>28.6 (122)^d</td>
<td>-11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>63.5 (4718)^c</td>
<td>49.3 (210)^d</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>19.7 (1465)^c</td>
<td>18.8 (412)^d</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0 (7426)</td>
<td>100.0 (426)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This data represents an estimation of 2007 membership aged 12-18 in specific programs or levels. It does not represent the total QLD population of young members (see Chapter 4). D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community.

a. Missing cases=1, 0.0%; b. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; c. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; d. Missing cases=14, 3.3%.

Similarly, Table 5.3 shows the YDRP sample has a significantly higher proportion of females living in disadvantaged communities and males living in middle-advantaged and advantaged communities \( (x^2(2, N = 412) = 4.836, p = .089) \).
Less than one tenth of young members in the YDRP sample identified as Indigenous Australian (3.9%), which is slightly higher than the proportion of Indigenous youth in the Queensland population (3.3%) (2006 Census, OESR, 2009). Similarly, less than one tenth of young members in the YDRP sample reported they were born in a LOTE country (4.8%) and just over one tenth reported their mother (10.2%) or father (10.7%) were born in a LOTE country (Table 5.3). This compares to the proportion of people in the Queensland population born overseas which is under one tenth (7.9%) (2006 Census, OESR, 2009).

Table 5.3 shows a small proportion (4.4%) of young members reported they had a disability which is lower than the proportion of Australian children with a disability (7.0%) (ABS, 2012). Of these young members, the majority are male (8.5%) rather than female (1.3%). This difference between the sexes is highly significant ($x^2(1, N = 409) = 12.475, p = .000$). This pattern reflects disability in the Australian population aged 0-14 years with a higher proportion of males (8.8%) compared to females (5.0%) with a disability (ABS, 2012).

Although the proportion of males is closely matched, the proportion of females is lower in the YDRP. While the ABS age range is not directly comparable to the YDRP, this data provides an indicative comparison. One important limitation of the YDRP data is that it is self-report data. During our field work, for example, we noted some young people, particularly girls, who needed one-on-one support to participate because of their disability did not want to identify as someone who has a disability.

The majority of female and male young members who took part in the YDRP attended secondary school and, as previously noted, were living in middle-
advantaged communities. Less than one quarter reported that they skipped school. A small proportion of young members no longer attended primary or secondary school (7.0%, n=30), demonstrating one way in which community programs extend young member peer networks beyond the school community (Quane & Rankin, 2006, p. 1243; Skattebol et al. 2012, p. 67). Almost all young members attending school reported achieving average or above average grades.

Table 5.3 shows close to half of all young members regularly attended religious services or activities in-school and/or out-of-school time. Significantly more males than females attended religious services or activities ($x^2(6, N = 425) = 74.525 p = .000$). This significant difference is explained by the church-based BB young members. When BB young members are removed from the analysis, the between sex difference is no longer significant. In contrast, only one third reported that religion or spirituality was highly important to them. Significantly more males than females reported religion or spirituality was highly important to them ($x^2(2, N = 422) = 5.789 p = .055$). Again, when BB young members are removed from the analysis, the between sex difference is no longer significant.

These levels of religious participation appear high, when compared to the Australian population. The 2010 General Social Survey (ABS, 2013) showed 22% of women and 15% of men aged over 18 actively participate in spiritual or religious activities. This is noteworthy when, as the ABS (2013) have observed, trends suggest youth are driving the increase rate in Australians reporting no religion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Female (%(n))</th>
<th>Male (%(n))</th>
<th>Diff. (%)</th>
<th>Total (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to 13</td>
<td>14.6 (62)</td>
<td>8.2 (35)</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>22.8 (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.0 (64)</td>
<td>8.2 (35)</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>23.2 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.7 (54)</td>
<td>10.6 (45)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>23.2 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.6 (41)</td>
<td>8.5 (36)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>18.1 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 to 18</td>
<td>5.2 (22)</td>
<td>7.5 (32)</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
<td>12.7 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATSI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in LOTE country</td>
<td>3.8 (9)</td>
<td>3.9 (7)</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>3.9 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English &amp; LOTE spoken at home</td>
<td>4.7 (11)</td>
<td>5.1 (9)</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>4.8 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOTE only spoken at home</td>
<td>7.2 (17)</td>
<td>5.1 (9)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>6.3 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother born in LOTE country</td>
<td>9.4 (22)</td>
<td>11.2 (20)</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
<td>10.2 (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father born in LOTE country</td>
<td>11.1 (26)</td>
<td>10.2 (18)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>10.7 (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 (3)</td>
<td>8.5 (15)</td>
<td>-7.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education/training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (year 6 to 7)</td>
<td>5.7 (14)</td>
<td>9.4 (17)</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
<td>7.4 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (year 8 to 12)</td>
<td>88.7 (212)</td>
<td>81.2 (164)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>85.5 (359)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher (university)</td>
<td>1.2 (3)</td>
<td>0.6 (1)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further (TAFE, apprenticeship, on-the-job)</td>
<td>3.3 (8)</td>
<td>7.1 (13)</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
<td>4.9 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grades</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average or above</td>
<td>98.2 (216)</td>
<td>95.7 (154)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>96.7 (370)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skipped school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.8 (42)</td>
<td>20.3 (32)</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.4 (74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lone-parent families</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.6 (33)</td>
<td>10.9 (20)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>33.5 (78)</td>
<td>24.6 (44)</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>29.6 (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-advantaged</td>
<td>49.8 (116)</td>
<td>52.5 (94)</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>51.0 (210)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantaged</td>
<td>16.7 (39)</td>
<td>22.9 (41)</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
<td>19.4 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion/Spirituality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly attend services or activities</td>
<td>42.6 (103)</td>
<td>54.6 (100)</td>
<td>-12.0</td>
<td>47.8 (203)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly attend services or activities</td>
<td>42.6 (103)</td>
<td>37.5 (48)</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>40.8 (151)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.0 (243)</td>
<td>43.0 (183)</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>100.0 (426)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; b. Missing cases=11, 2.6%; c. Missing cases=12, 2.8%; d. Missing cases=21, 4.9%; e. Missing cases=27, 6.3%; f. Missing cases=15, 3.5%; g. Missing cases=6, 1.4%; h. Missing cases=396, 93.4%; i. Missing cases=43, 10.1%; j. Missing cases=1, 0.2%; k. Missing cases=14, 3.3%; l. Includes all programs, missing cases=4, 0.9%; m. Excludes BB program, n=367, missing cases=4, 1.1%. 

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Table 5.3. Contextual characteristics of 12-18 year olds in YDRP sample

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5.2.3. Young people aged 12 to 13: YDRP and AHWS sub-samples

The characteristics of 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples can be compared on a selection of socio-demographic indicators. This section explores the socio-demographic characteristics of these two sub-samples across sex, age, Indigenous and LOTE background, education and grades, religiosity, lone-parent family status and residential community (Table 5.4). There are similarities and differences across the two sub-samples of 12 to 13 year olds.

The YDRP sub-sample has a higher proportion of females to males, compared to the AHWS which has a higher proportion of males to females. There is a higher proportion of youth aged 13 years in the YDRP sub-sample and a higher proportion of 12 year olds in the AHWS sub-sample. This difference is reflected in the level of education young people are undertaking, with a higher proportion of YDRP youth in secondary education and a higher proportion of AHWS youth in primary education. Analysis of scholastic achievement reveals almost all youth in each sub-sample do ok with their grades, achieving average or above grades. Youth in the AHWS, however, reported doing slightly better and fewer skipped school.

The YDRP sub-sample of 12 to 13 year olds had a slightly higher proportion of young people identifying as Indigenous Australian (3.2%) compared to the AHWS (2.9%). Both of these proportions are slightly lower than the proportion of youth in the Queensland population identifying as Indigenous (3.3%) (2006 Census, OESR, 2009). The level of young people with a LOTE background is higher across all five measures in the AHWS compared to the YDRP sub-sample. Both the AHWS and the YDRP sub-samples are lower than the proportion of the Queensland population reporting they speak a language other than English at home (7.8%) (2006 Census, OESR, 2009).
Table 5.4.  Contextual characteristics of 12-13 year olds in YDRP and AHWS sub-samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>YDRP (%(n))</th>
<th>AHWS (%(n))</th>
<th>Difference (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36.1 (35)</td>
<td>51.0 (451)</td>
<td>-14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63.9 (62)</td>
<td>49.0 (434)</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.0 (32)</td>
<td>92.7 (820)</td>
<td>-59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>67.0 (65)</td>
<td>7.3 (65)</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATSI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in a LOTE speaking country</td>
<td>2.2 (2)</td>
<td>4.2 (37)</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English &amp; LOTE spoken at home</td>
<td>3.2 (3)</td>
<td>6.3 (56)</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOTE only spoken at home</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>0.8 (7)</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother born in LOTE country</td>
<td>5.2 (5)</td>
<td>11.9 (105)</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father born in LOTE country</td>
<td>3.1 (3)</td>
<td>12.9 (114)</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (year 6 to 7)</td>
<td>32.0 (31)</td>
<td>92.7 (820)</td>
<td>-60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (year 8 to 9)</td>
<td>68.0 (66)</td>
<td>7.3 (65)</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grades</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average or above</td>
<td>96.7 (89)</td>
<td>98.2 (869)</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipped school</td>
<td>17.6 (16)</td>
<td>15.3 (150)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone-parent families</td>
<td>5.2 (5)</td>
<td>23.8 (211)</td>
<td>-18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>27.2 (25)</td>
<td>45.2 (397)</td>
<td>-18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-advantaged</td>
<td>56.5 (52)</td>
<td>43.0 (378)</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantaged</td>
<td>27.2 (15)</td>
<td>11.8 (104)</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion/Spirituality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly attend services or activities at school</td>
<td>46.3 (44)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly attend services or activities outside school</td>
<td>33.3 (32)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly attend services or activities</td>
<td>52.6 (50)</td>
<td>27.3 (242)</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0 (97)</td>
<td>100.0 (885)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Duke of Edinburgh Program members are not included in the YDRP 12 to 13 year old sub-sample as eligibility for program membership commences at age 14.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| a. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; b. Missing cases=5, 5.1%; c. Missing cases=4, 4.1%; d. Missing cases=3, 0.3%; e. 5. Missing cases=1, 0.1%; f. Missing cases=2, 0.2%; g. Missing cases=9, 1.0%; h. Missing cases=59, 6.7%; i. Missing cases=6, 0.7%; j. Missing cases=2, 2.1%; k. Missing cases=1, 1.0%; l. Missing cases=3, 3.1%.
The overall proportion of young people who take part in religious services or activities is higher in the YDRP sub-sample than in the AHWS. More young people in the YDRP attend religious services or activities at school than outside school. These differences hold even when the BB young members are removed from the analysis (not shown). Similarly, the proportion of young people who reported that religion or spirituality is highly important in their life is higher in the YDRP than the AHWS sub-samples. The AHWS sub-sample more closely matches the rate of attendance of the Australian adult population. Lone-parent households are also higher in the AHWS than in the YDRP. The proportion of lone-parent families represented in the Queensland population at 30 June 2006 (15.9%) (2006 Census, OESR, 2008) is lower than the AHWS sub-sample (23.8%) and higher than the YDRP sub-sample (5.2%). The proportion of young people living in disadvantaged communities is higher in the AHWS than the YDRP sub-sample. Conversely, the proportion of young people in middle-advantaged and advantaged communities is higher in the YDRP sub-sample.

Overall, the analysis of socio-demographic data presented here illustrates a number of young member contextual characteristics. First, the YDRP sample largely matches the YDOP young member population on sex, age and community representation. In both, more females and more young people from middle-advantaged communities participate. However, the age profile of the YDRP young member sample is slightly different, peaking at age 14 and 15 rather than age 14. Second, the YDRP sample of youth has a similar level of Indigenous and LOTE cultural diversity and young males with a disability compared to the Queensland population. These results support the argument that a diverse range of young people are engaged in community youth programs (Hirsch & Wong, 2005; Impact,
There is, however, lower participation of youth living in disadvantaged and advantaged communities, younger males, older youth, particularly females, and young females with a disability. Finally, compared to the AHWS, the YDRP sub-sample of 12 to 13 olds had a higher proportion of females, 13 year olds, Indigenous and secondary school students and young people living in middle and advantaged communities. In comparison, the AHWS had higher proportions of males, 12 year olds, primary school students, youth with a LOTE background, youth from lone-parent families, and youth living in disadvantaged communities. For the comparison between the more representative young people in the AHWS and the young members in the YDRP, sex, age and community will be used to ensure these analytic sub-sample differences are accounted for.

5.3. Program and activity involvement characteristics

In this section, I examine young member activity portfolios to illustrate the structural involvement dimension of their characteristics. I focus on two structural involvement characteristics: involvement in organised youth and sporting programs and activities and breadth of participation in sporting activities. The analysis presented here complements the research presented in section 5.2 on the contextual socio-demographic dimension and section 5.3 on the life-skill outcome dimension of young member characteristics.

In the YDRP, all young people are participating in a program. This program was considered to be their primary program. Involvement in additional youth and sporting activities was assessed by asking young people if over the past year they had been involved in other voluntary clubs or programs or sports activities or
clubs. A two point scale was used: yes, no. This provides an indicator for involved or not involved. If young people answered yes, we asked them to name the activity/ies. This provides an indicator of breadth of engagement. The youth club or program question used in the YDRP did not, however, capture a broader range of extracurricular school-based or organised community-based programs and activities. It also did not capture mandatory programs or extra-curricular activities linked to the school-curriculum.

In the AHWS, activity involvement was assessed by asking young people how many times over the past year had they been involved in sports, clubs, organisations or other activities at school and outside of school. A five point scale was used: Never; 1 or 2 times; 3 to 5 times; 6 to 9 times; 10 or more times. These questions are aggregated into two categories involved and not involved. The comparative analysis is restricted to this aggregation, comparing involved and non-involved, because the AHWS and YDRP measure different components of structural involvement (number of programs versus time involved). Nevertheless, the questions provide an illustration of the involvement level within the AHWS and YDRP analytic sub-samples.

The YDRP and AHWS structural involvement questions do, however, enable a comparative analysis on breadth of sporting activity involvement. Breadth of sports involvement in the AHWS is assessed by asking young people how many sports teams they played on at school and outside of school. A seven point scale

---

15 YDRP question 13 in full: Have you been involved in other voluntary youth clubs or programs in the past year? YDRP question 15 in full: Have you been involved in other sports activities or clubs in the past year?
16 AHWS question 35 in full: How many times in the past year have you: b. been involved in sports, clubs, organisations or other activities at school. c. been involved in sports, clubs, organisations or other activities outside of school?
17 AHWS question 80 in full: During the past 12 months, on how many sports teams did you play at school? AHWS question 81 in full: During the past 12 months, on how many sports teams did you play outside of school?
was used: None, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more. For the purposes of the sporting activity comparative analysis, in the YDRP sub-sample, SLS participation was counted as one sporting program. For the AHWS it is assumed that if young people are members of a team they are taking part in sporting programs and activities.

5.3.1. Young members: YDRP sample

The structural activity involvement characteristics of young members in the YDRP sample can be explored through their self-report participation in youth and sports programs and activities. In this section, young member involvement is examined across their contextual socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex and community.

| Table 5.5. YDRP sample: Breadth of involvement in other voluntary youth clubs and programs |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------|------|------|------------------|
| Sociology-demographic characteristics            | None 1 2 3 Total |
| Sex a                                             | Female      | 76.8 (185) | 18.7 (45) | 3.7 (9) | 0.8 (2) | 100.0 (241) |
|                                                  | Male        | 74.7 (136) | 22.0 (40) | 2.7 (5) | 0.5 (1) | 100.0 (182) |
| Age a                                             | 12-13       | 81.3 (78)  | 15.6 (15) | 3.1 (3) | 0.0 (0) | 100.0 (96)  |
|                                                  | 14          | 79.8 (79)  | 17.2 (17) | 2.0 (2) | 1.0 (1) | 100.0 (99)  |
|                                                  | 15          | 72.7 (72)  | 23.2 (23) | 4.0 (4) | 0.0 (0) | 100.0 (99)  |
|                                                  | 16          | 72.0 (54)  | 24.0 (18) | 4.0 (3) | 0.0 (0) | 100.0 (75)  |
|                                                  | 17-18       | 70.4 (38)  | 22.2 (12) | 3.7 (2) | 3.7 (2) | 100.0 (54)  |
| Community b                                       | D           | 74.6 (91)  | 23.0 (28) | 2.5 (3) | 0.0 (0) | 100.0 (122) |
|                                                  | M           | 79.7 (165) | 15.5 (32) | 3.4 (7) | 1.4 (3) | 100.0 (207) |
|                                                  | A           | 66.3 (53)  | 28.7 (23) | 5.0 (4) | 0.0 (0) | 100.0 (80)  |
| Total                                            | 75.9 (321)  | 20.1 (85)  | 3.3 (14)  | 0.7 (3) | 100.0 (423) |

Note. Activity data does not include participation in the primary youth development program. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the four categories of ‘none’, ‘1’, ‘2’ and ‘3’. a. Missing cases=3, 0.7%. b. Missing cases=17, 4.0%.

Table 5.5 shows three quarters of young members do not participate in any other organised voluntary youth club or program, beyond their primary program. Only one quarter reported they participate in another youth club or program (24.1%). This high proportion of non-participation in other voluntary youth clubs
or programs is similar for both males and females. While non-significant, Table 5.5 shows the pattern of breadth of participation in other youth clubs and programs increases as young people age.

This pattern of increased involvement associated with aging may be partly explained by the Duke of Edinburgh Award program (Dukes). As described in Chapters 1 and 4, the Dukes commencement age is 14 years and has been designed to be delivered to complement any existing school or community program curriculum. Although young people nominate a diversity of other voluntary programs and activities, Dukes accounted for one quarter (25.5%) (not shown). The addition of Dukes to young member activity portfolios, appeals to similar proportions of youth from across disadvantaged, middle and advantaged communities (not shown). This suggests the choice to add Dukes to an existing portfolio of activities is not linked to advantage. Nevertheless, examination of involvement by community shows participation in a breadth of other youth programs and activities is highest for youth living in advantaged (33.8%), followed by disadvantaged (25.4%) and middle-advantaged (20.3%) communities. This pattern is marginally significant ($x^2(6, N = 409) = 10.874, p=.092$). This is somewhat similar to Zambon et al. (2009, p. 93) finding that the wealthier a youth’s background the higher the breadth of participation. However, this result is unusual because there is no clear increase in breadth linked to increased advantage.

In contrast to participation in youth clubs or programs, Table 5.6 shows young members have a high involvement rate in other sports clubs and activities (69.8%) and this is the case for both males (71.3%) and females (68.6%). While non-significant, increased breadth of engagement in sporting activities is linked
with increased advantage. Breadth of participation in sporting activities decreases significantly as young people age ($x^2(12, N = 420) = 23.360, p = .025$).

Table 5.6. YDRP sample: Breadth of involvement in other sports clubs and activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Involved in other sports clubs and activities (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31.4 (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28.7 (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>18.8 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.6 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>28.6 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>37.3 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>43.4 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communityb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>34.5 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>30.8 (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>22.8 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.2 (127)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Activity data presented in this table does not include the primary program. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the four categories of 'none', '1', '2' and '3'.

Table 5.7 shows that when these two types of additional activity choices - youth and sports programs, clubs and activities - are put together, the majority of youth (85.2%) participating in community programs also participated in other clubs, programs and activities. While there are no significant differences associated with sex and community, there is with age. As young people age, their overall portfolio of activities reduces significantly ($x^2 (4, N = 425) = 9.781, p = .044$). This link between aging and decreased participation is consistent with other research reported in Chapter 2.
Table 5.7.  YDRP sample: Involvement in other youth and sports programs, clubs and activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Additional activity involvement (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74.9 (182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>77.5 (141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>85.6 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7 (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>78.8 (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>69.7 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>66.7 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>75.4 (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>73.2 (153)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>83.8 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85.2 (363)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Activity data presented in this table does not include the primary program; D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the two categories of 'yes' and 'no'.

a. Missing cases=0, 0.0%. b. Missing cases=14, 3.3%.

5.3.2. Young people aged 12 to 13: YDRP and AHWS sub-samples

The structural involvement characteristics of 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and the AHWS sub-samples is examined through a comparative analysis of involvement or non-involvement in sports, clubs, organisations or other activities and their breadth of involvement in sports activities. In this section involvement is compared across the socio-demographic characteristics of sex, age and community.

Table 5.8 illustrates involvement and non-involvement in sports, clubs, organisations or other activities for the AHWS sub-sample. The YDRP sub-sample is not discussed here because all young members are involved in at least one program, their primary program. This means the involvement count for YDRP 12 to 13 year olds across all socio-demographic categories is 100%. Almost all young people in the AHWS sub-sample are shown to be involved in sports, clubs, organisations or other activities. Only a small proportion is uninvolved. This
pattern is replicated across sex, age and residential community. This high involvement rate is comparable to the YDRP sub-sample.

**Table 5.8.** AHWS sub-sample: Involvement of youth aged 12 and 13 in sports, clubs, organisations or other activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Sports, clubs, organisations or other activities involvement(%(n))</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex*a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>93.3 (404)</td>
<td>6.7 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>96.9 (437)</td>
<td>3.1 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age*a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>95.1 (779)</td>
<td>4.9 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>95.4 (62)</td>
<td>4.6 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community*b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>92.9 (368)</td>
<td>7.1 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>96.0 (363)</td>
<td>4.0 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100.0 (104)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95.1 (835)</td>
<td>4.9 (43)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. 
a. Missing cases=97, 9.9%; b. Missing cases=103, 10.5%.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to extrapolate from this AHWS involvement data the kinds of sports, clubs, organisations or other activities youth are involved in. Table 5.9 does, however, illustrate youth opinion about the activities in their community. This can be considered an involvement indicator because to be involved there needs to be an awareness of activity availability. These activity questions have also not been adjusted for Australian youth and therefore there is a mismatch between some of these descriptions and activities normally available in the community. Young people’s awareness of activity availability shown in Table 5.9 is, nevertheless, suggestive that the portfolio of activities underpinning the AHWS involvement data (Table 5.8) is most likely to include sports, followed by youth groups, then community service and lastly scouting type activities.
Table 5.9.  AHWS sub-sample: Availability of activities in community for youth aged 12 to 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity type</th>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Sex (%(n))</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports teams(^a)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84.2 (363)</td>
<td>87.5 (392)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15.8 (68)</td>
<td>12.5 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth groups (boys and girls clubs, church groups etc(^a))</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76.5 (329)</td>
<td>75.7 (340)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>23.5 (101)</td>
<td>24.3 (109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service (visiting or helping people, environmental projects, fundraising for charity, service clubs)(^b)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73.1 (313)</td>
<td>74.6 (335)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>26.9 (115)</td>
<td>25.4 (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scouting ( Scouts, cubs, Girl Scouts, Brownies)(^a)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65.6 (282)</td>
<td>65.7 (295)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>34.4 (148)</td>
<td>34.3 (154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0 (449)</td>
<td>100.0 (430)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a. Missing cases=103, 10.5%; b. Missing cases=105, 10.7%.

0 shows involvement in sporting programs and activities for both the YDRP and the AHWS sub-samples of 12 to 13 year olds. Young people in the YDRP (80.2%) reported a slightly lower proportion of involvement in sports programs, clubs and activities than young people in the AHWS (87.9%). While non-significant, in both the YDRP and the AHWS, girls participated in fewer sporting activities than males, and 12 year olds participated in fewer sporting activities than 13 year olds. These differences are emphasised in the YDRP sub-sample. In contrast, the YDRP and AHWS have different patterns of sports participation linked with advantage. In the AHWS sub-sample there is a highly significant pattern of increased involvement linked with increased advantage ($x^2(2, N = 875) = 11.853, p=.003$).

This is similar to the non-significant pattern in the YDRP sample. In the YDRP sub-sample, however, there was no pattern of increased participation associated with increased advantage. Instead there was a somewhat significantly higher proportion of middle-advantaged 12 to 13 year olds reporting higher sporting activity participation ($x^2(2, N = 91) = 9.624, p=.008$).
Table 5.10. AHWS and YDRP sub-samples: 12 and 13 year old sports program and activity involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Sports program and activity involvement (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHWS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexa</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agea</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communityb</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| YDRP                              |                          |                          |                        |
| Sexc                             | Female                  | 21.3 (13)                | 78.7 (48)              | 100.0 (61)              |
|                                  | Male                    | 17.1 (6)                 | 82.9 (29)              | 100.0 (35)              |
| Agec                             | 12                      | 28.1 (9)                 | 71.9 (23)              | 100.0 (32)              |
|                                  | 13                      | 15.6 (10)                | 84.4 (54)              | 100.0 (64)              |
| Communityd                        | D                       | 36.0 (9)                 | 64.0 (16)              | 100.0 (25)              |
|                                  | M                       | 9.8 (5)                  | 90.2 (46)              | 100.0 (51)              |
|                                  | A                       | 33.3 (5)                 | 66.7 (10)              | 100.0 (15)              |
|                                  | Total                   | 19.8 (19)                | 80.2 (77)              | 100.0 (96)              |

Note: D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Chi-square analysis is based on 'no' not involved and 'yes' involved.
a. Missing cases=101, 10.3%; b. Missing cases=107, 10.9%; c. Missing cases=1, 1.0%; d. Missing cases=6, 6.2%.

Table 5.11 shows the breadth of sports activity involvement within the AHWS and YDRP sub-samples of 12 to 13 year olds. In both the YDRP and the AHWS sub-samples, females reported an overall lower breadth of sports activity engagement than males. This difference was significant in the AHWS ($x^2(3, N = 881) = 11.394, p = .010$). There are no significant differences associated with age within the AHWS, however within the YDRP 12 year olds participated in significantly fewer sporting activities than 13 year olds ($x^2(3, N = 96) = 9.843, p = .020$). There is a significant pattern of increased breadth of sporting activity associated with increased advantage within the more representative AHWS youth sub-sample ($x^2(6, N = 875) = 14.992, p = .020$) but not within the YDRP sub-
sample. Instead, within the YDRP there was a somewhat significantly higher proportion of middle-advantaged young people reporting higher sporting activity participation ($x^2 (6, N = 91) = 11.589, p = .072$).

In summary, this exploration of the structural involvement dimension of young member characteristics shows that young members are more likely to supplement their primary program activities with sporting activities than with other organised voluntary youth clubs or programs. As young members age, their breadth of engagement in youth clubs and programs increases, while their breadth of involvement in sports activities and clubs decreases. This pattern is however, only significant for sports activities and clubs. Importantly, advantage is linked

### Table 5.11. AHWS and YDRP sub-samples: Breadth of involvement of youth aged 12 and 13 in sports activity involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Number of sporting activities (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AHWS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14.1 (61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10.2 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.3 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.8 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>16.2 (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9.8 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5.8 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.1 (107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YDRP</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21.3 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14.3 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.1 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.5 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>28.0 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9.8 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>33.3 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.7 (17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community.
a. Missing cases=101, 10.3%; b. Missing cases=107, 10.9%; c. Missing cases=1, 1.0%; d. Missing cases=6, 6.2%. 


with a broader breadth of engagement in other activities. This linkage was evident in the YDRP sample and the more representative AHWS youth sub-sample but not the YDRP sub-sample.

5.4. Life-skill characteristics

In this section, I use life-skills to illustrate the outcome dimension of young member characteristics across their contextual socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex and community. The analysis presented here complements the research presented in section 5.2 on the socio-demographic dimension section 5.3 on the structural activity involvement dimension of young member characteristics. I focus on exploring self-report attitudes, activities and behaviours relating to one life-skill indicator for each of The Jacobs Foundation (2011, pp. 12, 31-32) four core life-skill area outcomes introduced in Chapter 2. I examine: problem solving as an indicator of critical thinking and cognitive skills; temper control as an indicator of coping skills and self-management; volunteering as an indicator of social and moral skills; and positive communication with friends as an indicator of communication skills.

These life-skill indicators have been chosen to enable analysis across the program and the individual domain. They have also been chosen to enable a comparative analysis between the AHWS and the YDRP sub-samples of 12 to 13 year olds. For each life-skill, I explore the program domain first. I present at least one example of belief in the impact of program participation on life-skill development in the individual domain or an example of youth opinion towards an activity or behaviour in the program domain. Second, I explore the individual domain. I present examples of young people’s self-report level of skill, behaviour or
activity. For each of these analyses, I explore how the life-skill is expressed by young people in the YDRP sample of 12 to 18 year olds. To see if the YDRP young members are similar to other young people, I also compare 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP with a more representative sample of Queensland 12 to 13 year olds in the AHWS for each life-skill in the individual domain.

5.4.1. Critical thinking and cognitive skills: Problem solving

The first core skill area, critical thinking and cognitive life-skills, is defined as encompassing skills in problem solving, decision making, autonomy, self-reflection, and flexible and creative thinking (Jacobs Foundation, 2011, pp. 12, 31-32). In this section, I analyse youth self-report problem solving attitudes and skills as indicative of critical thinking and cognitive life-skills.

In the YDRP, we assessed the influence of the program environment by asking young members whether their program helps them learn how to work things out.\(^{18}\) A five point scale was used: always, often, sometimes, rarely, never. To explore problem solving skills we asked young members if they are good at working out their problems.\(^{19}\) A four point scale was used: often, sometimes, rarely, never. The same question is used in the AHWS, however, a different four point scale was used: YES! yes, no, NO! While the scales in the YDRP and AHWS are differently worded, the meaning is similar enough to allow a direct comparison of reported skill level. For the purposes of comparison young people who answered often or sometimes in the YDRP and YES! or yes in the AHWS are defined as having problem solving skills.

\(^{18}\) YDRP question 8 in full: Being involved in [program] has: helped me to learn how to work things out.
\(^{19}\) YDRP question 42 in full: When you have a problem what do you do? e. I am good at working it out. AHWS question 57 in full: When you have a problem what do you do? d. I am good at working it out.
Sub-section 1. YDRP sample

Analysis of the influence of the program environment on *helping young people to learn how to work things out* revealed well over three quarters of young members (82.3%) reported their program *always* or *often* helps them learn to how to work things out (Table 5.12). There are no significant differences in young people’s experience of learning problem solving in their program associated with age, sex or community. This suggests supporting young people to learn problem solving is strongly reflected in the curriculum and practices of the participating community programs and is not influenced by age, sex or community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Program helps youth learn to work things out (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48.3 (117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.7 (91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>55.2 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>51.5 (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>39.4 (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>53.2 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>44.4 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>44.3 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>50.5 (106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>50.6 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.9 (208)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the four categories of 'always', 'often', 'sometimes' and 'rarely/never'
a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%. b. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

Analysis of problem solving skills showed that over three quarters (79.8%) of young members reported they have some skill in working out their problems. As shown in Table 5.13, this contrasts to the close to one quarter (20.2%) of young members reporting they are not skilled in working out their problems. There are no significant differences in level of problem solving skill associated with age, sex
or community. While a high proportion (82.3%) of young members reported their program *always* or *often* helps them to work things out (Table 5.12), a lower proportion (79.8%) reported having skill in problem solving (Table 5.13). Analysis of the relationship between learning in the program environment and skill shows that of those young people reporting their program has *always* or *often* helped them to learn how to work things out (n=340), the majority are *often* or *sometimes* good at working out their own problems (81.5%, n=277) (Table 5.14).

### Table 5.13. YDRP sample: Problem solving skill

| Socio-demographic characteristics | Good at working out problems(%|n|) | Often | Sometimes | Rarely/never | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|--------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| **Sex**                          |                               |     |        |           |              |       |
| Female                           | 30.2 (71)                     | 47.7 (112) | 22.1 (52) | 100.0 (235) |
| Male                             | 31.3 (55)                     | 51.1 (90)  | 17.6 (31)  | 100.0 (176) |
| **Age**                          |                               |     |        |           |              |       |
| 12-13                            | 27.8 (15)                     | 55.6 (30) | 16.7 (9)  | 100.0 (54)  |
| 14                               | 34.7 (26)                     | 46.7 (35) | 18.7 (14) | 100.0 (75)  |
| 15                               | 28.1 (27)                     | 50.0 (48) | 21.9 (21) | 100.0 (96)  |
| 16                               | 30.2 (29)                     | 45.8 (44) | 23.9 (23) | 100.0 (96)  |
| 17-18                            | 32.2 (29)                     | 50.0 (45) | 17.7 (17) | 100.0 (90)  |
| **Community**                    |                               |     |        |           |              |       |
| D                                | 33.0 (38)                     | 47.0 (54) | 20.0 (23) | 100.0 (115) |
| M                                | 27.1 (55)                     | 52.7 (107) | 20.2 (41) | 100.0 (203) |
| A                                | 39.2 (31)                     | 44.3 (35) | 16.5 (13) | 100.0 (79)  |
| **Total**                        | 30.7 (126)                    | 49.1 (202) | 20.2 (83) | 100.0 (411) |

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Chi-square is based on the three categories of ‘often’, ‘sometimes’ and ‘rarely/never’.

a. Missing cases=13, 3.1%. b. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

Table 5.14 shows that there is, however, a small group of young members who reported that while their program has *always* or *often* helped them to learn how to work things out, they are *rarely* or *never* able to work out their own problems (18.5%, n=63). These young people clearly value the problem solving learning they have gained in the program environment but have been unable to translate these skills into their daily lives. Within the small proportion of young people who reported being involved in their program has *rarely* or *never* helped them to learn how to work things out (n=17), the majority reported they have skill...
in working out their own problems (64.7%, n=11). These young people have
problem solving skills but credit their learning to other domains. These patterns
linking learning problem solving in the program environment and problem solving
skill are highly significant ($x^2(6, N = 411) = 23.959, p=.001)$.

Table 5.14. YDRP sample: Linking the learning of problem solving in the
program environment with the practice of working problems out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good at working out problems</th>
<th>Learning how to work things out(%)n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>65.9 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>45.0 (91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely/never</td>
<td>36.1 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49.6 (204)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 5.12 and 5.13 due to missing cases. Chi-square is based on the data categories presented in this table.
a. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

Sub-section 2. YDRP and AHWS sub-sample

To explore if young members matched other young people on problem
solving ability I compared the responses of 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP sub-
sample and the AHWS sub-sample. Table 5.15 shows that young people in the
YDRP sub-sample, compared to those in the AHWS sub-sample, reported higher
levels of ability to work their problems out. This difference is highly significant
($x^2(2, N = 973) = 14.323, p=.001$). Differences across all three socio-demographic
categories are also evident. While not a significant difference, a higher proportion
of females than males within the YDRP sub-sample reported they are good at
working out their problems. The proportion of males and females reporting
problem solving skills within the AHWS sub-sample are similar. Between sub-
samples, the difference between females, but not males, is highly significant ($x^2(2,
N = 492) = 18.307, p=.000$).
Table 5.15. YDRP and AHWS sub-samples: 12 and 13 year olds have the ability to work problems out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>YDRP</th>
<th>AHWS</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to problem solve (%(n))</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>86.2 (50)(^a)</td>
<td>63.4 (275)(^b)</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>75.0 (24)(^a)</td>
<td>67.9 (305)(^b)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 year old</td>
<td>87.5 (28)(^a)</td>
<td>65.5 (536)(^b)</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 year old</td>
<td>78.0 (46)(^a)</td>
<td>67.8 (44)(^b)</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community advantage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>81.8 (18)(^c)</td>
<td>60.4 (239)(^d)</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>77.1 (37)(^c)</td>
<td>69.8 (263)(^d)</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100.0 (15)(^c)</td>
<td>76.0 (79)(^d)</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82.2 (74)</td>
<td>65.7 (580)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This table only reports aggregated data on problem solving skills: *often* or *sometimes* in the YDRP and *YES* or *yes* in the AHWS. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Chi-square is based on the AHWS three categories of ‘Yes’, ‘yes’ and ‘No or no’ and the equivalent in the YDRP.

a. Missing cases=5, 5.2%; b. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; c. Missing cases=10, 10.3%; d. Missing cases=6, 0.7%.

Analysis of age in the sub-samples shows more 12 year olds within the YDRP, and slightly more 13 year olds within the AHWS reporting better problem solving skills. This difference between the ages and reported problem solving skill is moderately significant within the YDRP ($x^2(2, N = 90) = 6.195, p = .045$) but not the AHWS. Differences between sub-samples shows 12 and 13 year olds in the YDRP have better problem solving ability than their peers in the AHWS. The difference between the YDRP and AHWS 12 year olds, but not between 13 year olds, is highly significant ($x^2(2, N = 849) = 18.537, p = .000$).

Community advantage shows more of a pattern in the AHWS than in the YDRP sub-sample (Table 5.15). In the AHWS sub-sample there is a moderately significant increase of problem solving skill with increased advantage ($x^2(6, N = 877) = 14.970, p = .020$). Interestingly, while YDRP youth reported better problem solving skill than AHWS youth across all community advantage levels, there is only a moderately significant difference between YDRP and AHWS youth living in advantaged communities ($x^2(2, N = 119) = 8.529, p = .014$).
In summary, this analyses of young people’s perspectives on whether *being involved in their program had helped them to learn how to work things out* revealed well over three quarters reported their program *always or often* helped them to learn how to work things out. This indicates that the practice of supporting young people to learn problem solving is readily applied by the participating community programs. Importantly, analyses suggest that this program practice is not influenced by the age, sex or community characteristics of young people. The majority of young people who reported their program has *always* helped them to learn how to work things out, reported skill at working out their own problems. The comparative analysis between 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples shows young members, reported significantly higher levels of ability to work their problems out. This significant difference between sub-samples is emphasised for 12 year olds and females. While there is no significant pattern between level of community advantage and level of problem solving skill within the YDRP sample there is within the AHWS. Here, reported problem solving skill increases significantly from the lowest skill level in disadvantaged to the highest in advantaged communities.

5.4.2. Coping and self-management skills: Regulating emotion through temper control

The second core skill area, *coping and self-management skills*, is defined as encompassing skills in regulating emotion, self-esteem, self-confidence and awareness, and managing stress (Jacobs Foundation, 2011, pp. 12, 31-32). In this section, I focus on attitudes and behaviours in *regulating emotion* using temper control as an indicator.
In the YDRP, we assessed program environment influence by asking young members whether their program helped them to learn to control their temper\textsuperscript{20}. A five point scale was used: always, often, sometimes, rarely, never. To explore temper control skill, in the YDRP we asked young members how good they are at controlling their temper.\textsuperscript{21} A five point scale was used: very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, very bad. In the AHWS this is examined by asking young people if they can control their temper when people are angry at them.\textsuperscript{22} A four point scale was used: YES! yes, no, NO! While there are differences in temper focus and scales, these two questions allow an indicative comparison of temper control.

To enable comparison across the YDRP and AHWS it is assumed that the YDRP question is broader than the AHWS and could capture more situations and occasions where young people are unable to control their temper. Young people who answered \textit{very good} or \textit{good} in the YDRP and \textit{YES!} or \textit{yes} in the AHWS are considered to have sound skills in temper control. Young people in the YDRP who answered \textit{neither good nor bad} are excluded from the comparative analysis because there is no comparative point in the AHWS sub-sample. Young people who answered \textit{bad} or \textit{very bad} in the YDRP and \textit{no} or \textit{NO!} in the AHWS are considered to have no temper control skill.

\textbf{Sub-section 1. YDRP sample}

Analysis of the influence of the program environment on \textit{learning to control temper} revealed well over half of young members (59.6\%) reported their program had \textit{always} or \textit{often} helped them to learn to control their temper (Table 5.16).

\textsuperscript{20} YDRP question 8 in full: Being involved in [program] has helped me to: h. Learn to control my temper.
\textsuperscript{21} YDRP question 40 in full: How good are you at doing these things? m. Controlling your temper.
\textsuperscript{22} AHWS question 56 in full: Please tell us how true each of the following statements are for you: I control my temper when people are angry with me.
While there are no significant differences based on age or community, this is not the case with sex. Significantly more males (65.0%) than females (55.4%) believed being involved in their program had always or often helped them to learn to control their temper ($x^2 (4, N = 425) = 9.589, p = .048$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Program helps youth learn temper control (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28.5 (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32.8 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>38.5 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>33.3 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>28.3 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>28.6 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>16.7 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>30.3 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>32.9 (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>26.6 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.4 (129)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D = disadvantaged community. M = middle-advantaged community. A = advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated, chi-square is based on the five categories of 'always', 'often', 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never'.

These results suggest supporting youth to learn temper control skill is moderately reflected in the curriculum and practices of the participating programs. While not influenced by age or community, these results also indicate the program environment is more likely to support male, rather than female, learning in temper control.

Analysis of young people’s ability to regulate their emotion through controlling their temper revealed that over four-fifths of young members (84.5%) reported they had temper control skill (Table 5.17). While non-significant, slightly more males than females reported skill in temper control. Similarly, while Burton and Marshall (2005, pp. 55-56) reported more males than females in their sample of 14-15 year old extra-curricular program participants take part in aggressive
behaviour, this finding is also non-significant. Likewise, Anderson, Sabatelli, and Trachtenberg (2007, p. 34) found no significant difference between male and female youth in their level of self-regulatory efficacy following 12 months of participation in a police sponsored community program. Table 5.17 also shows no significant differences in temper control across age and community.

Table 5.17. YDRP sample: Skill in temper control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Temper control (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29.7 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31.5 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (^b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>31.9 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>33.3 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>33.0 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.7 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>27.8 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community (^b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>31.6 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>29.4 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>31.6 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.4 (126)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the four categories of ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘average’ and ‘bad or very bad’.
a. Missing cases=12, 2.8%. b. Missing cases=26, 6.1%.

While over half of young members (59.6%) reported their program had always or often helped them to learn to control their temper (Table 5.16) a much higher proportion (84.5%) reported skill in temper control (Table 5.17). Analysis of the relationship between learning in the program environment and skill shows that of those young members reporting their program always or often helps them learn to control their temper (n=245), the majority also reported skill in temper control (91.4%, n=224) (Table 5.18). A very small proportion of these young members
reported they have no skill in controlling their temper (8.6%, n=22). For these young people, learning about temper control in the program environment has not translated to temper control in the individual domain. Within the proportion of young people who reported being involved in their program has rarely or never helped them to learn how to control their temper (n=74), the majority believe they have some temper control skill (71.6%, n=53). While these youth have skill in temper control, they credit their learning to other domains. These patterns linking learning temper control in the program and level of skill in controlling anger are highly significant ($\chi^2(9, N = 414) = 53.004, p=.000$).

Table 5.18. YDRP sample: Linking the learning of temper control in the program environment with practicing temper control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temper control skill</th>
<th>Learn to control temper (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>49.2 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>25.9 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>20.2 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad/very bad</td>
<td>15.6 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.2 (125)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 5.16 and 5.17 due to missing cases. Chi-square is based on the data categories presented in this table.

Sub-section 2. YDRP and AHWS sub-sample

To explore whether young members match other young people on capacity to control their temper, I compared 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS. Table 5.19 indicates young people in the YDRP sub-sample reported superior temper control than young people in the AHWS sub-sample. This difference between sub-samples is highly significant ($\chi^2(2, N = 955) = 21.067, p=.000$). This is similar to Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, p. 31) research that young people participating in structured community programs had better anger management.
skill than young people not participating. As well, O’Donnell et al. (1999, p. 35) research suggests there may be a link between community service participation, which is a key feature of these community programs, and violence reduction.

Table 5.19. YDRP and AHWS sub-samples: 12 and 13 year olds ability to control temper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>YDRP Can control temper (%(n))</th>
<th>AHWS Can control temper (%(n))</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79.6 (39)a</td>
<td>67.7 (293)b</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>79.2 (19)a</td>
<td>67.3 (302)b</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 year old</td>
<td>77.3 (17)a</td>
<td>67.8 (554)b</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 year old</td>
<td>80.4 (41)a</td>
<td>63.1 (41)b</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>70.6 (12)c</td>
<td>67.3 (266)d</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>76.3 (29)c</td>
<td>66.3 (250)d</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100.0 (14)c</td>
<td>72.1 (75)d</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84.6 (77)</td>
<td>67.5 (595)</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This table only reports the aggregated data on sound skills in temper control: very good or good in the YDRP and yes in the AHWS. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=Advantaged community.
a. Missing cases=6, 6.2%. b. Missing cases=3, 0.3%. c. Missing cases=11, 11.3%. d. Missing cases=9, 1.0%.

Differences across all three socio-demographic categories are also evident. Similar levels of ability are reported for males and females within both the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples. Both males and females reported higher skill in the YDRP than in the AHWS. These differences between the AHWS and YDRP sub-samples are highly significant for females ($x^2 (2, N = 482) = 19.805, p = .000$) but not for males. Analysis of age reveals no significant difference between the 12 and 13 year olds within the YDRP or within the AHWS sub-sample. Between sub-samples, however, there is a moderately significant difference for 12 year olds ($x^2 (2, N = 839) = 7.320, p = .026$) and a highly significant difference for 13 year olds ($x^2 (2, N = 116) = 10.686, p = .005$).

Overall, Table 5.19 suggests young people living in advantaged communities within both the YDRP and the AHWS are more likely to have reported
they had temper control skill than young people in disadvantaged or middle-
advantaged communities. The relationship between community advantage and
temper control is non-significant within the YDRP, however, it is marginally
significant within the AHWS sub-sample ($x^2 (6, N = 876) = 11.827, p = .066$).
Between sub-samples there are significant differences related to community
advantage. YDRP youth showed highly significantly better skills than AHWS youth
in middle-advantaged ($x^2 (2, N = 415) = 10.366, p = .006$) and moderately
significant better skills for those youth living in disadvantaged ($x^2 (2, N = 412) =
8.329, p = .016$) and advantaged communities ($x^2 (2, N = 118) = 6.738, p = .034$).
This is consistent with Riggs et al. (2010, pp. 417, 425) finding that young people
who regularly participated in after-school programs had better regulation skills,
including temper control, than young people who did not regularly participate.
While this could be an indication of self-selection effects, they also found
significant growth in emotional regulation skills for the cohort of young people
who had regulation emotion problems at their commencement.

In summary, this analysis of young people’s perspectives on whether being
involved in their program had helped them to learn to control their temper shows
that well over half of young people felt their program always or often helped them
to learn to temper control. Significantly, more males than females felt this was the
case. These results indicate the program environment is more likely to support
male, rather than female learning in controlling their temper. This may be linked to
the fact that more males than females indicate they are less skilled at controlling
their temper. Importantly, analyses suggest neither this program practice nor skill
in temper control is influenced by the age or community characteristics of young
people. Almost all young members who reported being involved in their program
always helped them to learn temper control believed they have some skill at controlling their temper. The comparative analysis between 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples shows young members reported significantly better temper control. This significant difference between sub-samples is emphasised for females, 12 and 13 year olds, and for young people living in disadvantaged, middle-advantaged and advantaged communities. While there is no significant pattern between community advantage and problem solving skill within the YDRP sub-sample there is within the AHWS. Here, reported skill to control anger increases significantly from the lowest skill in disadvantaged and middle-advantaged communities to the highest in advantaged communities.

5.4.3. Social and moral skills: Being socially responsible and helpful

The third core skill area, social and moral skills, is defined as encompassing skills in social responsibility and helpfulness, caring and having empathy for others, positive and constructive relationships and respecting and valuing others (Jacobs Foundation, 2011, pp. 12, 31-32). In this section, I focus on attitudes and behaviours in volunteering as indicators of life-skills associated with being socially responsible and helpful.

To explore the influence of the program environment in the YDRP, we asked young members about their program group’s attitude towards volunteer fund raising.23 A four point scale was used: very good chance, pretty good chance, some chance, very little/no chance. Young people who answered very good chance and pretty good chance are considered to have a program environment with a highly positive attitude towards volunteering. To explore socially responsible and helpful

---

23 YDRP question 7 in full: What are the chances you would be seen as cool at your program if you: c. Raised a lot of money for a special volunteer project?
behaviour in the YDRP we asked youth how often in the past 30 days they had volunteered. A four point scale was used: never, 1 or 2 times, 3 to 9 times, 10 or more times. In the AHWS, to explore socially responsible and helpful behaviour youth were asked how often during the past 12 months they had volunteered. A five point scale was used: never, once, twice, 3 or 4 times, 5 or more times. While there is a difference in the wording of the YDRP and AHWS questions and scales used, they are similar enough in meaning to allow an indicative comparison of reported activity. To allow comparison across sub-samples a positive response to volunteering is considered indicative of volunteering.

Sub-section 1. YDRP sample

Analysis of attitudes in the program environment towards volunteer fundraising revealed that over four-fifths of young members (85.3%) reported a program environment with a highly positive attitude towards volunteering (Table 5.20).

While there are no significant differences based on age or community, there is related to sex. A moderately significant higher proportion of females (89.2%) than males (80.2%) believed their program group would consider fundraising to be cool ($\chi^2(3, N = 423) = 8.669, p=.034$). This finding is consistent with Beutel and Kirkpatrick Johnson's (2004, p. 385) research which shows adolescent females favour making financial contributions to volunteer causes more highly than males do. Overall, these results suggest a highly positive attitude towards volunteering is nurtured in the practices of the participating community programs.

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24 YDRP question 39 in full: In the past 30 days how many times have you done these things: d. Been active in volunteer activities.
25 AHWS question 39 in full: During the past 12 months how often have you done volunteer work to help other people such as helping out at a hospital or raising money for charity?
### Table 5.20. YDRP sample: Attitudes towards fundraising volunteering in the program group domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristic</th>
<th>Fundraising for a special volunteer project is ‘cool’ (%(n))</th>
<th>Very good chance</th>
<th>Pretty good chance</th>
<th>Some chance</th>
<th>Very little/no chance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex(^a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>58.1 (140)</td>
<td>31.1 (75)</td>
<td>7.1 (17)</td>
<td>3.7 (9)</td>
<td>100.0 (241)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.5 (92)</td>
<td>29.7 (54)</td>
<td>15.9 (29)</td>
<td>3.8 (7)</td>
<td>100.0 (182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age(^b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.4 (58)</td>
<td>24.0 (23)</td>
<td>12.5 (12)</td>
<td>3.1 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>57.1 (56)</td>
<td>31.6 (31)</td>
<td>7.1 (7)</td>
<td>4.1 (4)</td>
<td>100.0 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>52.5 (52)</td>
<td>31.3 (31)</td>
<td>8.1 (8)</td>
<td>8.1 (8)</td>
<td>100.0 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.3 (39)</td>
<td>30.3 (23)</td>
<td>17.1 (13)</td>
<td>1.3 (1)</td>
<td>100.0 (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.0 (27)</td>
<td>38.9 (21)</td>
<td>11.1 (6)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community(^c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td>46.7 (57)</td>
<td>38.5 (47)</td>
<td>12.3 (15)</td>
<td>2.5 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.7 (118)</td>
<td>28.4 (59)</td>
<td>9.6 (20)</td>
<td>5.3 (11)</td>
<td>100.0 (208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.0 (49)</td>
<td>24.1 (19)</td>
<td>11.4 (9)</td>
<td>2.5 (2)</td>
<td>100.0 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.8 (232)</td>
<td>30.5 (129)</td>
<td>10.9 (46)</td>
<td>3.8 (16)</td>
<td>100.0 (423)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(D=\) disadvantaged community. \(M=\) middle-advantaged community. \(A=\) advantaged community. Chi-square for this table is based on the four categories of ‘very good chance’, ‘pretty good chance’, ‘some chance’ and ‘very little/no chance’.

\(^a\) Missing cases=6, 1.4%. \(^b\) Missing cases=17, 4.0%.

Analysis of young people’s socially responsible and helpful behaviour revealed young people are active in volunteering (Table 5.21). Over four-fifths of young members (81.5%) reported they volunteer. A similarly high proportion of female (81.7%) and male young members (81.2%) reported volunteering. Just over half (52.6%) of these volunteers reported volunteering 1 or 2 times in the past 30 days and the remainder (47.4%) reported volunteering more than 3 times. There are no significant differences related to the sex, age or community characteristics of young members and the number of times they volunteered.
Table 5.21. YDRP sample: Volunteering behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Volunteering in past 30 days (%(n))</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18.4 (44)</td>
<td>42.3 (101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18.8 (34)</td>
<td>43.6 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>18.9 (18)</td>
<td>47.4 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>17.3 (17)</td>
<td>37.8 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.4 (21)</td>
<td>46.9 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>18.7 (14)</td>
<td>40.0 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>14.8 (8)</td>
<td>40.7 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communityc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>24.0 (29)</td>
<td>43.8 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>17.4 (36)</td>
<td>39.6 (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>13.9 (11)</td>
<td>50.6 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18.6 (78)</td>
<td>42.9 (180)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Chi square is based on the four categories ‘never’, ‘1 or 2’, ‘3 to 9’, and ‘10+’.

a. Missing cases=6, 1.4%. b. Missing cases=17, 4.0%.

While over four-fifths of young members (85.3%) had a program environment with a highly positive attitude towards volunteer fundraising (Table 5.20), a slightly lower proportion (81.4%) are active volunteers (Table 5.21).

Analysis of the relationship between attitudes in the program about volunteer fundraising for a special project and active volunteering reveals of those young people who reported a positive attitude towards volunteering (n=358) over four-fifths (84.4%, n=302) are active volunteers (Table 5.22). Participation in volunteering activity is significantly higher for young people who belong to a program group with a highly positive attitude towards fundraising (84.4%, n=302), compared to those who belong to a program group with a less positive attitude (63.3%, n=38) ($\chi^2(6, N = 418) = 22.705, p = .001$). This suggests attitudes within the program environment positively influence young people’s volunteering activity.
Table 5.22. YDRP sample: Linking attitudes towards volunteering in the program environment with the practice of volunteering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteering in past 30 days</th>
<th>Very good chance</th>
<th>Pretty good chance</th>
<th>Some chance</th>
<th>Very little/no chance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>43.6 (34)</td>
<td>28.2 (22)</td>
<td>21.8 (17)</td>
<td>6.4 (5)</td>
<td>100.0 (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>52.8 (95)</td>
<td>34.4 (62)</td>
<td>10.6 (19)</td>
<td>2.2 (4)</td>
<td>100.0 (180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td>63.7 (102)</td>
<td>26.9 (43)</td>
<td>5.0 (8)</td>
<td>4.4 (7)</td>
<td>100.0 (160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55.3 (231)</td>
<td>30.4 (127)</td>
<td>10.5 (44)</td>
<td>3.8 (16)</td>
<td>100.0 (418)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 5.20 and 5.21 due to missing cases. Chi-square is based on the data categories presented in this table.
a. Missing cases=8, 1.9%.

Sub-section 2. YDRP and AHWS sub-sample

To explore whether young members match other young people on their volunteering activity, I compared responses of 12 and 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples. Table 5.23 shows that a considerable number of young people in both sub-samples participated in volunteering activity. By showing young people are active volunteers these results confirm scholarly research which challenges the pervading myth about young people being uninvolved community members (Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1999, p. 188; Vromen, 2003).

Table 5.23. YDRP and AHWS sub-samples: 12 and 13 year olds volunteering behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>YDRP</th>
<th>AHWS</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young people have volunteered (%(n))</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>83.6 (51)</td>
<td>65.4 (283)</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>76.5 (26)</td>
<td>56.7 (253)</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 year old</td>
<td>78.1 (25)</td>
<td>61.2 (499)</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 year old</td>
<td>82.5 (52)</td>
<td>58.7 (37)</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>76.0 (19)</td>
<td>59.3 (234)</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>84.0 (42)</td>
<td>64.0 (240)</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>73.3 (11)</td>
<td>56.3 (58)</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81.1 (77)</td>
<td>61.0 (536)</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This table only reports the aggregated data on active volunteering: '1 or more times'.
D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Chi-square is based on the two categories of 'never' and '1 or more times'.
a. Missing cases=2, 2.1%. b. Missing cases=6, 0.7%. c. Missing cases=7, 7.2%. d. Missing cases=12, 1.4%.
Nevertheless, despite the substantially longer time period over which young people in the AHWS could report volunteering activity, Table 5.23 shows young people in the YDRP sample still reported significantly higher levels of volunteering activity ($x^2(1, N = 974) = 14.811, p=.000$). Differences across all three socio-demographic categories are also evident. In both the YDRP and the AHWS, females are more likely than males to have taken part in volunteer activities. This is consistent with Roker, Player, and Coleman’s (1999, p. 189) earlier research which found the same gendered difference in volunteering activity. These gendered differences may be reflective of Beutel and Kirkpatrick Johnson’s (2004, p. 385) finding that young females generally gain more satisfaction from helping others than young males do.

While the differences between the sexes in their volunteering activities are non-significant within the YDRP sub-sample, the difference is moderately significant within the AHWS sub-sample ($x^2(4, N = 879) = 10.460, p=.033$). The difference between sub-samples is moderately significant for males ($x^2(1, N = 480) = 5.060, p=.024$) and highly significant for females ($x^2(1, N = 494) = 8.131, p=.004$). This non-significance within the YDRP sub-sample is similar to Anderson, Sabatelli, and Trachtenberg (2007, p. 34) research which found no significant difference in male and female empathy and caring developmental outcomes following participation in a 12 month police sponsored community program. The significance within the AHWS may reflect Beutal and Marini’s (1995) representative longitudinal research finding that adolescent females are more compassionate than their male peers.

Young people aged 13 in the YDRP reported higher levels of volunteering than 12 year olds. This pattern is reversed within the AHWS where the younger
age group reported higher levels of volunteer activity. While these patterns within each sub-sample are non-significant, the difference between sub-samples is marginally significant for 12 year olds ($x^2(1, N = 848) = 3.757, p = .053$) and highly significant for 13 year olds ($x^2(1, N = 126) = 8.609, p = .003$). Similar to the AHWS sub-sample, Beutel and Kirkpatrick Johnson (2004, p. 385) found that, in their representative sample of young people, 13 year olds showed weaker pro-social values than 12 year olds.

Interestingly, for both the YDRP and AHWS, young people living in middle-advantaged communities volunteered more than young people living in disadvantaged or advantaged communities. This difference is marginally significant within the AHWS sub-sample ($x^2(8, N = 873) = 15.513, p = .050$) and the YDRP sub-sample ($x^2(1, N = 90) = 10.678, p = .083$). Between sub-samples, the higher level of volunteering by YDRP young members compared to the AHWS youth is non-significant for those living in advantaged communities, marginally significant for those living in disadvantaged communities ($x^2(1, N = 420) = 2.757, p = .097$) and highly significant for those living in middle-advantaged communities ($x^2(1, N = 425) = 7.904, p = .005$).

This difference between sub-samples may be partly explained by two key factors illustrated by Beutel and Kirkpatrick Johnson (2004, p. 386) which underscore two key differences between the sub-samples. First, they found that compared to religious non-attendance, religious attendance predicted stronger pro-social values amongst adolescents. As discussed in section 5.2, religious attendance is higher in the YDRP compared to the AHWS (Table 5.4). Second, they found that young people who have either been helped by others or have a network they can turn to for help have stronger pro-social values. As discussed in Chapter 2,
the characteristics of community youth development programs supports the
development of relationships with pro-social peers and significant adults. The
higher level of connectedness to others in the YDRP young members is intimated
by the significantly higher levels of communication skills in expressing feelings and
thoughts to friends (Table 5.27). Future analysis of the link between these two
factors and volunteering will add to our understanding about how these two
factors interact with pro-social outcomes.

In summary, this analysis of attitudes in the program environment towards
volunteer fund-raising revealed that over four-fifths of young members (85.3%)
reported a program environment with a highly positive attitude towards
volunteering. There are no significant differences based on age or community,
however significantly more females than males reported a program environment
with a highly positive attitude towards volunteering. Analysis of volunteering
behaviour shows that over two thirds of male and female young members reported
making a contribution through volunteering activity. There are no significant
differences related to the sex, age or community characteristics of young members
and the number of times they volunteered. The comparative analysis between 12
to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples show a considerable number
of young people in both samples participated in volunteering. Young members
across each of the sex, age and community socio-demographic categories, however,
reported a significantly higher level of volunteering activity than young people in
the AHWS sub-sample. In both the YDRP and AHWS, young people living in middle-
advantaged communities volunteered significantly more than young people living
in disadvantaged or advantaged communities.
5.4.4. Communication skills: Sharing feelings and thoughts

The final and fourth core skill area, *communication skills*, is defined as encompassing skills in expressing thoughts, feelings, emotions, values and motives and being assertive (Jacobs Foundation, 2011, pp. 12, 31-32). In this section, I examine youth self-report communication skills in sharing feelings and thoughts. Skills in sharing feelings and thoughts and communicating positively are indicative of communication skills and are important skills necessary for supporting positive relationships.

To explore the influence of the program environment in the YDRP, we asked young members whether their program had helped them to learn how to share their feelings and thoughts.26 A five point scale was used: always, often, sometimes, rarely, never. To explore the practice of sharing feelings and thoughts, young people were asked in the YDRP and in the AHWS how good they are at letting friends know they like them by showing or telling them.27 In the YDRP a five point scale was used: very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, very bad. In the AHWS a four point scale was used: Very bad at this, poor at this, good at this, very good at this.

While the scales used in these questions are different they do allow an indicative comparison of communication skills. To enable comparison across the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples young people who answered *very good* or *good*, in the YDRP and *good at this, very good at this* in the AHWS are considered to have sound skills in communicating with friends. Young people in the YDRP who answered *neither good nor bad* are excluded from the comparative analysis.

---

26 YDRP question 8 in full: Being involved in [program] has helped me to: j. Share my feelings and thoughts.
27 YDRP question 40 in full: How good are you at doing these things? a. Letting friends know you like them by telling them or showing them? AHWS question 38 in full: How are you at: a. Letting friends know you like them by telling them or showing them?
because there is no comparative point to the AHWS sub-sample. Young people who answered *bad,* or *very bad* in the YDRP and *Very bad at this,* *poor at this* in the AHWS are considered to not have skill in communicating positively with friends.

**Sub-section 1. YDRP sample**

Analysis of the influence of the program environment on helping young members to *share their feelings and thoughts* reveals just over two thirds (66.8%) of young members reported their program *always or often* helped them to share their feelings and thoughts. Table 5.24 shows only a small proportion reported this is *rarely or never* the case. This supports Rhodes (2004, p. 152) assertion that program leaders can help young people develop their relational skills and their understanding of social processes. There are no significant influences on young member experiences of their program helping them to learn to share their feelings and thoughts associated with sex, age, or community. These findings suggest the practice of supporting young people to learn to *share their feelings and thoughts* is moderately reflected in the curriculum and practices of the community programs.

**Table 5.24. YDRP sample: Learning to share feelings and thoughts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Program helps youth share feelings and thoughts (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35.7 (86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31.7 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>35.4 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>37.4 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>29.3 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>38.2 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>27.8 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>28.7 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>37.8 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>30.4 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34.0 (144)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note. D = disadvantaged community. M = middle-advantaged community. A = advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the four categories of ‘always’, ‘often’, ‘sometimes’ and ‘rarely/never’. a. Missing cases = 2, 0.5%. b. Missing cases = 16, 3.8%.

Analysis of young member skill in letting their friends know they like them by showing them or telling them reveals that almost all young members (96.7%) reported some skill in this area. Table 5.25 shows a higher proportion of young members reported they have good (48.2%) rather than very good (33.2%) or average (15.3%) skills. This pattern is replicated across age, community and sex.

While there are no significant differences related to age or community, females reported significantly better skills than males at letting their friends know they like them ($X^2 (3, N = 419) = 15.939, p = .001$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Skill in letting friends know they are liked (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38.8 (93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25.7 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>29.0 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>37.4 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>35.1 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>38.2 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>22.2 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community(^b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>37.0 (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>32.4 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>27.8 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33.2 (139)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D = disadvantaged community. M = middle-advantaged community. A = advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the four categories of ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘average’ and ‘bad/very bad’. a. Missing cases = 7, 1.6%; b. Missing cases = 21, 4.9%.

While a high proportion (88.9%) of young members reported their program helped them to share their feelings and thoughts (Table 5.24), a higher proportion (96.7%) reported having skill in letting their friends know they are liked (Table 5.25). Analysis of the relationship between learning in the program environment and skill shows that of young members who reported their program had always or
often helped them to learn to share their feelings and thoughts (n=280), the
majority also reported they had skill in letting their friends know they are liked
(97.1%, n=272). For a small number of these young people (2.9%, n=8), the
communication skills they reported learning in the program environment had not
translated into being able to let their friends know they are liked. Of those youth
who reported their program had rarely or never helped them to learn to share
their feelings and thoughts (n=47), the majority reported they had skill in letting
their friends know they are liked (93.6%, n=44). These young people credit their
skill development in this area to other developmental domains. These patterns
linking learning communication skills in the program environment and letting
friends know they are liked are highly significant ($x^2 (9, N = 418) = 49.657, p$
= .000).

Table 5.26. YDRP sample: Linking the learning to share feelings and thoughts in
the program environment with skill communicating feelings with friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letting friends know they are liked</th>
<th>Always (%)</th>
<th>Often (%)</th>
<th>Sometimes (%)</th>
<th>Rarely/never (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>47.8 (66)</td>
<td>30.4 (42)</td>
<td>16.7 (23)</td>
<td>5.1 (7)</td>
<td>100.0 (138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>31.7 (64)</td>
<td>34.7 (70)</td>
<td>25.2 (51)</td>
<td>8.4 (17)</td>
<td>100.0 (202)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>14.1 (9)</td>
<td>32.8 (21)</td>
<td>21.9 (14)</td>
<td>31.3 (20)</td>
<td>100.0 (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad/very bad</td>
<td>21.4 (3)</td>
<td>35.7 (5)</td>
<td>21.4 (3)</td>
<td>21.4 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34.0 (142)</td>
<td>33.0 (138)</td>
<td>21.8 (91)</td>
<td>11.2 (47)</td>
<td>100.0 (418)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 5.24 and 5.25 due to missing cases. Chi-square is based on the data categories presented in this table.

Sub-section 2. YDRP and AHWS sub-sample

To assess whether young members matched other young people on their
communication skills, I compared 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS sub-
samples. Across all three socio-demographic categories, young people within the
YDRP sample reported higher levels of positive communication skills.
Table 5.27. YDRP and AHWS sub-sample: 12 and 13 year olds ability to communicate positively with friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>YDRP</th>
<th>AHWS</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skilled in letting friends know they are liked (%(n))</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100.0 (53)a</td>
<td>87.1 (378)b</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>92.3 (24)a</td>
<td>67.9 (304)b</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 year old</td>
<td>96.0 (24)a</td>
<td>77.4 (632)b</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 year old</td>
<td>98.1 (53)a</td>
<td>76.9 (50)b</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>95.2 (20)c</td>
<td>75.1 (298)d</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>97.6 (40)c</td>
<td>77.7 (292)d</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100.0 (13)d</td>
<td>84.6 (88)d</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>97.5 (77)</td>
<td>77.1 (885)</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This table only reports the aggregated data on YDRP good and very good skill and AHWS Yes! and yes skill in letting friends know they are liked. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community.

a. Missing cases=18, 18.6%; b. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; c. Missing cases=22, 22.7%; d. Missing cases=6, 0.7%.

Young 12 to 13 year olds within the YDRP sub-sample reported significantly better skills communicating that they liked their friends than their peers within the AHWS sub-sample ($x^2(2, N = 961) = 17.752, p=.000$). Table 5.27 shows both females and males in the YDRP sub-sample reported better skills in communicating they liked their friends than their peers in the AHWS. This difference between the two sub-samples is moderately significant for males ($x^2(2, N = 474) = 6.969, p=.031$) and females ($x^2(2, N = 487) = 7.727, p=.021$). Overall, within both sub-samples, females are significantly more likely than males to be able to let their friends know they like them (YDRP ($x^2(4, N = 93) = 11.787, p=.019$); AHWS ($x^2(3, N = 882) = 75.193, p=.000$)).

While the difference between 12 and 13 year olds within the YDRP and the AHWS sub-samples is non-significant, the difference between sub-samples is highly significant. Both ages in the YDRP sub-sample are more likely to have better skills in letting friends know they like them than their peers in the AHWS (12 year
olds ($x^2(2, N = 842) = 5.282, p=.071$); 13 year olds ($x^2(2, N = 119) = 11.670, p=.003$)).

In both the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples, increased skill in letting friends know they like them is linked to increased advantage. Although this relationship between community advantage and reported ability to let friends know they like them is non-significant within the YDRP sub-sample, it is moderately significant within the AHWS sub-sample ($x^2(6, N = 877) = 16.185, p=.013$). Analysis of community advantage between the sub-samples reveals significant differences between YDRP and AHWS youth living in disadvantaged ($x^2(2, N = 418) = 4.717, p=.095$) and middle-advantaged ($x^2(2, N = 417) = 9.066, p=.011$) communities.

The differences between skill level in the two sub-samples is consistent with research which shows that sustained involvement in organised activities is associated with positive relationships with peers (Good, Willoughby, & Fritjers, 2009, p. 1167). These differences may be partly explained by McGee at al. (2006, pp. 13-15) who found an association between participation in extra-curricular activities and higher levels of peer attachment in adolescence. They argue that participation in organised activities may help to widen and strengthen young people’s social networks. As well, they hypothesise that if participation leads to less risky behaviour this may be a participation factor which contributes to less conflict and better relationships with others.

In summary, young people’s perspectives on whether being involved in their program had helped them to share their feelings and thoughts revealed that two thirds of young members reported their program had *always or often* helped them to share their feelings and thoughts. There are no significant sex, age, or community related patterns of difference associated with young member
experiences of this practice. In the YDRP there are no significant differences related to age or community, however, females have significantly better overall skill than males at letting their friends know they like them. Both females and males in the YDRP sub-sample reported significantly better skills than youth in the AHWS. While the difference between 12 and 13 year olds within the YDRP and the AHWS sub-samples is non-significant, the difference between sub-samples is highly significant for both age groups. In both sub-samples young people living in disadvantaged communities reported the lowest level of skill in communicating with friends, but this difference is only significant for young people in the more representative AHWS sub-sample.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a summary of key findings from research conducted in Study Two exploring the contextual, structural involvement and life-skill outcome dimensions of young member characteristics in the program and individual domains. This work contributes to the second core research question: What are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs? By drawing on youth perspectives, this chapter presents a youth-focused view on how their community program participation impacts on their lives.

In section 5.2, I used socio-demographic data to explore the contextual dimension of young member characteristics. This work involved first profiling the 12 to 18 year olds in the YDOP young member population and the YDRP sample of young members, and second, comparing the 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and AHWS sub-samples. There are three main findings.
First, the age, sex and community characteristics of young people in the YDRP sample are broadly reflective of the YDOP population. Participating youth in the YDOP population and the YDRP sub-sample are predominantly drawn from middle-advantaged communities, involving slightly more females than males and peaking at age 14. The key differences between the YDOP population and the YDRP sample are the larger proportion of young people from disadvantaged communities and the extension of the membership peak across the 14 and 15 year old cohorts within the YDRP sample. This indicates that the YDRP sample largely matches the YDOP 12 to 18 year old population on the three available points of comparison.

Second, the YDRP sample of young members has a similar level of Indigenous Australian and LOTE cultural diversity to the Queensland population. Compared to the Australian population, the YDRP also has a similar proportion of males, but not females, who identify as having a disability. The greatest identified difference, between the Queensland population and the YDRP young member sample is the much higher level of religious activity attendance. This difference was also evident between the two sub-samples with adolescents in the more representative AHWS reporting a much lower level of religious activity involvement more closely matching the Australian adult population rates. Future analysis of the religious involvement dimension of the YDRP sample will add to our understanding about how religion may interact with life-skill outcomes.

Third, this analysis supports the argument that a diversity of young people are engaged in community youth development programs. Improving the accessibility of programs for the groups of young people who have lower participation rates will, however, increase this diversity. In particular, there is a
lower participation rate of younger males aged 12 to 13, older females aged 15 and over, young people from disadvantaged and advantaged communities and young females with a disability. Importantly, while both male and female involvement reduces as they age, female participation falls at a significantly higher rate than male participation. This finding adds a new dimension to the literature discussed in Chapter 2 exploring the link between sex and involvement. New research may shed light on whether this greater exodus from being involved by females is due to predominantly positive or negative life-influences.

In section 5.3 of this chapter, I used the number of activities and programs or the breadth of activity participation to illustrate the structural involvement dimension of young member characteristics. There are four main findings from this analysis.

First, the YDRP data on involvement indicates the majority of community program members are engaged in a breadth of other youth and sporting clubs, programs and activities. This pattern is replicated in the YDRP sub-sample of 12 to 13 year olds and is also present within the AHWS sub-sample. The high involvement level in both sub-samples illustrates McGee et al. (2006, p. 3) argument that participation in a diversity of organised youth clubs, groups and activities is relatively common. While young people in the AHWS reported a variety of activities, including community programs, are available in their local community, it is not possible to estimate how many actually participate in these programs. It is, however, likely that the proportion who participate in community youth development programs would be lower in the AHWS compared to the YDRP. Balsano et al. (2009, pp. 256; also Nelson & Gastic, 2009, p. 1181), for example, found that in their sample of out-of-school time involvement data the proportion of
young people involved in community programs was low. However, when they included participation in other programs, the proportion of involved children is much higher.

Second, there are no significant differences in breadth of involvement for males or females in the YDRP sample for either participation in other youth clubs and programs or sporting clubs and activities beyond their primary program. These findings are both typical and unusual. As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have found no gendered influences on involvement they have, although, consistently found a significant gendered pattern of activity choice with males choosing sporting activities more than females (Crean, 2012, p. 186; Fredricks & Eccles, 2010, p. 329; Wimer at al. 2006, p. 5; Zambon et al. 2010, p. 93). Analysis of involvement in sporting programs, clubs and activities in the two sub-samples also revealed a non-significant gendered pattern of involvement. Consistent with the literature, analysis of breadth within the AHWS sub-sample did, however, reveal a significant gendered pattern of participation with more males than females involved in sporting activities.

Third, there is a distinct pattern of age-based involvement in the YDRP sample with engagement in youth clubs and programs increasing and engagement in sports activities and clubs significantly decreasing as young people age. These findings are again both typical and unusual. As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have also found that as young people age their involvement rate decreases (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003, p. 40; Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, pp. 16-17; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 4; King, Imms, et al. 2013, p. 203; McGee et al. 2006, pp. 7, 12). While non-significant, the increased participation in youth programs and clubs is, however, unusual. This pattern may be partly explained by
the scholarly argument that older youth are attracted to programs and activities where they have increased freedom from supervision, independence, and leadership and decision making opportunities (Jones & Perkins, 2006, p. 102; Libby & Sedonaen, 2006; Rhodes, 2004, p. 154; Wheeler & Edlebeck, 2006, p. 90).

The pattern of increased involvement in youth development programs for some young people as they age, suggests there is continued intrinsic and extrinsic value to be gained from these programs. The commencement eligibility age of 14 years for Dukes, discussed previously in Section 1, may explain some of the increase in program engagement as young people age. Dukes is, however, largely youth-led and youth-determined (Dukes, 2006) and this may also partly explain why older youth complement their primary program with participation in Dukes.

Fourth, young members in the YDRP sample living in advantaged communities have a broader breadth of engagement in other activities than their peers living in middle-advantaged and disadvantaged communities. For the 12 to 13 year olds this significant pattern was replicated within the more representative AHWS youth sub-sample, but not the YDRP sub-sample. Overall, these findings are consistent with the scholarly work discussed in Chapter 2 which has shown how disadvantage and poverty can shape and limit youth involvement choices (Borden, Perkins, Villarruel et al. 2006, p. 201; Bottrell, Armstrong, & France, 2010, p. 63; Cuevo, 2011, p. 135; McGee et al. 2006; Skattebol, et al. 2012, p. 69; Wimer et al. 2006, pp. 14-15).

In section 5.4 of this chapter, I used life-skills to illustrate the outcome dimension of young member characteristics across their contextual socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex and community. I focused this analysis on exploring one life-skill indicator for each core life-skill area.
Analysis of the influence of the program environment on young people's development reveals young people reported their program helped them the most with learning how to work things out (82.3%), followed by helping them to share their feelings and thoughts (66.8%) and lastly with learning temper control (59.6%). Over four-fifths (85.3%) reported a program environment with a highly positive attitude towards volunteer fundraising.

Overall, this analysis shows that learning problem solving and learning to share feelings and thoughts in the program environment are not influenced by young people's age, sex or community. While young members learning temper control and their peers' attitudes towards volunteering in the program environment are not influenced by community or age, they are influenced by sex. Learning temper control in the program environment was moderately more effective for males than females. Differences in attitudes towards volunteer fundraising are also significantly different with a higher proportion of females than males reporting a highly positive attitude towards volunteer fundraising in their program group.

For all four life-skills, the relationship between the influence of the program environment and the level of skill or behaviour was highly significant. The majority of young people who reported some program influence also reported high level skill or behaviours. Only a small proportion of young people who reported they had learnt skills in the program environment are unable to translate these skills into their daily lives. This suggests a high level of program efficacy. For each life-skill a small proportion of young people who reported having skills or positive behaviours did not credit the program domain with influencing their learning or
behaviour. This suggests there is a group of young people for whom taking part in their program is related to other intrinsic or extrinsic incentives that are not associated with gaining the life-skills examined in this chapter.

Of the four life-skills examined, young members reported their best skill was letting their friends know they are liked (96.7%), followed by temper control (84.5%) and problem solving skills (79.8%). The intersection between these skills and the influence of youth socio-demographic characteristics reveals youth problem solving and temper control skills are not influenced by age, sex or community. Skill in communicating with friends is not influenced by age or community; however, females reported significantly better skill in letting friends know they like them than males. Young members are also shown to be active volunteers (81.5%). Analysis of the intersection between volunteering and the influence of youth socio-demographic characteristics showed sex, age and community did not influence the number of times young members volunteered.

To explore if young members matched other young people on their life-skills and behaviours, I compared the responses of 12 to 13 year olds in the YDRP and the AHWS. These analyses showed that youth in the YDRP sub-sample, compared to their peers in the AHWS sub-sample, reported significantly better ability to work their problems out, control their temper and communicate with friends. Comparison of volunteering activity showed a considerable number of young people in both sub-samples participated in volunteering activity. Young people in the YDRP sub-sample, however, still reported significantly higher levels of volunteering activity than their peers in the AHWS sub-sample.
The intersection between these skills and the influence of youth socio-demographic characteristics suggests that participation in these community programs may act to level the impact sex, age and community on life-skill outcomes. This is illustrated in each summary of the within and between YDRP and AHWS comparative analyses for these socio-demographic indicators. For many of the socio-demographic characteristics shown to influence a life-skill there is less of an impact in the young member YDRP sub-sample than there is in the more representative AHWS sub-sample.

First, analysis of sex showed differences between the sexes are greater within the AHWS sub-sample and between the AHWS and the YDRP females, rather than the AHWS and the YDRP males.

The within sub-sample analysis shows that while males in the AHWS and females in the YDRP sub-samples reported better problem solving skills these differences between the sexes are non-significant. Likewise, there was no significant difference in temper control between the sexes in either the YDRP or the AHWS sub-samples. Males and females within each sub-sample have very similar temper control skill. In contrast, females are significantly more likely than males to have skill in letting their friends know they like them. Within the AHWS this difference between the sexes was highly significant. In contrast, within the YDRP this difference was moderately significant. Comparison of volunteering activity showed that females are more likely than males to have taken part in volunteer activities in both sub-samples. This difference was, however, moderately significant in the AHWS but was not significant in the YDRP.

The between sample analysis shows that compared to their female peers in the AHWS, female young members had significantly higher problem solving skills,
temper control and skills in communicating with their friends. They are also significantly more likely to volunteer. In contrast, while male young members reported better life-skills than their male peers in the AHWS, there are fewer significant differences between the two groups of males. Males in the YDRP sub-sample have significantly better friendship communication skills and are significantly more likely to participate in volunteering activities than males in the AHWS.

Second, analysis of age showed few differences between the ages within the AHWS and YDRP subsamples. There are, however, significant differences between the age groups with both 12 and 13 year olds in the YDRP sub-sample reporting better life-skills than their 12 and 13 year old peers in the more representative AHWS sub-sample.

The within sub-sample analysis shows no significant differences between 12 and 13 year olds in the YDRP and the AHWS sub-samples in their temper control, ability to let their friends know they are liked and their volunteering activity. Within the YDRP, but not the AHWS, 12 year olds reported moderately significant better problem solving skills than 13 year olds.

The between sample analysis revealed that young members aged 12 years have significantly better problem solving skill, temper control, and skill in communicating with their friends than their 12 year old peers in the AHWS. In contrast, young members aged 13 years had significantly better temper control and skills in communicating with their friends, but not problem solving. Both 12 and 13 year olds are significantly more likely to participate in volunteering activities than their 12 and 13 year old peers in the AHWS.
Third, analysis of the contextual socio-demographic dimension of community showed the link between advantage and superior life-skills was stronger within the AHWS subsample.

The within sub-sample analysis shows that community advantage had less impact on young people’s life-skills in the YDRP. While a pattern of increased problem solving, temper control and skill in letting friends know they like them was linked to increased advantage in the YDRP, these differences are not significant. In contrast, within the AHWS the link between increased advantage and increased life-skill was significant for problem solving, temper control and skill in letting friends know they like them. For both the YDRP and the AHWS young people living in middle-advantaged communities volunteered significantly more than young people living in disadvantaged or advantaged communities.

The between sample analysis shows that young members in the YDRP subsample living in advantaged communities had significantly better problem solving skill, and temper control skill than their peers in the AHWS living in advantaged communities. In contrast, young members living in disadvantaged and middle-advantaged communities have significantly better temper control and skills in communicating with their friends. Both young members living in disadvantaged and middle-advantaged communities reported higher levels of participation in volunteering activities than their AHWS peers.

The analysis presented in this chapter shows 12 to 13 year old community program participants have higher levels of activity in volunteering and better problem solving, temper control and positive communication skills than 12 to 13 year olds in the more representative sample. Since participation in the community programs profiled in this chapter is voluntary and, therefore, young people choose
to participate, these results are likely to be influenced by self-selection effects. Guest and McRee (2009, pp. 61-62) argue that while the personal characteristics of participants indicates selection effects, the fact that selection effects occur should not be problematic for research on developmental outcomes. They argue that selection effects are an essential part of the context of participation. They explain:

...activity participation never occurs in a vacuum where other participants, with whom activities usually foster direct interaction, are completely neutral. There are always certain factors, such as eligibility requirements and peer networks that facilitate the selection of certain youth into activity participation (pp.60-61).

Denault and Poulin (2009, p. 1210) argue that even though selection effects impact on who participates, this does not weaken the positive contribution made by organised programs to young people's lives. Similarly, Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, pp. 13, 34) argue that while youth most easily recruited into their after-school program are already “joiners”, almost all parents reported participation had resulted in significant positive developmental outcomes for their child. Importantly, Baldwin Grossman et al. (2002, p. 30) found that one third of young people had never taken part in any activities previous to joining their program.

While any interpretation about the influence of program participation on young people’s lives does need to take into account the impact of selection effects, young people’s testimony about the difference these programs make to their lives suggests a level of efficacy. It is also important to note that the differences between young people in the youth development sub-sample and the more representative sub-sample are not due to young people in the AHWS being uninvolved. As shown in Section 3, there is a high level of breadth of activity involvement in the AHWS
sub-sample. While it is not possible to identify the exact programs young people in the AHWS participate in, the differences between sub-samples may indicate that there are different developmental outcomes associated with different activity portfolios. The few program specific differences illustrated in this chapter, underscore the importance of understanding how the characteristics of different programs may interact differently with life-skill outcomes. These differences may also link to research discussed in Chapter 1, which suggests the quality of a program and its activities will influence whether, and how much, participation will have a negative, neutral or positive effect on a young person’s life (Feldman Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006, p. 515; McLaughlin & O’Brien-Strain, 2008, p. 313; Perkins & Borden, 2003, pp. 330-331; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a).

The significance of the higher levels of life-skills is emphasized by the research discussed in Chapter 2 which shows when young people are well equipped with life-skills they are more likely to reach their full intellectual potential and be happy, active, confident, healthy, and contributing family, peer group and community members. Overall, these results illustrate the argument presented in Chapter 2 that community programs are uniquely positioned to bring together young people with different class, race, age, sex and ability characteristics and help to address their experiences of exclusion.

In the next two chapters, I draw on data from Study One and Study Two to further explore my two core research questions which are focused on gaining a better understanding about the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland community programs and the characteristics of these programs.
In Chapter 6, I present the new good practice framework which illustrates the characteristics of community youth development programs and is a key research outcome from Study One. I illustrate the core theoretical, structural, operational and contextual themes of a strength-based approach to youth development program practice. While each of the principles and underlying indicators are distinctly different, there are many bidirectional linkages and effects between them. The summaries and examples which I use to describe each principle are illustrative and demonstrate the complexity of issues addressed by each principle.

In Chapter 7, I present a case study of the first principle, Learning and Development. This work illustrates the complex bi-directional links between the four program elements, theory, operation, structure, and context, profiled in Chapter 6 and the fifth program characteristic element, outcomes, profiled in this chapter. In this way, I illustrate the complex way in which these characteristic elements of programs combine to create the conditions for positive developmental outcomes.
Chapter 6. Characteristics of quality strength-based youth programs: A new good practice framework

6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored the socio-demographic, structural involvement and life-skill outcome dimensions of young member characteristics across the program and individual domains. This work addressed my second core research question on what are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs. I examined the community program population, the Queensland Youth Development Research Project (YDRP) sample, and compared two sub-samples of 12 to 13 year olds from the YDRP and a more representative sample of students from the Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey (AHWS).

First, I explored the contextual dimension of young member characteristics using socio-demographic data. This showed a diversity of young people are engaged in community youth development programs, however, older youth, young people from disadvantaged and advantaged communities and young people with a disability participate at lower rates. Second, I explored the structural involvement dimension of young member characteristics. This showed the majority of young members have a broad portfolio of activity involvement. Younger and advantaged youth, however, have the broadest portfolio of organised activity engagement. Third, I explored the life-skill outcome dimension of young member characteristics across four core illustrative life-skills: problem solving (critical thinking and cognitive skills); temper control (coping skills and self-management); volunteering (social and moral skills) and positive communication skills (communication skills).
This showed learning problem solving and positive communication was strongly associated with program participation. Importantly, this analysis showed 12 to 13 year old community program participants generally reported higher levels of activity in volunteering and better problem solving, temper control and positive communication skills. This exploration of the life-skill dimension of youth characteristics contributes to a better understanding about one of the five characteristic program elements – outcomes - discussed in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, I present the second of three results chapters and explore the second core research question on what are the characteristics of community youth development programs? I present the new good practice framework which illustrates these program characteristics and is a key research outcome from Study One. This work builds on four of the five characteristic program elements – theory, structure, operation and context - discussed in Chapter 2 and represents a synthesis of academic, youth and practitioner expertise. Chapter 4 documents the participatory action research methodological approach used to bring together a diversity of perspectives to shape this framework. The following eight Queensland youth sector stakeholders were involved in this work: Impact: Youth organisations reducing crime (Impact); The Boys’ Brigade (BB); The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award (Dukes); The Emergency Services Cadets Program (ESC); Girl Guides Queensland (Guides); Lions Clubs International Leo Clubs (Lions/Leos); The Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) and Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLS).

The new strength-based good practice framework shown in Figure 1 illustrates the six principles which support the framework. These principles focus on the themes of: learning and development; leadership and decision making; an inclusive ethos; community service; partnerships and networking; and ethical
First, I will present the key structural strengths of the framework. I discuss how the language used can address overt prescriptiveness, how a simplified structure can address repetition and the provision of examples of action can address a lack of clarity. Second, I will describe each of the six principles and 36 indicators with reference to some of the 288 examples of action. The examples of action are described more fully in the published framework (Seymour, 2012a). I show how the principle summaries and examples detailed in this chapter provide an illustration of the way in which the theoretical, operational, structural and
contextual program elements introduced in Chapter 2 meld together in the program environment across these six principles. The complex bi-directional links between these four elements and the fifth program element, outcomes are described in Chapter 7.

6.2. Structural strengths of the new good practice framework

Gaining a better understanding about good practice is important because the better the program quality, the better a program can support young people to achieve positive developmental outcomes. The framework has distinctive structural strengths developed by addressing three key criticisms of previous good practice frameworks: prescriptiveness, repetition and low clarity. To address the first criticism, that good practice frameworks can be too prescriptive (Graupner, Motahari-Nezhad, Singhal, & Basu, 2009; P. Wright, 2008, pers. comm. 4 February), care was taken to use broad themes and non-prescriptive language to craft the text of the framework. The new principles and indicators are neither overly prescriptive, nor so broad as to be meaningless.

To address the second criticism, that good practice frameworks can be too repetitive (IEAA, 2008, p. vii; Working-Group, 2006), the known understandings about program good practice have been distilled into the six distinctly different principles and 36 indicators which support the framework. Each principle, the underlying indicators and the concepts which support them have been designed to operate as a whole, linked to and supporting the other principles and indicators in the framework. Synthesising these links is essential because there are many common contextual, theoretical, operational, structural and outcome concepts which run through youth work practice.
To address the third criticism, that good practice frameworks are difficult to implement because it is unclear how they can be translated into action (Delgado, 2004, p. 26), the new framework illustrates each indicator through examples of action. These examples of action help to make the meaning and intent of each indicator clearer to the reader. While the concept linkages across the framework mean there is a low level of repetition, each example is tailored to relate to the specific indicator it supports. The ways in which good practice can be delivered depends greatly on the specific characteristics of the organisation and program and therefore there are differences. These differences are diverse and, as described in Chapters 1 and 2, can be expressed in different theoretical, contextual, structural, operational and outcome characteristics such as paid and volunteer staffing profiles, resourcing, program curriculum and young members (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 11; Berlin et al. 2007; Gallagher et al. 2005; Lawford et al. 2012). By providing a range of examples of actions, differing in complexity and scope, the framework recognises there is no single way to deliver a program and program differences will impact on the type, range and capacity of practices to be developed, implemented and sustained. The actions therefore cater for program diversity and for the different skill levels, opportunities and aspirations of those who may use the framework. These differences are illustrated throughout the following six principles.

6.3. Principle One: Learning and Development

The first principle in the framework, Learning and Development, focuses on the education needs of both youth workers and program participants. It is comprised of nine indicators (Table 6.1) and 70 examples of action (Chapter 7). A more detailed case study setting out the full complexity of issues addressed by this
principle is presented in Chapter 7. Two key arguments underpin this principle. Firstly, inclusive organisations and programs play an important role in the education of young and older people; supporting them to be active participants in, and contributors to, society (Ledwith, 2011, p. 85, London, 2002, p. 8; Quintelier, 2008; Rouse & Clawson, 1992). Secondly, a commitment to education can help to build organisation and program sustainability by supporting recruitment, development and retention of staff and youth (Deschenes & McDonald, 2003, p. 7; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 292; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 13).

I use the term learning as the development of personal knowledge about the world and one’s own place in it through reflection, instruction, experience and observation. Likewise, I use development as the growth of personality and character through the formation of values and relationships. Learning and development therefore constitute education as understood in a broad sense including informal and formal education.

The first indicator emphasises the provision of learning, development and recognition opportunities for everyone (Table 6.1). Indicator 1 is influenced by the idea that formal and informal education and recognition opportunities are important for everyone (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47; Working-Group, 2006; Impact, personal communication, 2007). A culture of life-long learning can be fostered by actions which increase access to learning, development, and recognition opportunities (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47, 2003e, p. 37; ESC & PCYC, personal communication, 2008; Working-Group, 2006) and use incentives to encourage and reward participation (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 13; Pianta & Allen, 2008, p. 25; Salter, 2010, p. 57; Scott, 1990; Wooder, 2010, p. 90).
Table 6.1. Principle 1 indicators: Supporting learning and development

<table>
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<th>Principle 1 indicators:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Providing learning and development opportunities and recognising learning achievements is a high priority (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47; Working-Group, 2006; Impact, personal communication, 2007).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Using strength-based practices each person is supported to identify their existing skills and knowledge and to document and achieve learning and development goals (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The core values, skills and knowledge needed by program leaders are identified and provide the basis for recruitment, development and training (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47; Impact, personal communication, 2008).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The organisation has a succession planning strategy that is integrated into its training and development structure (BB, personal communication, 2008).</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. A safe physical learning and activity environment is provided for participants (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Innovative, supportive and integrated approaches to learning and development are adopted using a combination of instruction, observation, experience and reflection (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; PCYC &amp; ESC, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Activities are structured sequentially to build and maintain positive learning outcomes (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; Hansen, Larson, &amp; Dworkin, 2003, p. 29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Program leaders can easily access mentoring, support and training (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29, BB, personal communication, 2008, Roundtable, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Activities are engaging and meaningful (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; Working-Group, 2006; Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 43).</td>
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The second indicator highlights the adoption of individual learning and development practices which help everyone to achieve their education goals (Table 6.1). Indicator 2 is influenced by the idea that when each person is supported to identify and achieve their own learning and development goals this will have flow on benefits to groups, organisations and society (Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 5, 2003e, p. 7; ANTA, 2002, p. 11; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, pp. 290-294; Scott, 1990, pp. vi, 200). Contextual, structural and operational matters can each act as incentives and as barriers to learning (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 25). Individual learning and
development can be supported by actions which address these barriers and increase participation incentives by supporting everyone to: identify and record their learning needs and goals; set achievable goals; record and celebrate achievements; and identify the link between existing and new competencies and future opportunities (ANTA, 2002, p. 11; Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 5; 2002e, p. 47; Catalano et al. 2004, p. 108; MacNeil & McClean, 2006, p. 100; Stacey et al. 2010b, p. 81).

The third Indicator specifies understanding and defining program leader core competencies (values, skills and knowledge) and using them to underpin the basis for recruitment, development and training (Table 6.1). Program leader recruitment, development and training are most effective when they are underpinned by up-to-date understanding of the core values, skills and knowledge needed to successfully work with young people in a program environment (Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 30; Meyer, Miller, & Herman, 1993, pp. 100, 102; Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, pp. 221, 223). Indicator 3 can be supported by actions which help experienced staff mentor program leaders to identify their strengths and learning needs (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47; Impact, personal communication, 2008) and which support broad engagement in the evaluation of program leader training curriculum (Lions, personal communication, 2008; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, p. 321).

The fourth Indicator is underpinned by the recognition that widespread benefits for individuals, groups, organisations and programs will flow from integrating succession planning into the training and development curriculum (Table 6.1). Succession planning supports the sustainability of organisations and programs (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 49, 2003c, p. 27; Kress, 2006, p. 53) and requires
the targeted use of learning and development activities and opportunities (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 36; BB, personal communication, 2008). For succession planning to be most effective, paid and volunteer staff and young people need to experience it as a positive and constructive process where strategies are fairly applied, individuals are supported and each person is able to gain the skills and knowledge they need (Davis & Smith, 2012, p. 75; Skinner, 2010, pp. 45-46; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 11). Actions supporting Indicator 4 can include the rotation of roles and responsibilities to help build a broad knowledge and skill base across multiple tasks within the organisation (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 57; London, 2002), and implementing a leader development policy and approach to support the identification, recognition and training of potential leaders (Roundtable, 2010; Skinner, 2010, pp. 45-46).

The fifth indicator requires the provision of a safe physical learning and activity environment for participants (Table 6.1). Providing a safe physical environment for young and older people is an essential part of the work of inclusive organisations and programs (Ausyouth, 2003a, pp. 7, 9, 10; Côté, Strachan, & Fraser-Thoma, 2008, p. 39). The provision of a safe social and psychological environment is addressed in Principle Three An Inclusive Ethos. Actions under Indicator 5 link the provision of a safe physical environment with education (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29, 2003e, p. 12; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005; Working-Group, 2006) and accessible information about safe behaviour (ESC, personal communication, 2008).

The sixth indicator emphasises innovative, supportive and integrated approaches to learning and development using mixed teaching methodologies (Table 6.1). Young people have multiple learning styles. For the best learning
outcomes, program activities need to use mixed learning methodologies of instruction, observation, experience and critical reflection (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; Bandura, 1977; Cunningham, 2009; PCYC & ESC, personal communication, 2008; Pianta & Allen, 2008; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, pp. 53-54). Indicator 6 may be supported by actions which teach program leaders about the different ways young people learn and develop (Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 333). Actions under this indicator can also encourage young people to practice being role models and to learn from others; valuing their skills, knowledge and experience (Taylor & Bressler, 2000, pp. 53-54; Holdsworth et al. 2005, pp. 7, 70, 101; PCYC, personal communication, 2008).

The seventh indicator specifies that activities need to be structured sequentially, ensuring age and developmentally appropriate activities are at the heart of a program curriculum (Table 6.1). Indicator 7 focuses on building and maintaining positive learning outcomes for kids and young adults. The need to build positive learning and development outcomes for program leaders is addressed in Indicator 8. Since negative outcomes can also result from activity participation, Indicator 7 places an emphasis on positive learning outcomes (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003, p. 29; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). Young people are diverse, come to program activities with different skills and knowledge (MacCallum & Beltman, 2002, p. 4; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12) and will also differ in age and developmental level (Jacobs Foundation, 2011, p. 10). Actions supporting this indicator emphasise a program curriculum which teaches a number of lessons and sequentially builds a range of practical skills and life-skills over time (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 14).
The eighth indicator emphasises the provision of easily accessible mentoring, support and training for program leaders (Table 6.1). Skilled program leaders are important for successful work with young people, each other and the community. An organisational culture of life-long education can support the professional development of program leaders in two key ways: firstly by valuing and utilising their existing skills and knowledge (Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 290; Hunter, 2010, p. 35; Jones & Perkins, 2006, p. 102; Speer, 2008, p. 217) and, secondly, by recognising and developing their potential (Grossman & Furano, 2002; Meyer et al. 1993, pp. 100, 102; Skinner, 2010, p. 50). This indicator supports the operationalisation of leader core competencies encapsulated in Indicator 3. Actions under this indicator can include regular paid and volunteer staff meetings (Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 7), coaching and mentoring meetings with more experienced paid or volunteer staff and providing a dedicated support person or hotline (Smith & Akiva, 2008, p. 195; Lloyd-Jones, 2010, p. 23; Miller, Kobes, & Forney, 2008, p. 183).

The ninth indicator promotes the provision of engaging and meaningful activities (Table 6.1). There is a strong connection between curriculum appeal and program effectiveness (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 4). Five key purposeful features, which support youth engagement, underpin Indicator 9. These features are that activities are fun, meaningful, relate to everyday life experiences, foster a world-view and encourage a positive vision for the future. Actions supporting this indicator illustrate the combined importance of: activity design (Ausyouth, 2003a, p. 11; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 28; Codling, 2010, p. 40; Gambone, 2001, pp. 279, 287; leader training (Grossman & Furano, 2002, p. 9); youth voice (Bell, Vromen, & Collin, 2008; Holdsworth et al. 2005, p. 104; Bolzan &

6.4. Principle Two: Leadership and Decision Making

The second principle, *Leadership and Decision Making*, focuses on young people’s needs and interests in shaping their organisations and programs. It comprises five indicators (Table 6.2) and 43 examples of action (Seymour, 2012a). This principle recognises that actively engaging with young people in leadership and decision making is a central feature of strength-based organisations and programs (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 40; Camino, 2005, p. 1; Holdsworth, 2006, p. 15; London, 2002, p. 8; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12; Martinek & Hellison, 2009). I use the term leadership in reference to the process of individuals being responsible for specific organisational or program roles, taking the initiative in working with, supporting and directing others and being a role model. Likewise I refer to decision making as the process by which options are considered and a choice is made. Good leadership and decision making will utilise skills from across the four core life-skill areas introduced in Chapter 2: critical thinking and cognitive skills; coping skills and self-management; social and moral skills; and communication skills (The Jacobs Foundation, 2011).

Two key arguments underpin this second principle. First, both young and older people have important roles to play in improving young people’s participation in leadership and decision making. Second, all young people are capable of being leaders and decision makers.
Table 6.2. Principle 2 indicators: Supporting leadership and decision making

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<th>Principle 2 indicators:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Organisational decision making and leadership development processes are shaped in partnership with young people (Bell, Vromen, &amp; Collin, 2008, pp. 11, 13, 15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Young people are supported to be active leaders in the organisation (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 25, 33; Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The participation of young people in organisational decision making is active, purposeful, valued and respected (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 25; Impact, personal communication, 2008; Guides, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Young people are encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles in program and activity planning, delivery and evaluation (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 25, 33, 37).</td>
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The first indicator emphasises the importance of shaping organisational decision making and leadership development processes in partnership with young people (Table 6.2). Shaping participation processes in partnership with young people better supports their participation, because the methods chosen are more likely to be accessible, engaging and relevant to them (Bell, Vromen, & Collin, 2008; Leong, Paine, & Hughes, 2010, p. 104). Actions supporting Indicator 1 work to increase inclusion - supporting young and older members to engage with each other as they work together to shape and create participation opportunities (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 36, 2003d, p. 28; Hinton, 2008, p. 290; Kellett, 2009, p. 50; MacNeil & McClean, 2006, p. 100; Partridge, 2005, p. 188; CPSU, 2004, p. 7; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 62; Tisdall, 2008, pp. 4, 20).

The second indicator focuses on facilitating young people’s involvement in, and understanding of, formal organisational leadership roles (Table 6.2). Underpinning Indicator 2 is the understanding that significant adults and an organisational culture of lifelong education are essential for successful youth
engagement in organisational leadership roles. This indicator introduces a focus on leadership at the organisational level. Leadership at the program level is addressed by Indicator 4. Actions supporting this indicator explore the use of education to support older and younger people share leadership of the organisation and understand how their own use of power can include or exclude people (Holdsworth et al. 2005, p. 80; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. xv). Moreover, actions can include the use of mixed teaching methodologies and the provision of flexible and diverse organisational leadership opportunities (Guides, personal communication, 2008; also Davis & Smith, 2012, pp. 83-85; London, 2002; MacNeil & McClean, 2006, pp. 99-100; Speer, 2008, p. 217; White, 2001, p. 41; Whitlock & Hamilton, 2003, p. 46).

*The third indicator specifies an organisational approach to youth participation in decision making that is active, purposeful, valued and respected* (Table 6.2). Indicator 3 recognises that organisational decision making can involve a wider group of young people beyond the formally recognised youth leadership group. Strength-based youth work practices support an organisational culture where young people are asked for their opinion, are listened to and have influence (Broadbent & Papadopoulos, 2010, p. 253; Hancock, Hyjer, & Jones, 2012, p. 84; Miller, et al. 2008, p. 188). Actions under this indicator include providing young people with varied conventional (e.g. meetings) and alternative (e.g. online mechanisms) opportunities to actively take part in decision making (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 25, 2003e, p. 31; Bell, Vromen, & Collin, 2008, p. 11).

*The fourth indicator highlights the important and varied leadership opportunities a supportive program environment can offer young people through participation in program and activity planning, delivery and evaluation* (Table 6.2).
All young people are encouraged to develop leadership skills and to take responsibility for a full range of program tasks and activities (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 33; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 3; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 19). Leadership at the organisation level is addressed by Indicator 2. An action which supports Indicator 4 is to design activities with multiple components and tasks. This enables program leaders to better support young people in a range of leadership roles appropriate to different levels of knowledge and skills (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29, 2003a, p. 7, 2003e15; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 7; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12; Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, p. 223).

The fifth indicator stresses the importance of involving young people in decisions about their program and activities (Table 6.2). Indicator 5 supports the idea that there are a multitude of individual and group-based decision making opportunities which can be utilised with young people throughout the program and activity curricula (Ausyouth 2001e, pp. 25, 37; Royal Commonwealth Society 2004, p. 7; Perkins & Borden, 2003, pp. 332-333; Wood, 2006, p. 28). Flexible non-core content is important because often only small changes are needed to substantially improve young people’s experiences (Horton, Kraftl, & Tucker, 2011, p. 43). Actions supporting this indicator can include the provision of varied opportunities for young people to be involved in, or responsible for, program and activity decisions using youth-led, adult-led and intergenerational processes. Young people can play a role in: thinking about, designing and evaluating the activities they take part in (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 25,37; Larson & Angus, 2011, 288; Zeldin, Camino, & Mook 2005, p. 122); the structure and operation of the program (Perkins & Borden, 2003, pp. 332-333); the ways in which they participate (CPSU, 2004, p. 7); the group norms or rules governing their

6.5. Principle Three: An Inclusive Ethos

The third principle in the framework, *An Inclusive Ethos*, addresses program leader and young member needs and experiences and contends that nurturing an inclusive ethos will greatly enrich organisations, programs, participants and the local community. It is comprised of eight indicators (Table 6.3) and 66 examples of action (Seymour, 2012a). Underpinning this third principle is the argument that an inclusive ethos requires a commitment to social justice which is a fundamental component of youth work (Martinek & Hellison, 2009, pp. 27-37). Social justice is a complex, dynamic, utopian and flexible concept which has been theorised, defined and used in many different ways (Hytten & Bettez, 2011; Konstantoni, 2011, cited in Davis & Smith 2012, p. 40; Williams & Cooney, 2006; Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006). Beck and Purcell (2010) define social justice as:

...respecting and valuing diversity and difference; challenging oppressive and discriminatory actions and attitudes; addressing power imbalances between individuals, within groups and society; committing to pursue civil and human rights for all... [and] seeking and promoting policy and practices that are just and enhance equality whilst challenging those that are not (p. 15).

Youth-inclusive organisations and programs strengthen communities and help to make them better places to live (Ausyouth, 2002b, p. 8). They also support young people to be civically engaged and to advance social justice in the world (Lerner, 2005, p. xii; Quintelier, 2008).
This third principle is underpinned by the vision of an organisational and program environment where inclusion and respect for all people regardless of their backgrounds, opinions, experience, skills, interests, needs and capacity is fostered (Gilchrist & Rauf, 2006, p. 22). This necessitates the provision of ongoing support to help staff and young members build a program and organisational environment which is free from bias and discrimination (Lerner, 2004, p. 124) and where the use of power and control is a conscious and reflective exercise (Beck & Purcell, 2010, pp. 73-74; Foley & Leverett, 2011, p. 5; Ledwith, 2011, pp. 146-7; Stacey et al. 2010a).

**Table 6.3. Principle 3 indicators: Supporting an inclusive ethos**

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<th>Principle 3 indicators:</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Encouraging and valuing new ideas and different ways of thinking about and doing things (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 39; Working-Group, 2006)</td>
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<td>3. Advice from a range of people, groups and organisations is actively sought, valued and used to inform organisational decision making (Ausyouth 2001e, p. 31).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Rigorous and fair volunteer and paid staff recruitment and retention processes are used encouraging a range of people to become involved and stay involved (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 27, 41; Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 56; Dukes, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The program provides a positive, supportive and safe social and psychological environment (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 27; Working-Group, 2006).</td>
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<td>6. Programs are developed, implemented and evaluated using a variety of methods and involving a range of stakeholders (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 27, 31, 37, 49; 2003c, p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There is flexibility in program design and implementation to accommodate the varying and evolving requirements of a range of young people, families and communities (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 27; 2003c, p. 38).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The program offers opportunities for young people to experience and learn to value difference (Working-Group, 2006).</td>
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</table>

_The first indicator points to the contribution a strategic business and governance approach can make to achieve an inclusive ethos (Table 6.3). The_
process of promoting, nurturing and maintaining an inclusive ethos can be more successful when governance frameworks are supported by a clear framework of social justice policies, procedures, strategies and actions (Gilchrist & Rauf, 2006, p. 22; Miller et al. p. 185). Actions to support success under Indicator 1 can include adopting a participatory cycle of evaluation, reflection and action to ensure high level policies are effectively implemented and translated into practices which support an inclusive ethos (Scott, 1990, pp. 146-147).

The second indicator focuses on encouraging and valuing new ideas and different ways of thinking about and doing things (Table 6.3). New ideas and different ways of thinking about and doing things help organisations and programs remain vibrant and relevant to different circumstances, youth, community and social needs and to respond to shifting social, cultural, place and spatial contexts (Chan & Short, 2011; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 19; Negroponte, 2003, p. 2). Actions supporting Indicator 2 can include: inviting people external to the program or organisation to present new ideas (Chan & Short, 2011, p. 138; Dukes, personal communication, 2008; Davies, R. 2014, p. 226); and developing a culture of openness to new ideas, freedom and innovation (Davis, 2013, pp. 12-15; Davis, Aruldoss, McNair, & Bizas, 2012, pp. 186-187; Wandersman, 2009, p. 5; Wheeler & Edlebeck, 2006, p. 92; Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005).

The third indicator highlights the practice of seeking diverse expertise to inform organisational decision making (Table 6.3). By bringing different perspectives to problem solving, an organisation or program can find unexpected new ideas and ways of doing and viewing things (Auszouth, 2001e, p. 39; Davis & Smith, 2012, pp. 41, 78; Negroponte, 2003, p. 2; Petrie, 2011, p. 136; Working-Group, 2006). Bringing a diversity of voices to decision making can lead to conflict...
Building trust and using a strength-based collective approach to working with uncertainty can, however, create opportunities, support change, and sustain and transform individuals, programs and organisations (Beck & Purcell, 2010, p. 23; Gilchrist & Rauf, 2006, p. 4; Martinek & Hellison, 2009; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 67; Tisdall, 2008, p. 423). Davis (2013, p. 8) argues acknowledging conflict and uncertainty early in decision making processes is important for collaborative decision making. Actions under Indicator 3 can include using a variety of formal and informal mechanisms to involve different interests, opinions and ideas in decision making (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 31; SLS & ESC, personal communication, 2008) and to promote participation opportunities (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 33; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 28).

The fourth indicator emphasises the use of staff recruitment and retention processes to support organisational diversity (Table 6.3). Achieving staff diversity helps to encourage a diversity of young people to participate (Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 4), increases understanding and knowledge about difference (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 35; Davis, 2011, p. 51) and supports stronger, more effective relationships across communities. Staff and youth diversity can open up the kinds of partnership and collaborative opportunities discussed in Principle Five, Partnerships and Networks, which can better support young people. Actions supporting Indicator 4 can include providing training on delivering a rigorous and fair selection process (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 37; Grossman & Furano, 2002, pp. 7-11) and using research to better understand factors influencing staff recruitment, engagement and retention (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 48; Petty, Brewer, & Brown, 2005, p. 70).
The fifth indicator emphasises a positive and safe social and psychological program environment (Table 6.3). Young people notice when program leaders exercise their power and control in reflexive partnership with them to create safe spaces that are free of negative social interchanges (Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, pp. 335-336; Mahoney et al. 2005, p. 11). Program leaders can help young people to experience challenge, diversity and failure positively (Åkerström, Aytar, & Brunnberg, 2013, p. 7; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011, pp. 19, 21) and to participate in creating spaces associated with feelings of safety and wellbeing and not risk and danger (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 36; Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 20; Leverett, 2011, pp. 9, 17; Wood, 2006, p. 8). Actions supporting Indicator 5 can include: ensuring young people can get to and from the program site safely (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 18; Wierenga, 2003, p. 7); developing a buddy system (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 35); ensuring participation is voluntary (Ausyouth, 2002c1, p. 23; Jolly, J. 2010, p. 4; Speer, 2008, p. 219); and working with young people to help build a safe program environment (Bers, 2006, p. 201; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, pp. 335-336; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 18; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b, p. 175).

The sixth indicator focuses on the inclusion of diverse methods and voices in program development, implementation and evaluation (Table 6.3). Fundamental to Indicator 6 is a commitment to working with a diversity of stakeholders in the local community (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 27, 31, 37, 49; 2003c, p. 35; Davis, 2011, pp. 50-51). Older and younger people from specific social, cultural and spiritual backgrounds are more likely to choose to participate when a program, initiative, or activity is supported by their own community (Ausyouth, 2003c; Bell, Vromen, & Collin, 2008, pp. 111). On a purely practical level, to enable program staff and young people to conduct quality program evaluations they need support to
develop skills and knowledge and they need accessible evaluation tools (Bailey & Deen, 2002; Tisdall, 2009, p. 195). The perception that this internal research capacity can be strengthened by accessing external research expertise, such as that provided through university-community partnerships, is also growing (Ayon & Fernández, 2007; Lerner, 2005, p. xi; Lerner, Ostrum, & Freel, 1995; Nation, Bess, Voight, Perkins, & Juarez, 2011). Building the evidence base using internal and external resources can help programs collect and provide reliable information about program quality and impact (Bailey & Deen, 2002). Actions under this indicator can include using consultative processes to help ensure program structure, location, hours and content meet the needs of the local community (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 10; Leong, Paine, & Hughes, 2010, p. 109; Meyer et al. 1993, p. 97; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 24; SLS & ESC, personal communication, 2008).

The seventh indicator highlights the importance of supporting program flexibility to accommodate diverse needs (Table 6.3). Programs attract a range of young people with different social, developmental, economic, demographic and cultural needs (McLaughlin, 2000, pp. 12, 23; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 333; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 65) and are delivered across a diversity of times, places and spatial contexts (Ausyouth, 2002b, p. 5; Hill, 2010, p. 102). Flexibility in design and content enables leaders to amend program material and activities to address the specific needs and interests of each group and young person (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 20; Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 40; Cuevo, 2011, p. 136; Codling, 2010, p. 40; Hill, 2010, p. 102; Foley & Leverett, 2011, p. 5; Speer, 2008, p. 222; Wienstein, 2008; Wood, 2006, p. 12; Zaff, Oksana, & Eccles, 2008, p. 51; Zeldin, 1995, p. 453). Delivering on core program features to maintain its integrity and honesty is addressed in Indicator 3, Principle Eight, Ethical Promotion. Actions under Indicator 8 can
include allocating resources for staff to respond to requests (Impact & PCYC, personal communication, 2008), encouraging young people to express their participation needs (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 19) and providing information for everyone about where program activity design is flexible and where it is not (Impact, personal communication, 2008).

The eighth indicator emphasises the inclusion of opportunities to experience and learn to value difference in the program curriculum (Table 6.3). The provision of formal and informal educational opportunities exploring cross-cultural, community and social issues helps staff and young members to understand and value diversity and to challenge stereotyping and discrimination (Arai, 2011, pp. 126, 127; Ausyouth, 2003c, pp. 2, 32, 34-36; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 22; Bell, Vromen, & Collin, 2008, pp. 111-112; Gilchrist & Rauf, 2006, p. 20; London, 2002, p. 6; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 30). Actions under Indicator 8 can include actively challenging stereotypes (Arai, 2011, p. 126; Davis, 2012, p. 420), supporting critical thinking and reflective practice (Salter, 2010, p. 65), and providing a range of creative and non-threatening activities which integrate issues around difference (Bers, 2012, pp. 45-46, 2006, p. 201; Wood, 2006, p. 8).

6.6. Principle Four: Community Service

The fourth principle, Community Service, links youth development, learning through service, strengthening community and building social capital. It comprises five indicators (Table 6.4) and 35 examples of action (Seymour, 2012a). Quality community service activities use mixed teaching methodologies (instruction, observation, experience and reflection) to ensure there is a meaningful service learning outcome flowing from participation. By providing service learning opportunities, programs bring many short and longer-term reciprocal benefits to
young people, their social and familial networks and the community (ANTA, 2002, pp. 10, 24; Broadbent & Papadopoulos, 2010; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12; Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002). I use the term service learning in reference to voluntary community focused activities which, while designed to directly benefit others, indirectly lead to beneficial outcomes for everyone involved and especially lead to meaningful learning and developmental outcomes for young people.

This principle is underpinned by the arguments that service learning promotes cooperation, exchange, understanding and the discovery of new perspectives amongst and between people of all ages (Wheeler & Edlebeck, 2006, pp. 90-93). Community service learning does this by: facilitating positive social interactions with others (McAdam & Brandt, 2009, p. 948; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 66; Zaff, Oksana, & Eccles, 2008, p. 50); supporting young people to be active partners (Christens & Kirshner, 2011); and helping them to develop internalised pro-social and civic engagement values (Flanagan & Christens, 2011, pp. 2, 3; Morgan & Streb, 2001, p. 158; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011, p. 18).

The first indicator highlights an organisation wide recognition of community service learning (Table 6.4). This indicator focuses on the promotion and valuing of community service and the individuals and groups who take part in it. Actions supporting Indicator 1 can include recognising groups for service learning activities (Working-Group, 2006; Guides, personal communication, 2008) and developing curriculum to promote meaningful individual or team-based service learning (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 45; Zaff, Oksana, & Eccles, 2008, p. 50).
Table 6.4. Principle 4 indicators: Supporting community service

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principle 4 indicators:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Community service learning is valued and promoted by the organisation (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 45).</td>
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<td>2. Community service learning activities conform to recognised volunteer good practice (Dukes, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The program provides young people with safe opportunities to learn from, engage with, influence and contribute to their community through group and individual service learning activities (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 33; Dukes, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community service learning activities and the intended outcomes for young people and the community are meaningful, negotiated and communicated to all stakeholders (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 33; Dukes, personal communication, 2008).</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Community service learning activities are evaluated and actual outcomes are acknowledged, valued, and celebrated (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 45, 2003g, p. 13).</td>
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The second indicator is underpinned by the idea that service learning activities should be based on recognised volunteer good practice (Table 6.4). The more that good practice is embedded in a service learning activity, the more likely it is that activity outcomes will be positive and achieve long lasting benefits (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005). Actions to support Indicator 2 can include developing a feedback loop between volunteering practice, the framework of policies, strategies and guidelines supporting service learning activities and the development, delivery and evaluation of these activities (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 37, 2003g, pp. 10-12; Dukes, personal communication, 2008; London, 2002, p. 8; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, pp. 49, 50; Roundtable, 2010; Youth Scotland, 2008, p. 1).

The third indicator addresses the provision of safe opportunities for young people to learn from, engage with, influence and contribute to their community through group and individual service learning activities (Table 6.4). This indicator is influenced by the idea that safe, positive learning and development experiences are facilitated when service learning activities are resourced, planned and

The fourth indicator emphasises meaningful, negotiated and understood service learning activities (Table 6.4). A key element of strength-based service learning is engaging with young people and the community in a collaborative partnership where young people can participate as decision makers, leaders and change makers (Hancock, 1994, p. 141; Jones & Perkins, 2006, pp. 104-105; Morgan & Streb, 2001, p. 166; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, pp. 4, 48-49; Wood, 2006, p. 74; Zaff, Oksana, & Eccles, 2008, p. 50). This indicator builds on evidence that when all stakeholders are directly involved in making decisions about service activities they are more likely to view the activity as meaningful, benefiting everyone, and meeting diverse needs (Christens & Kirshner, 2011, pp. 30-33; Morgan & Streb, 2001, pp. 166-167). Actions to support Indicator 4 can include using problem-posing learning techniques to support young people as they work with others in their community to identify, develop, implement and evaluate service learning activities (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 28; Beck & Purcell, 2010, p. 23).

The fifth indicator focuses on the importance of evaluating service learning activities and celebrating outcomes (Table 6.4). This indicator is influenced by the idea that engaging in evaluative and celebratory processes will sustain service
learning partnerships and collaborative projects. Supporting young people to gain a deeper understanding about social issues, the challenges encountered and the resulting outcomes are crucial community service learning outcomes (Broadbent & Papadopoulos, 2010, p. 253; Goerisch, 2014, p. 266; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 49; Skinner, 2010, p. 47; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12). Actions to support Indicator 5 can include: facilitating structured individual, team and group reflection (Christens & Kirshner, 2011, pp. 32-33; Davis, 2011, p. 94; Wood, 2006, p. 11; Youth Scotland, 2008, p. 1); using diverse verbal, written and activity celebratory and acknowledgment approaches (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 46, 2003c, p. 29; Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 9; Broadbent & Papadopoulos, 2010, p. 253; Hill, 2010, p. 103; McLaughlin, 2000, pp. 12,16); and using evaluation to identify structures or processes that block or slow down meaningful participation (Davis, 2011, p. 97).

6.7. Principle Five: Partnerships and Networks

The fifth principle in the framework, Partnerships and Networks, recognises that successful partnerships and networks are at the centre of strength-based youth organisations. It comprises five indicators (Table 6.5) and 42 examples of action (Seymour, 2012a). Through partnerships and networks, organisations and programs can build social capital, generate knowledge and strengthen youth and community resilience (Ausyouth, 2003d, pp. 3, 7; Lerner, Ostrum, & Freel, 1995; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 28; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 333; Tisdall, 2008, p. 425; Whitlock & Hamilton, 2003, pp. 46-47).
Table 6.5. Principle 5 indicators: Supporting partnerships and networks

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principle 5 indicators:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Partnership opportunities are explored and range of informal, semi-formal and formal partnerships are successfully initiated and developed (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 35, 49; 2002, p. 33; Gilchrist &amp; Rauf, 2006, p. 4; Wood, 2006, p. 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Processes have been established to support partnership implementation, growth, management and continuous improvement (Impact, personal communication, 2008; Gilchrist &amp; Rauf, 2006, pp. 8-9; Hancock, 1994, p. 142; Taylor &amp; Bressler, 2000, p. 67).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Partnerships and networks are concluded in a positive and constructive manner (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 25).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Program leaders actively engage with community networks and build partnerships (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 31; Lions, personal communication, 2008; Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 37).</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Program activities provide opportunities for young people to strengthen family relationships and expand their networks to form safe, supportive relationships beyond their immediate family and network (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 33, 49; ESC &amp; SLS, personal communication, 2008; Roundtable, 2010).</td>
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Encouraging different groups of older and younger people to come together, find common ground, develop relationships and work together on a range of community and youth development activities, projects and initiatives is a feature of strength-based youth work (Ausyouth, 2003d, pp. 3, 7; Gilchrist & Rauf, 2006, p. 11; Hunter, 2010, p. 34; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 28; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 333; Wood, 2006, p. 4). In building partnerships and networks, organisations and programs can help to develop and sustain a community wide “web of mutual accountability and responsibility for young people” (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 28).

The first indicator emphasises the exploration and development of a variety of partnership opportunities (Table 6.5). Informal, semi-formal and formal partnerships across geographically (Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 23) and demographically (Christens & Kirshner, 2011, p. 33; Cuevo, 2011, p. 137) diverse organisations, programs, and individuals, can increase the range of available resources (Ausyouth, 2003d, pp. 5, 7; Abidi-Sheldon, 2010, p. 115; Baldwin Grossman et al.)
Actions supporting Indicator 1 focus on the early phase of partnerships and can include: adopting a governance framework to support the initiation and development of partnerships (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 35; Dukes, personal communication, 2008); allocating sufficient lead time for pre-implementation planning; working within existing community and organisation protocols; and discussing and agreeing on the characteristics of the initiative (Ausyouth, 2002b, p. 38, 2003d, p. 26; Gilchrist & Rauf, 2006, p. 14; Hunter, 2010, p. 37; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 67; Wood, 2006, p. 4; Zeldin, 1995, p. 453).

The second indicator links rigorous, ethical processes with supporting partnership implementation, growth, management and improvement (Table 6.5). Successful partnerships and networks don’t just happen – significant ongoing effort and commitment is needed to create and sustain them (Abidi-Sheldon, 2010, p. 115; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 3; Gilchrist & Rauf, 2006, pp. 8-9). Actions under Indicator 2 focus on the middle and sustaining phase of partnerships and can include: documenting agreed roles, tasks and responsibilities (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 35; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 17; Zeldin, 1995, p. 453); ensuring communication protocols support sustained, consistent dialogue processes (Beck & Purcell, 2010, p. 28; Davis, 2011, p. 107; Hancock, 1994, p. 142; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 68; Yoshikawa & Shinn, 2008, p. 351); and recognising and celebrating key milestones and achievements (Ausyouth, 2002d, p. 13, 2003d, p. 27; Hancock, 1994, p. 141; Hill, 2010, p. 103).

The third indicator highlights the reality that there are many reasons why partnerships or networks may need to be wound up and promotes the adoption of processes which conclude these relationships in a positive and constructive manner.
Being involved in enduring partnerships and networks is important. The capacity to mark the end of a partnership or network initiative in a positive way is also vital (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 24; Hancock, 1994, p. 140; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 67; Wooder, 2010, p. 90) and can open up possibilities for working together again in the future (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 24). Actions supporting Indicator 3 focus on the concluding phase of partnerships and can include: disseminating knowledge on successes and lessons learnt (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 25; Working-Group, 2007); and supporting staff and young people through the closure process using discussion, reflection and celebration (Stacey et al. 2010b, p. 78).

The fourth indicator points to the benefits that can be gained when program leaders are able to actively engage with community networks and build partnerships (Table 6.5). Partnerships and networks provide access to important resources which support the professional development of staff and the delivery of high quality programs and activities (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 31, 2003c, p. 37; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 9, 11; Lions, personal communication, 2008; Lloyd-Jones, 2010, pp. 22-23; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 65; Wood, 2006, p. 4). Connections between youth workers and the people, organisations, programs and businesses in their community can be deliberately established or they can be accidental, established through chance encounters and conversations (Davis & Smith, 2012, p. 5; Messias et al. 2005, pp. 323-324;). Actions which support Indicator 4 can include providing training and information resources about networks and partnerships (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 12; Dukes, personal communication, 2008) and providing individual development opportunities for new program leaders to visit local community agencies or to shadow more experienced program leaders (Impact, personal communication, 2008; BB, personal communication, 2008).
The fifth indicator highlights the important role youth organisations and programs can play in strengthening family relationships and expanding young people's networks (Table 6.5). Fostering new and existing relationships between and amongst both young and older people and extending these opportunities into the broader community is a key feature of strength-based program practice (Catalano et al. 2004, p. 102; Harris, Rogers, & Smith, 2010, p. xiv; Laser & Leibowitz, 2009, p. 99; Lerner, Napolitano et al. 2014, p. 22; Loder & Hirsch, 2003; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 18; Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 30). Actions to support Indicator 5 can include structuring program activities to promote and foster new networks, connections and friendships (Ausyouth, 2003a, p. 7, 2003c, p. 27; Dukes, personal communication, 2008; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 333). Moreover, actions can recognise the important roles program leaders play, ensuring they have the skills they need to nurture and support young people to develop safe, caring and responsive relationships (Catalano et al. 2004, p. 102; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, p. 323; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 67; Walker, 2011; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011, p. 13).

6.8. Principle Six: Ethical Promotion

The sixth and final principle in the framework, Ethical Promotion, is influenced by the argument that, as ethical youth work practice underpins quality programs, the marketing of programs necessarily involves ethical promotional strategies and practices. Principle Six is comprised of four indicators (Table 6.6) and 32 examples of action (Seymour, 2012a). Ethical promotion practices help to: create and raise positive organisational, program and youth profiles (Stacey et al. 2010c, pp. 90, 91; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 33; Seif, 2011, p. 67); build a trusted reputation (McLaughlin, 2000, pp. 12-3); protect assets (reputation and access to
the youth market) (Ausyouth, 2002d, p. 18); gain funding (Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 5, 2002d, p. 18); and attract staff and program participants (Codling, 2010, p. 10; Ohlin, Heller, Byrne, & Keevy, 2010, pp. 1, 20).

Table 6.6. Principle 6 indicators: Supporting ethical promotion

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<th>Principle 6 indicators:</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. The program can be delivered by different program leaders across different venues and to different groups of young people while maintaining its core features (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 37).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The program is resourced appropriately to enable young people to attain the promoted outcomes (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 43; ESC, personal communication, 2008; Grossman &amp; Furano, 2002, p. 117; Taylor &amp; Bressler, 2000, p. 48).</td>
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The first indicator specifies using an ethical framework to guide promotional decision making (Table 6.6). Adopting an ethical or values-based promotional framework of guidelines, policies and strategies supported by an education program will help to maintain a consistent and ethical approach to promotional work. Actions supporting Indicator 1 can include: collaboratively developing a promotion strategy which is owned and supported by key stakeholders (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 43; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 27); evaluating funding sources (Ausyouth, 2002d, p. 18; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 61); and excluding sponsorship deals where the promotion of activities and products harmful to the wellbeing of young people is an expected outcome (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 43; Impact & PCYC, personal communication, 2008).

The second indicator emphasises the promotion of positive youth images, role models and stories about young people and programs to the local, national
and global community (Table 6.6). This indicator responds to the need for more positive messages about young people (France, 2007, p. 162). Youth organisations are uniquely positioned to effectively affirm kids and young adults as valued community members (McLaughlin, 2000, pp. 12 to 13; Stacey et al. 2010c, pp. 90, 91) and to profile successful intergenerational partnerships (Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005, p. 129). The opportunities programs have to work with young people to collect, document and publish evidence on their achievements and positive development are significant (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 33). This work can help to counter the dominant negative and risk-focused portrayal of young people in the media (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 26; France, 2007, pp. 161-162; Stacey et al. 2010c, p. 91; Leong, Paine, & Hughes, 2010, p. 104; Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002). Actions supporting Indicator 2 can include: actively working with young people to promote the contribution they make to their community (Christens & Kirshner, 2011, p. 37 Christens & Dolan, 2011, p. 543; Seif, 2011, p. 67); profiling kids, parents, grandparents and program leader stories in both mainstream and alternative media (Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 15; Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005, p. 127); and participating in partnerships with scholars to research, document and publicise positive young and older peoples stories (Baruch & Ramalho, 2006, pp. 59-60; Jones & Perkins, 2006, p. 106).

The third indicator highlights the importance of maintaining core program features (Table 6.6). Young people and their families need to know that no matter which program group they take part in, they will find the same core program features and achieve the same core program outcomes (Holdworth et al. 2005; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 55). Core features can be defined as: central topics which give the program a common purpose (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 13); specific
defined values which underpin the program (Hill, 2010, p. 103); or defined methods of program delivery, style and structure which may include specific time commitments and regularity of meetings (Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 55). Indicator 7, Principle Three, An Inclusive Ethos, addresses the need to allow for program flexibility to cater for difference in youth social, developmental, economic, demographic and cultural needs. Ensuring a strong link between program promotion, core features and activity delivery enables young people and significant adults to make informed decisions about their participation (Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 5). Evaluation of outcomes across different program groups is enabled and widespread recognition of programs supported (Meyer et al. 1993, pp. 97-99).

Actions under Indicator 3 can include: designing program curricula to allow different leaders to apply their own expertise and skills to program delivery while maintaining core features (Grossman & Furano, 2002, p. 9; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 21; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, pp. 55, 67); and using evaluation to help maintain quality in the delivery of programs across multiple locations and to assess the portability of program design (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 37; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 9).

The fourth indicator stresses the importance of appropriately resourcing programs to deliver the promoted outcomes (Table 6.6). This indicator builds on the idea that organisations have an ethical responsibility to ensure their programs and activities are resourced so that young people receive the intended services and can attain the promoted outcomes (ESC, personal communication, 2008; also Ausyouth, 2003d, pp. 18-19; Grossman & Furano, 2002, p. 117; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 48;). Programs need to have the right people, funding and facilities to deliver positive outcomes for young people (MacNeil & McClean, 2006, p. 100; Wandersman, 2009). Actions under Indicator 4 can include: estimating the
minimum resources needed from the start (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 43); putting strategies in place to support program sustainability, such as succession planning (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 57; BB, personal communication, 2008); and creatively extending resources through, for example, community partnerships, sharing activities with other program groups, utilising stakeholder skills and seeking sponsorships (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 35; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 290; White, 2001, p. 41).

### 6.9. Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced the strength-based good practice framework developed in Study One which illustrates the practical application of the theoretical, operational, structural and contextual program elements most important for supporting positive developmental outcomes in the program environment. The framework illustrates these characteristic elements of youth programs generally and community youth development programs specifically through six principles. These six principles address the broad themes of education, leadership, decision making, inclusion, community service, relationship building and ethical promotion in the youth organisation and program environments. I summarised each of the six principles and 36 indicators with reference to some of the 288 examples of action thereby illustrating key characteristics of community programs. The work presented in this chapter, therefore, makes an original contribution to understanding the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs.

This framework is the result of a research process which is firmly grounded in the experiences of community program young members and youth-workers. It represents a synthesis of scholarly, youth and practitioner expertise. The attention
paid to the structure, language and presentation of ideas has resulted in the
development of a good practice framework with an accessible and user-friendly
structure. This work delivers a suitable tool for a diversity of organisations and
programs which supports practitioners and young people to do the best they can,
to create opportunities, to make contextually appropriate judgements and to learn
from these experiences.

In the next chapter, I provide a case study discussion of the first principle,
Learning and Development. This chapter details the complex bi-directional links
between the four theoretical, operational, structural and contextual program
characteristic elements profiled in this chapter and the fifth program characteristic
element, outcomes, profiled in Chapter 5. In this way, I will illustrate the way in
which these characteristic elements of programs combine to create the conditions
for positive developmental outcomes. This first principle illustrates the important
role youth organisations and programs play in the education of young and older
people; supporting them to be active participants and contributors to society.
Chapter 7. Case study illustrating Principle One, Learning and Development

7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored the characteristics of youth development programs. I introduced the strength-based good practice framework developed in Study One illustrating the practical application of the theoretical, operational, structural and contextual program elements most important for supporting positive developmental outcomes in the program environment. I described each of the six principles: learning and development; leadership and decision-making; an inclusive ethos; community service; partnerships and networking; and ethical promotion.

In this chapter, I present the final of three results chapters: a case study exploration of the first principle, Learning and Development. This work illustrates the complex bi-directional links between the four program elements, theory, operation, structure and context profiled in Chapter 6 and the fifth program element, outcomes, profiled in Chapter 5. By exploring learning and development practice in the program environment and interweaving young member voices, I illustrate the complex ways in which these characteristic program elements combine to create the conditions for positive developmental outcomes. I also illustrate the complex links between the two central research questions which focus on understanding the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs and the characteristics of young people who participate in these programs.
The triangulation of scholarly, program leader and young member perspectives presented in this chapter, highlight the characteristics of learning and development that are most important for supporting young people to achieve positive developmental outcomes in the program environment. I discuss young people’s opinion on how important a selection of learning and development related program characteristics are for their sustained engagement and their experiences of a selection of program practices.

This first principle which consists of 9 indicators and 70 examples of action focuses on the education of youth workers and young members. Two main arguments underpin this principle. First, youth organisations and programs play an important role in the education of young and older people, supporting them to be active participants in, and contributors to, society (Davies, R. 2014; Ledwith, 2011, p. 85; Lerner, 2005, p. x; London, 2002, p. 8; Rouse & Clawson, 1992). Second, an active commitment to education can support sustainability by fostering effective recruitment, development and retention of staff and young participants (Deschenes & McDonald, 2003, p. 7; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 292; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 13).

Drawing on data from Study One and Two, in this chapter I argue that an important role of strength-based youth programs is to offer young and older people a unique largely informal indoor and outdoor learning and development environment (Chan & Short, 2011, p. 125; Davies, R. 2014; Kyle, 2014). While some programs provide access to formal training, youth programs mainly complement the formal education system by meeting other informal physical, practical and life-skill educational needs. In Chapter 2, I discussed how programs support young
people to reach their full potential by helping them to learn about, develop, and practice a diversity of life-skills, physical skills (Armour, Sandford, & Duncombe, 2012; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005), and practical and specialist technical skills (ANTA, 2002; Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 14; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b). In Chapter 5, I discussed the contribution to the development of life-skills that participation in community youth development programs makes. Carefully addressing activity design; methods of development, delivery and review; the delivery place and environment; the potential learning and developmental outcomes; and recognition methods are therefore important foci for program design (Davies, R. 2014; Codling, 2010, pp. 39-40; Jacobs Foundation, 2011, p. 20; Kress, 2006).

Similarly, older people are also provided with opportunities to practice and strengthen their life-skills, practical skills and knowledge in working with others and in delivering community youth development programs (Beck & Purcell, 2010, p. 31; Grossman & Furano, 2002, p. 6; Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O’Connor, 2004). The quality and success of youth programs relies on the skills, knowledge and aptitude of the older people who work to deliver and support them (Greene et al. 2013, p. 1567; Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, pp. 221, 224; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 331). This makes the learning and development needs of older people, as they fulfil roles ranging from program leaders, facilitators and decision makers to organisational leaders and role models, just as important as the needs of young people (Checkoway, 2011, p. 342; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 291; Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003; Larson & Walker, 2010; Rouse & Clawson, 1992).
I use the term learning in reference to the accumulation of personal knowledge and skills about the world and one’s own place in it through reflection, instruction, experience and observation. Likewise, development is viewed as the growth of personality and character through the formation of values and relationships. Learning and development therefore constitute education in a broad sense including informal and formal education.

Drawing on the literature, the PAR research outcomes and young people’s opinion, I argue that fostering a culture of life-long education is a central role of strength-based organisations and programs. I present nine key indicators which underpin Principle One, Learning and Development. These nine indicators point to the need for safe, positive and diverse learning, development and recognition experiences. Together, these indicators reflect the use of mixed teaching methodologies to foster learning, development and recognition opportunities which support individual, group, age-based, developmentally appropriate and role-based education experiences. Each indicator is illustrated by examples of action developed collaboratively through individual and small and large group (Working-Group & Roundtable) discussions and by drawing on scholarly literature.

I discuss each of these nine indicators separately. Some young leaders, aged 19-25, shared their views about their organisation and program leader experiences in the YDRP Study Two interviews. These stories are used mostly in the discussion of indicators 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8. However, the majority of stories shared in the YDRP Study Two interviews and questionnaires illustrate participation of young people.

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28 Participating organisations and programs: Impact: Youth organisations reducing crime (Impact), The Boys’ Brigade (BB); The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award (Dukes); The Emergency Services Cadets Program (ESC); Girl Guides Queensland (Guides); Lions Clubs International Leo Clubs (Lions/Leos); The Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) and Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLS).
aged 12-18 at the program level. These program stories are mainly used in the
discussion of indicators 1, 2, 5 and 9. For each of the program engagement and
practice issues discussed, I analyse young member experiences across different
ages, sexes, and communities.

7.2. Indicator 1. Prioritising learning, development and recognition
opportunities

The first indicator emerged through individual and group discussion with
the YDOPs and is influenced by an Ausyouth indicator (2001e, p. 47). This
indicator points to the idea that using strength-based practices to support learning
and development means valuing each person for who they are now, building on
existing skills and knowledge, and recognising achievements and future potential.

The practical application of this indicator on learning, development and
recognition is demonstrated by the 11 examples of action outlined in Table 6.1. Of
these 11 examples of action, six are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e, 2003e), one is
adopted with minor changes from Ausyouth (2001e) and four are new examples
put forward by the YDOPs. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss four of these
examples of action. These actions show how an organisational wide culture of life-
long learning can be fostered by, first, increasing access to learning, development
and recognition opportunities (Actions 2 and 5) and, second, by using extrinsic and
intrinsic incentives to encourage, support and reward participation (Action 4
and 6).

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29 Indicator 1 in full: Providing learning and development opportunities and recognising learning achievements is a high priority.
30 Ausyouth (2001e, p. 47) principle 13, organisation Indicator 3: The professional development of paid and voluntary staff is a high priority and formally accredited where possible.
Actions 2 and 5 build on scholarly work which suggests access to learning, development and recognition opportunities can be increased through access to diverse internal and external educational opportunities (CPSU, 2004, p. 7; Harris et al. 2010, p. xiv; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011, p. 13).

Table 7.1. Actions: Supporting learning, development and recognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action under Indicator 1 may include:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Distributing information on accredited training opportunities, recognition options for prior, existing and future learning achievements and any available incentives (Aysouth, 2001e, p. 47; ESC &amp; PCYC, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Using mixed training delivery methods to increase accessibility of staff training and development opportunities (e.g. seminars, webinars, DVD’s, podcasts) (ESC &amp; PCYC, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supporting young people to educate staff about the things they hold personal expertise on such as technology, youth culture and issues that impact on their lives (Aysouth, 2001e, p. 29; BB, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Encouraging young people to decide how their learning and development achievements will be celebrated and recognised (Aysouth, 2001e, p. 47; Bell, Vromen, &amp; Collin, 2008; London, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nominating paid and volunteer staff and young people for organisational and non-organisational awards such as state, national and international awards (Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Recognising branch achievements in supporting and mentoring program leaders and young people to achieve learning and development outcomes (Working-Group, 2006; also Guides, personal communication, 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Helping program leaders build their knowledge about the recognition process, how it can help deliver learning outcomes and how to apply it fairly to all young people (Roundtable, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Monitoring education research and literature to keep abreast of emerging developments in the education field and using this information to improve learning and development activities (Aysouth, 2001e, p. 47).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first of the actions on increasing access is Action 2 which emphasises building formal and informal learning and development opportunities and training and recognition links with other organisations. While youth organisations and programs offer different education experiences and provide different learning and development spaces, there are important opportunities for partnerships and for the sharing of professional practices and emerging knowledge. This links to Principle Five Partnerships and Social Networks. One way education focused partnerships can be formed is by fostering formal and informal training and recognition links with other organisations and program leaders (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47; Chan & Short, 2011, p. 139). Program diversity offers unique opportunities for leaders to explore and create learning and development links. This work can be a two way exchange (see Indicator 9) with educational opportunities offered to people outside the organisation and external expertise brought in to provide new internal education opportunities.

Action 5, supporting young people to be educators about the things they hold personal expertise on, is another innovative and inclusive way of using existing expertise to increase the range of educational opportunities available (BB, personal communication, 2008; also Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 24; Bessant, Sercombe, & Watts, 1998, p. 252; Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, & Third, 2011). Actively and reflexively listening to and recognising youth expertise links to Principle 2 Leadership and Decision-making (Checkoway 2011, p. 340-341; Hinton 2008, p. 285; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 66). Learning from youth, Mekinda and Hirsch (2014, pp. 222, 223) argue, is illustrative of the kinds of mentoring relationships which can develop in youth programs. It has, they suggest, the added advantage of
providing leaders with the opportunity to “model valuable learning behaviours, including strategies to deal with information one does not understand.”

A vibrant learning environment is characterised by a diversity of incentive or motivation practices which encourage, support, celebrate and reward all members in their learning over a long period of time (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 13; Pianta & Allen, 2008, p. 25; Salter, 2010, p. 57; Scott, 1990; Wooder, 2010, p. 90). Action 4 focuses on the use of a diversity of formal and informal training delivery methods because increasing the range of delivery methods increases the accessibility of educational opportunities (ESC & PCYC, personal communication, 2008). For staff, delivery methods can include orientation and induction training sessions; staff meetings and case conferences; seminars and webinars; DVD’s and podcasts; coaching, role-rotation and shadowing; and study circle groups (Grossman & Furano, 2002, p. 8; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, pp. 290-294; Leverett & Rixon, 2011, p. 181; Smith & Akiva, 2008, p. 195; Speer, 2008, p. 217).

Indicator 6 touches on using diverse delivery methods for young people.

Action 6 seeks to engage young people in helping to decide how their learning and development achievements will be celebrated and recognised. Recognition is an important incentive. Recognition can help to build a sense of achievement and act as an incentive to join, engage in learning and to stay involved (Working-Group, 2006; also Guides, personal communication, 2007; Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 38). Recognition can help young people to build their own sense of self-worth and pride in their achievements (Wood, 2006, p. 8), confidence and their self-development and discovery (Skinner, 2010, p. 47).
Young people taking part in the YDRP had different points of view on the value and methods of recognition. Many mentioned in their interview the opportunities they had to gain recognition awards, badges or certificates. Donald, a young BB leader (age 19-25) believes badge work is an important program practice because recognition provides a sense of direction and purpose. For some young people, recognition opportunities represent goals they can strive for (Marnie, PCYC, age 22; Lukas, Dukes, age 18) or future opportunities to gain employment or promotion to a higher rank or leader position within their organisation (David, SLS, age 20; Emily, Guides, age 15; Chris, PCYC, age 16). The importance of activities having some relevance and value for the future is discussed in Indicator 9 of this Principle. Once attained, some young people talked about how good their achievement had made them feel about themselves (Sheila, SLS, age 14; Ralph, BB, age 15; Ellis, SL, age 14; Liz, Dukes, age 19). Interestingly, a number of young people talked about the positive outcomes gained from both individual and team based recognition options where they had to work with others to gain their own award (Liz, Dukes, age 19; Ralph, BB, age 15). Orson (age 17, ESC) explained his observation of the effect of his leader’s use of verbal recognition in this way: “He likes to make people happy and get that bubbly feeling in their stomach when they’ve done a good job.”

To further explore young people’s view on the importance of recognition for their sustained engagement, we asked them in the questionnaire how important receiving verbal recognition for their hard work was. A four point scale was used: very important, important, not very important, not at all important. To explore

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31 YDRP question 6 in full: How important are the following things in making you want to belong to [program]: k. being told I’m doing well when I work hard.
young member experiences of recognition in the program environment we asked
them if they received verbal recognition for their hard work. A three point scale
was used: always true, sometimes true, not true.

Table 7.2. Engagement: Recognition of hard work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Being told I’m doing well when I work hard (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.2 (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42.9 (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>58.8 (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>54.1 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>38.4 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>48.1 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>27.8 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communityb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>38.5 (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>51.7 (108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>47.5 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totalb</td>
<td>47.1 (200)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless
otherwise stated chi-square is based on the three categories of ‘very important’, ‘important’ and ‘not
important’ (‘not very important’ and ‘not at all important’).
a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%; b. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

As shown in Table 7.2, the majority of youth (86.3%) reported that being
told they are doing well when they work hard is important for their sustained
engagement. More young people reported being told they are doing well when they
worked hard is very important (47.1%) rather than important (39.3%). Out of the
18 engagement characteristics examined, this recognition practice achieved a very
important ranking of 9 (Appendices-9). While there are no significant relationships
with the socio-demographic characteristics of sex or community, verbal feedback is
significantly more important for the younger than the older age groups ($x^2(8, N =
425) = 29.904, p = .000$). These results indicate that the majority of members in all

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32 YDRP question 5 in full: How true are the following about your personal experience in [program]: u. When I work hard adults in my [program] group tell me I’m doing well.
programs reported their desire to belong to their program group is strengthened when they receive verbal acknowledgement of their hard work.

Table 7.3. Practice: Recognition of hard work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>When I work hard I am told I am doing well (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58.4 (142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62.3 (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>63.9 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>65.7 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.5 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>63.6 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>50.0 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community(^b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>55.7 (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>62.9 (132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>60.0 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(^a)</td>
<td>60.1 (256)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square for this table is based on the two categories 'always' and 'sometimes true or not true'.

a. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; b. Missing cases=14, 3.3%.

When we asked young people in the questionnaire how often the practice of providing verbal recognition for working hard is demonstrated by adults in their program, over half reported they *always* receive it (Table 7.3). This compares to just over one third (39.9%) reporting they rarely or never receive verbal recognition for their hard work. As shown in Table 7.3, while not significant, more males (62.3%) than females (58.4%) believed this to be the case. Out of the 19 program practice characteristics examined, this practice is ranked 12; well below the top 5 most frequently experienced practices (Appendices-9). While there are no significant differences in the practice of verbal recognition reported by youth associated with age or community, older youth aged 17 to 18 and those living in
disadvantaged communities reported receiving verbal recognition the least. These results show that from young people’s point of view, the practice of providing verbal feedback to recognise their hard work is moderately reflected in the practices of the programs participating in this research.

While almost two thirds of youth (60.1%, n=256) reported their hard work is always recognised (Table 7.3), this practice is lower than the proportion of young members (86.4%, n=367) who reported verbal recognition is important for their sustained engagement (Table 7.2). Analysis of the relationship between this practice and its importance for engagement reveals the majority of youth who reported verbal recognition helps to sustain their engagement, always receive recognition for their hard work (Table 5.18). Over one third (35.1%), however, rarely or never receive verbal recognition for their hard work. These patterns linking the experience of verbal recognition practice with engagement are highly significant ($x^2$ (2, N = 425) = 32.204, $p$ = .000).

### Table 7.4. Linking practice and engagement: Recognition of hard work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal recognition for sustaining engagement</th>
<th>The practice of verbally recognising hard work (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>Always true 70.5 (141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>58.1 (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>29.3 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.0 (255)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the two categories ‘always’ and ‘sometimes true or not true’ for practice and the three categories of ‘very important’, ‘important’ and ‘not important’ (‘not very important’ and ‘not at all important’) for engagement. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 7.2 and 7.3 due to missing cases.

a. Missing cases=1, 0.4%. 
This analysis shows there is a group of young people who do not get the verbal recognition they crave. This has implications for sustained program engagement. Further analysis (not shown) of verbal recognition practices by sex, age and community suggests socio-demographic characteristics have differential influence on the experience of, and importance given to, verbal recognition (not shown). There are no significant differences related to age, sex or community for the cohort of young people (n=255) who reported they always receive verbal recognition for their hard work. For the cohort who reported they rarely or never receive verbal recognition (n=170), there are also no significant differences based on community. There are, however, significant differences for this cohort based on sex and age. The previous finding that receiving verbal feedback is significantly more important for the younger than the older age groups is reflected in this cohort. Younger kids are significantly more likely to have reported that recognition helps to sustain their engagement, yet they are also more likely to feel they have received little or no verbal recognition ($x^2(4, N = 170) = 14.997, p = .005$). A significantly higher proportion of females compared to males in this cohort reported they rarely or never receive verbal recognition ($x^2(1, N = 170) = 3.828, p = .050$).

Overall, these results suggest that for the majority of young people, receiving recognition for achievement is important for sustaining program engagement. Receiving recognition is particularly important for younger members. Not all young people reported that they value recognition. However, for those who do value recognition, receiving it contributes to their continued involvement. The evidence therefore suggests it is better for programs to provide more, rather than
less recognition, to pay more attention to the younger age groups and, in those programs involving females, to recognise the contribution of young girls.

7.3. Indicator 2. Strength-based individual learning and development practices

The second indicator emerged during individual and group discussions with the YDOPs about the Ausyouth (2001e) Principle Eight Quality Outcomes which focused on direct feedback processes, self-assessment and reflection as tools for program and organisational development. The absence of targeted strategies supporting individual-focused learning led to this indicator’s development. Organisational and program improvement is addressed across the framework (Chapter 6). This new indicator points to the idea that when individuals are engaged in identifying and achieving their own learning and development goals this will have flow on benefits to groups, organisations and society.

The practical application of this indicator on strength-based individual learning and development practices is demonstrated by the nine examples of action shown in Table 7.5. Three of these nine examples of action are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e, 2003c, 2003e), one is adopted with minor changes from Ausyouth (2001e) and five are new examples. Three of these new examples are put forward by the YDOPs and two address issues identified in the literature. These actions show how an organisational wide culture of life-long learning can be supported by strength-based individual learning and development practices. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss four of these examples of action which can

33Indicator 2 in full: Using strength-based practices each person is supported to identify their existing skills and knowledge and to document and achieve learning and development goals.
support and encourage individual learning and development (Actions 1, 2, 4 and 6).

**Table 7.5. Actions: Supporting collaborative, strength-based individual learning and development practices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action under Indicator 2 may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Encouraging a learning culture where the focus is not on succeeding or failing but on learning as you go and where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for further learning and development (Granger et al. 2003, p. 9; Hill, 2010, pp. 97,104; Salter, 2010, p. 54).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Building both formal and informal recognition options into individual learning and development practices to support the recognition and valuing of staff and volunteer knowledge and skills (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adopting a cycle of reflective self-assessment and peer review that all members are supported to take part in and where constructive, mutual and confidential feedback and coaching processes are supported (ESC &amp; SLS, personal communication, 2008; Roundtable, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing training that equips paid and voluntary staff with an understanding and proficiency in supporting individual learning and development practices (Impact, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Designing and evaluating individual learning and development practices to ensure they are implemented and experienced positively and constructively and changes are made as and when they are needed (Impact, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Using individual learning and development processes to support paid and volunteer staff and young people to develop a portfolio to record the skills and knowledge they develop throughout their involvement (ANTA, 2002, p. 11).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual learning and development plans, work-plans or portfolios can be used to actively engage staff and young members in a dialogue about their own educational needs and interests. In this way, each person can be supported to identify and value their existing strengths and weaknesses, build on them and develop new strengths (Ausyouth, 2002c, p. 5, 2003e, p. 7; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, pp. 290-294; Scott, 1990, pp. vi, 200).

Action 1 recognises the importance of addressing barriers and incentives to learning and development. Codling (2010, p. 39; also Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 292) introduces the idea that individual learning and development practices can also be used to increase responsiveness to issues which can act as barriers to individual and group learning. Building a culture of education where contextual, structural, and operational barriers to learning and development are addressed is an important characteristic of strength-based programs (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 25) and is reflective of the underpinning commitment to social justice encapsulated in Principle Three An Inclusive Ethos.

Action 2 focuses on attitudes and program practices about making mistakes which can impact on individual learning and development. Salter (2010, p. 54) suggests learning can be repressed when mistakes are not used as opportunities for learning and criticism is used as a method to provide feedback when mistakes are made. This concern can be addressed by supporting everyone to view mistakes as an opportunity for learning and to share this learning with others. Mistakes can become a constructive and integral part of the individual and shared learning and development experience (Brown, 2010, p. 32; Rhodes, 2004, pp. 151, 156). Lund (2015) illustrates how mistakes can be celebrated through a joking relationship
when the joking is underpinned by bi-directional mutual respect. Jantsch (2012, pp. 50-52; also Davis, 2013, p. 13) puts forward the idea that everyone needs to learn how to give themselves and others permission to fail. This, he argues, is essential because we can’t be good at things we don’t know how to do, and instilling a fear of failure can prevent people from trying out and learning new things. Ellis (age 14, SLS), expressed this simply when she said to me that the most important thing she had learnt is “[to] give it your hardest, and that not everything is about winning. You can learn from your mistakes and just learn from learning.”

To further explore young people’s view on the importance of mistakes in the program environment we asked them in the questionnaire if young people are made fun of when they make a mistake. A three point scale was used: always true, sometimes true, not true. Almost three quarters (72.0%) of young members reported their program environment nurtures a mistake tolerant program environment (Table 7.6). While the practice of being tolerant of errors is below the top 5 practices experienced by young people it is still highly ranked (8/19) indicating that the majority of young people experience a program environment which is accepting of mistakes (Appendices-9). There are no significant patterns associated with the socio-demographic characteristics of age or community. There is, however, with sex. A significantly higher proportion of females (78.1%, ranked 4) than males (63.9%, ranked 9) reported young people are not made fun of if they make a mistake \( \chi^2(1, N = 425) = 10.371, p = .001 \) (Appendices-9).

To examine whether these results may have implications for sustained program engagement further analysis of the link between young member’s

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34 YDRP question 5 in full: How true are the following about your personal experience in [program]: u. In my group, young people are made fun of if they get something wrong.
experience of mistakes and their desire to stay engaged was undertaken. Young members desire to stay engaged was measured by asking them for their view on whether they wished to continue to participate. A three point scale was used: always true, sometimes true, not true.

Table 7.6. Practice: Creating a mistake tolerant environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>In my group young people are made fun of when they get something wrong (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.7 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.3 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>4.1 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.0 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.0 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.2 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>3.7 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0.8 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4.8 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.5 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.5 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the two categories of ’always or sometimes true’ and ’not true’. a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%; b. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

Analysis of the relationship between this practice and young member’s desire to stay engaged reveals that of those young members (n=119) who reported that young people are always or sometimes made fun of if they make a mistake, the majority (79.0%, n=94) indicate that this does not impact negatively on their desire to stay engaged (Table 7.7). However, for those young members (n=41), who reported that sometimes they wish they did not have to take part anymore, well over half (61.0%, n=25) reported that young people are always or sometimes made fun of if they make a mistake. For those young members (n=306) who

<sup>35</sup> YDRP question 5 in full: How true are the following about your personal experience in [program]: u. I wish I didn’t have to take part in [program] any more.
reported a mistake tolerant environment, three quarters (93.5%) reported wanting to stay involved. These patterns linking the desire to stay involved and a mistake tolerant program environment are highly significant ($x^2 (1, N = 425) = 18.956, p = .000$). This is the case for both males and females (analysis not shown). These results suggest that for most young people the ways in which mistakes are experienced in the program environment will have an impact on their continued engagement.

Table 7.7. Linking practice and engagement: Staying involved in a mistake tolerant environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I wish I did not have to take part anymore</th>
<th>Always true</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always true</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>1.3 (4)</td>
<td>0.9 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes true</td>
<td>33.3 (5)</td>
<td>19.2 (20)</td>
<td>5.2 (16)</td>
<td>9.6 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not true</td>
<td>66.7 (10)</td>
<td>80.8 (84)</td>
<td>93.5 (286)</td>
<td>89.4 (380)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0 (15)</td>
<td>100.0 (104)</td>
<td>100.0 (306)</td>
<td>100.0 (425)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Chi-square for this table is based on the two categories ‘always and sometimes true’ and ‘not true’. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 7.5 and 7.6 due to missing cases.

a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%.

Viewing mistakes as opportunities for learning can encourage trust, connection, creativity and imaginative approaches to problem solving (Hill, 2010, pp. 97, 104; Negroponte, 2003, p. 2). As Granger et al. (2003, p. 9) advocate “it isn’t about succeeding or failing but learning as you go”. To contribute to a positive learning environment, Hill, Gallagher, and Whiting (2009, p. 150; also Stacey et al. 2010a, pp. 58, 60) argue program leaders model this kind of strength-based approach in their own learning and professional practice. As Wood (2006, p. 8) explains:

*Adults need to be emotionally literate, self aware and willing to demonstrate how to manage their emotions. This includes getting things*
wrong and admitting it and using mistakes to learn what to do differently next time.

For youth workers to develop, practice and model these skills effectively, Salter (2010, p. 54) argues a range of targeted and accessible support methods are necessary. Some of these support methods are addressed under Indicator 8. An often unanticipated benefit of strength-based individual learning and development practices is that everyone learns how to recognise when they need help and are encouraged to seek it out (McDonald, 2010, p. 78). Hirsch, Deutsch, and DuBois (2011, p. 304; also Grossman & Furano, 2002, p. 12; Hunter, 2010, p. 38) argue that adopting strength-based learning and development practices which support each individuals learning will not always be easy, but the potential for positive youth development and other more widespread benefits suggest the effort worthwhile.

*Actions 4 and 6 recognise that reflective practice is an important individual learning and development practice linked with positive learning outcomes* (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 37; ESC & SLS, personal communication, 2008; Roundtable, 2010). Hirsch, Deutsch, and DuBois (2011, pp. 290-291,302-306) advise reflective learning is a valuable technique for all individual development processes including coaching, networking and performance assessments. This indicator highlights the use of reflective dialogue practices as a tool for assessing goals, needs and interests. The important benefits to be gained from coaching are discussed in Indicator 8 *Learning and Development*. Networking is addressed in Principle Five *Partnerships and Social Networks* and reflective practice supports Principle Four *Community Service* (Chapter 6).
By practicing reflection, and engaging in a mutual constructive dialogue with others, the capacity to continuously evaluate and contextualise what is, and what is not, working significantly increases. This understanding can be used to underpin each person’s learning and development plan. Kevin (age 21, PCYC), told Jonathan this is an effective way to learn from others. He explained:

...when you’re facilitating a program or you’re involved in something, you know, you sit down as a group and you do some evaluations as a group, so you get some feedback from your peers... You know, you sit there and you might start off with a bit of positive, you know, “well [name], you’re really good at this and you’re doing really well but mate, I tell you, you’re really pissing me when you do this”. I think that’s obviously fairly important and that helps you grow. Um, yeah, I guess that’s probably fairly vital.

Hunter agrees (2010, p. 38; also Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 40; 2002c, p. 45; Leverett & Rixon, 2011; Salter, 2010, p. 53) arguing making time for reflection is the single most important practical action organisations can use to foster improvement. He maintains that time taken for reflection and actively used across multiple points - individual, team, program and organisation – will lead to continuous learning and development. Significant benefits can also be generated through mechanisms that enable young people to provide feedback to paid and volunteer staff as presented in Principle Two Leadership and Decision-making, and from using external expertise to review and support staff practice as detailed in Principle Three An Inclusive Ethos (Chapter 6).

Ongoing opportunities to practice reflection and giving and receiving strength-based feedback, can help to challenge, stretch, and reward young people
and staff in their learning (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 40; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 15). According to Gambone et al. (2004, p. 8; also Skinner, 2010, p. 47) learning to practice critical yet constructive self-reflection is especially important for children because it contributes to the development of their self-identity and awareness.

Self-reflection, Schmid et al. (2011, p. 1129) note, can help young people adjust their goals and construct their future. The incentive effect of this, David (age 20, SLS) described to Jonathan in this way:

You learn new things, you kind of find out a bit of things about yourself, like leadership skills that you didn’t know you had, so, um, and stuff like that. So yeah, that’s probably the best thing I love.

McLaughlin (2000, pp. 15-16) warns, however, that in introducing the art of reflection, evaluation or feedback “competition or one-upmanship” needs to be avoided. Instead, young people can be supported to learn to monitor themselves, deliver and receive honest yet supportive and constructive feedback and to acknowledge achievements, weaknesses and explore new learning and development opportunities (McLaughlin, 2000, p. 16).

7.4. Indicator 3. Understanding program leader values, skills and knowledge

The third indicator, adopted by the Working-Group, is based on an Ausyouth (2002e) indicator. The wording has been changed slightly with the original wording of key competencies replaced with the more descriptive core values, skills

36Indicator 3 in full: The core values, skills and knowledge needed by program leaders are identified and provide the basis for recruitment, development and training.
37Ausyouth (2001e, p. 47) principle 13, organisation Indicator 4: The key competencies needed by adult leaders are identified and provide the basis for leader training.
and knowledge. Following discussion with Impact, the applicability of the indicator was widened from a focus on only training to one which also includes recruitment and development. Indicator 3 is influenced by the understanding that program leader recruitment, development and training will be most effective when it is underpinned by the core values, skills and knowledge needed to work with young people in a program environment.

The practical application of this indicator is demonstrated by the seven supporting examples of action outlined in Table 7.8. These actions evolved during individual and group discussion and an exploration of the literature. Of these seven examples of action, four are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e) and three are new examples developed in response to YDOP suggestions. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss three examples of action which can build knowledge about core program leader competencies (Action 1) and promote these core capabilities through program leader recruitment, development and training (Actions 2 and 3).

Action 1 focuses on the core values, skills and knowledge youth workers need to successfully deliver programs and support young people (Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, p. 47; Meyer, Miller, & Herman, 1993, pp. 100, 102; Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, pp. 221, 223). Hancock, Hyjer, and Jones (2012, p. 84) found that adult attitudes and skills can have profound and unexpected effects on young people. When adult support is viewed more positively young people have a more positive belief in themselves. At the most basic level, when staff communicate in grumpy, ill-tempered ways, young people can end up feeling unwelcome and uncomfortable (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 35; Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, pp. 223, 228; Youth Scotland, 2008, p. 4).
Table 7.8. Actions: Linking program leader core values, skills and knowledge with recruitment, development and training

Action under Indicator 3 may include:

1. Identifying the core values, skills and knowledge needed by program leaders to successfully work with young people using a strength-based youth work approach (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 23, 29).

2. Designing program leader recruitment material with reference to the values, skills and knowledge identified as essential for new program leaders (Impact, personal communication, 2008).

3. Using individual development plans and succession planning to identify emerging program leaders, to offer targeted training opportunities to help them excel at what they do now and to equip them with the skills they need to excel in the future (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 41; BB, personal communication, 2008; PCYC, 2008).

4. Offering accessible training to help program leaders develop, reflect on, update and maintain the values, skills and knowledge needed for quality youth work practice (Working-Group, 2006; Impact, personal communication 2008).

5. Reviewing and revising, in partnership with youth workers, scholars, young people and families the content of program leader training to help ensure it remains relevant (Lions, personal communication, 2008).

6. Incorporating identified program leader competencies into individual learning and development plans to help program leaders build their confidence, recognise and value their existing knowledge and skills, manage their own learning and development, and monitor their program practice (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47; Impact, personal communication, 2008).

7. Supporting experienced paid and volunteer staff to develop the skill to identify program leader strengths, where these can be built on and where learning needs can be fostered while at the same time sustaining or increasing program leader confidence (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 47).

A number of young people participating in the YDRP commented on this.

David, (age 18, PCYC) mentioned that some staff “can yell a lot and get very angry.” In exploring this with Zoe he admitted that when this happens it can be very intimidating and it “makes me just want to like go to the back of the bus, with all the other people, to hide.” Peter (age 17, BB) mentioned in conversation with Jonathan that sometimes when program leaders “get up you a bit” this removes the fun element from activities. Ellis (age 14, SLS) talked about those older leaders who
are “mean” because “they kind of force you to do stuff” and “can be really demanding of what you do.” Mekinda and Hirsch (2014, p. 226) note these kinds of negative responses can result from young people feeling there is a lack of care or responsiveness in staff interactions with them. Principle three, *An Inclusive Ethos*, recognises that program leaders can also be subjected to, and have to constructively deal with, negativity directed at them from young people.

While there are these few stories about staff with difficult personalities, talking with young people through the YDPR does overwhelmingly highlight the diverse positive and significant roles program leaders play in their lives. Amber (age 16, Leos) describes her experience in this way:

...the really nice teachers are involved in Leos too. Like um there is this teacher at my school that everybody likes and she is like the co-ordinator of Leos for our school. So it’s good...there is like no intimidation or fear to speak up, even with the adults, ’cause lots of the younger girls have trouble with that. Everyone’s equal and that’s really good.

When asked to explain further Amber said:

*They are really approachable... Everyone is definitely heard... it’s good cause you get a more even idea about what everyone wants to do... it’s not just like one group of people’s opinion of what you want to do. It’s a widespread kind of idea of what the club wants to do, and it, it’s more stable and productive...*

The link to education, Amber explains, is that for her this equality in the Leo community fosters intergenerational and peer-based learning where everybody learns from everybody. Lia (age 15, SLS) explains to Karen that in her opinion
having program leaders who are “really easy going”, want to help you, demand respect and give respect in return is important. For her “it’s easier for people to learn because they’re not so pressured and they’re not getting yelled at”. Donald (age 19-25, BB), talking with Zoe about the significant influence other program leaders had on him and his life-choices explained it this way:

*...the thing about Boys Brigade is the influence that the other people have.*

They are people you respect so their ability to keep you on the straight and narrow is really not matched with anything else... Because you never listen to your parents but I always did listen to them at least.

Montana (age 16, Guides) discussed similar thoughts with Karen. She believes the reason her group is so much like a family is because her leaders had the skills and attitudes to run a relaxed, non-judgemental and fun group. Another BB member, Jack (age 19-25) also reflecting on his capacity to resist peer pressure to take part in risky activities, told Zoe:

*It wasn’t, it’s not Boys Brigade itself that did it, it’s the leaders that you have.*

*So I think, I think... if you had leaders that were involved in all that stuff then, of course it wouldn’t. Boys Brigade is a structure, a good lead for people to use to have a positive influence.*

The stories young people shared also highlight the significant role, addressed by Principle two *Leadership and Decision-making*, youth can play in leading activities for kids younger than themselves. As discussed in Chapter 6, the positive and significant role significant older non-family members can play in the lives of kids is a key theme underpinning Principle 5 *Partnerships and Social Networking.*
Action 2 supports the use of promotional, recruitment, induction and training materials to communicate youth worker competencies to potential and existing staff (Impact, personal communication, 2008). Here, Martinek and Hellison (2009, p. 30) argue effectively communicating expectations to program leaders will support program success. This links to Principle Three An Inclusive Ethos (Chapter 6) where ethical, equitable and fair recruitment and selection processes are addressed. A strength-based approach can support emerging youth workers to realise their full potential. Action 3 links educational opportunities with core values, skills and knowledge to support new program leaders to gain or strengthen core skills and knowledge before they take full responsibility for their group or any new program roles they may be transitioning into. However, as Grossman and Furano (2002, p. 7) advise:

[programs can teach volunteers needed skills (which can be both costly and time consuming), screen for those who already have the skills (which limits the pool of volunteers), or do a bit of both – which is what most programs do. If the mixed strategy is chosen, though, programs need to be explicit about what skills or attitudes applicants need to bring with them.]

The capacity to assess values, skills, knowledge and potential before appointment, such as suitability to work with kids, is therefore an important part of any recruitment process (Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, pp. 223-224). As Grossman and Furano (2002, pp. 7, 8; also Willems & Walk, 2013) remind us “[n]ot every well-intended person makes a good volunteer for every task.” Importantly, in strength-based assessment processes existing knowledge, experience and learning is recognised, opportunities for future learning and development are identified,
and leaders are supported to build their expertise (Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 300; Scott, 1990, pp. vi, 200-1).

7.5. **Indicator 4. Using education to support succession planning**

The fourth indicator evolved following an in-depth consultation with BB where succession planning was discussed as critical for ensuring the sustainability of youth organisations and programs. Succession planning has been identified as an important part of a strength-based culture of education because it supports the targeted use of learning and development activities and opportunities across all roles. While the concept of succession planning is not explicitly included in the Ausyouth (2001e) framework, Table 7.9 shows that some Ausyouth framework concepts do support it and a number of subsequent Ausyouth (2002e49; 2003c57) reports address it as an issue for organisation and program sustainability.

This indicator highlights the widespread benefits which can flow from integrating succession planning into the training and development curriculum for all leadership and other defined roles. Succession planning can help to build sustainable organisations and support and build community capacity (Auszouth, 2002e, pp. 49-50, 2003c, p. 25; London, 2002, p. 8). For succession planning to be most effective, everyone needs to experience it as a positive and constructive process where strategies are fairly applied and individuals are supported to gain skills and knowledge to move into different roles. As Davis and Smith (2012, p. 75) note, properly designing succession planning approaches will bring benefits as organisations become more effective at supporting everyone’s participation in building the organisational knowledge base. Doing it poorly, they argue, can lead to

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38Indicator 4 in full: The organisation has a succession planning strategy that is integrated into its training and development structure.
people resenting the process or feeling deskillied and devalued once they have passed their skills and knowledge onto others. Poor succession planning can also, as Ausyouth (2003c, p. 36) explains, lead to successful initiatives failing when the individuals who have been relied on to make the initiative work are no longer available.

Table 7.9. Actions: Supporting succession planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action under Indicator 4 may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Implementing a succession planning approach that complies with recognised volunteer good practice for all roles within the organisation (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 49).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rotating roles and responsibilities to help build a broad knowledge and skill base across multiple roles within the organisation (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 57).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Recognising and valuing existing achievements and skills in assessment processes for future role opportunities (Ausyouth, 2001e, pp. 41, 47).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Implementing a leader development policy and approach that supports the identification, recognition and training of potential younger and older leaders (Roundtable, 2010; also Skinner, 2010, pp. 45-46).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Developing training content and materials to equip paid and volunteer staff with the skills and knowledge they need to ethically apply succession planning strategies and identify opportunities for development (BB, personal communication, 2008; Roundtable, 2010; Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Supporting young people to develop a succession and development strategy for their young leaders and ensuring this strategy addresses recognition and engagement options into other roles for retiring young leaders (Impact, personal communication, 2008; Royal Commonwealth Society, 2004, 7; Wierenga, 2003, p. 6).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practical application of this indicator is demonstrated by the seven examples of action outlined in Table 7.9. These actions evolved during individual
and group discussion and an exploration of the youth literature. Of these seven examples, three are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e, 2002e, 2003c) and four are new. Two of these new examples respond to YDOP suggestions and two address issues identified in the literature. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss three examples of action highlighting operational practices which can be used to support succession planning (Actions 2 and 5) and which can nurture and sustain youth leadership (Action 7).

Adopting effective, strength-based approaches to succession planning can be difficult. However challenges can be mediated, addressed and supported by a variety of operational practices and strategies. Several of the challenges faced by youth focused organisations and programs are different to those faced by other kinds of organisations. Actions 2 and 5 focus on the rotation of roles and responsibilities as an effective strategy for building a broad knowledge and skill base across multiple roles within an organisation or program (Ausyouth, 2003c, p. 57). London (2002; also MacNeil & McClean, 2006, pp. 99-100; Speer, 2008, p. 217), in arguing that rotation is an effective form of experiential education, advocates for the use of techniques such as rotating leadership. This, he argues, will expose young people to the experience of acting in different leadership roles. Ausyouth (2003c, p. 57) further suggest that the benefit of role-rotation is that it facilitates a wider understanding about how different roles work, acts to distribute responsibility across more individuals, and acts to strengthen the long-term viability of programs. Role-rotation can also result in fairer work-load distribution, therefore reducing loss of young and older program staff through burn-out (H. Osborne, personal communication, 26 January 2015). The opportunity to experience different roles is a practice that a number of young members
commented on. Shiela (age 23, Leos) reported that in her community club everyone took turns to be President, Secretary and Treasurer. When asked by Karen whether this is a practice she enjoyed she replied:

Yeah it’s good cause you get to experience different aspects of the club so you get to learn about what it is to be secretary and you learn a lot of organisation from that as well as finances from the treasurer and the president. You get to sort of see over everything.

Orson (age 17, ESC) explained to me the way in which role-rotation can help to build experience and teamwork skills:

We learn about mentoring and leadership. So then we do activities that develop those skills. We do all the rescue type, the basic rescue skills. A lot of teamwork. That’s a big thing that we try to build and we’re always throwing different people into different situations and some people will shine in one aspect of a rescue and others won’t. Things like that so we’re always trying to swap around who the leader is. So it’s good like that because people get to experience different things.

Action 7 focuses on the creation of leadership opportunities for young people as an important feature of succession planning in strength-based program work (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 49). Succession planning is a particularly challenging issue for young people and youth-inclusive organisations and programs because, as Wierenga (2003, p. 23) explains, young people:

...have less access to structural power than many other groups. Young people are one minority group that have considerable numbers below the age of legal majority... [and] unlike other minority groups, children and
young people keep losing their best representatives and spokes-people because they keep growing up. Because of these things, young people's involvement ...needs to keep being re-negotiated.

The issues around power that Wierenga raises are significant and create an ongoing challenge for youth-centred organisations and programs. These are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4 in relation to participation in research and in Chapter 6 in relation to participation in Principle 2 Leadership and Decision-making. The impact of growing up on young people exiting youth leadership roles and the resulting continuous cycle within youth leadership of a “loss of organisational capital (goal momentum and institutional memory)” is a unique and real challenge (Kress, 2006, p. 53). This loss of skill and knowledge resulting from children growing up can have a linked impact on program leader skill and knowledge loss too as parents and grandparents exit the roles they originally took on to support their child or grandchild’s participation (H. Osborne, personal communication, 26 January 2015).

In addition to succession planning for targeted youth roles youth-inclusive organisations can support and engage with retiring young leaders in ongoing ways and support their transition into other leadership and decision-making roles (Stacey et al. 2010b, p. 81; CPSU, 2004, p. 7). When talking with Jonathan one young PCYC leader expressed how she had found herself mentoring another young woman working in the youth leadership role she had just aged out of:

So I did that (TILT) last year and then, that only goes from the ages of sixteen to twenty-one and I ran out of that age group last year... and I'm now twenty-two. So I'm still an advisor for the younger ones and that
because I do get the odd occasional phone call from the girl who’s taken over from me – ‘how do I do this?’ (Marnie, age 22).

When the sharing of knowledge and skills has been fostered amongst a diversity of older and younger people, sustainability of programs is more likely to be assured as different people move into and out of volunteer roles (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 49, 2003c, p. 27).

7.6. Indicator 5. Fostering a safe physical learning and activity environment

The fifth indicator evolved after the Working-Group, noted the provision of a safe physical activity environment was not explicitly addressed by the Ausyouth framework. The provision of a safe social and psychological environment is addressed in Principle Three An Inclusive Ethos (Chapter 6). The separation between a safe physical activity environment and a safe social and psychological environment was influenced by Working-Group, opinion that they were distinctly different issues, requiring different approaches.

This indicator points to the link between positive learning outcomes, and the provision of an activity environment where a balance between risk and safety has been achieved. The provision of a safe physical environment is an essential part of the work of youth programs in which young members and youth workers can each play a role. Côté, Strachan, and Fraser-Thomas (2008, p. 39) argue that paying attention to the physical program environment contributes just as much to program success as do the individuals who are located in that environment. McMinn, Griffin, Jones, and van Sluijs (2013, pp. 4-5; also Fuller, et al. 2013, p. 479), for example, show how concerns about safety can impact on the activities parents

39Indicator 5 in full: A safe physical learning and activity environment is provided for participants.
support their child to participate in. Ausyouth (2003a, pp. 7, 9, 10) for example argue how a safe physical environment helps to facilitate young people’s sense of personal safety and supports their positive development. Both of these outcomes, they argue, are essential for fostering initial interest in the program and a willingness to continue participating.

Table 7.10. Actions: Supporting a safe physical learning and activity environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action under Indicator 5 may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Developing, implementing and regularly reviewing a physical safety strategy, policy and procedural framework including a risk management strategy addressing hazard identification, assessment, and management and reporting and procedures for each type or class of activity, situation or event (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; 2003a, pp. 10, 29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing program leaders, young people and their families with information about the organisations approach to physical safety so they can understand the importance of safety practices and safe behaviour and why it needs to be applied to any individual who enters the program facilities or operation area (ESC, personal communication, 2008; Impact, personal communication, 2006; Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Displaying posters and information about safe behaviour around activity sites to keep the information fresh in the minds of all participants (ESC, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Training program leaders and young people to be effective role models in safe behaviours and to learn when it is safe to let go of an activity and not feel they have to control every aspect of it (Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Delivering activities on sites that have been subject to a hazard and risk assessment and after induction and/or training in safe practices relevant to the activity have been provided to those individuals who are taking part (BB, personal communication, 2008; Ausyouth, 2003a, p. 29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Making training in first aid and safety procedures available to program leaders and young people and helping them to maintain their first aid certificate and knowledge (Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Providing young people and parents with explicit written information about an activity before it takes place by using informed consent forms, waivers or releases (Ausyouth, 2003a, p. 29).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practical application of this indicator is demonstrated by the seven supporting examples of action shown in Table 7.10. These actions evolved during individual and group discussion. Of these seven examples, three are influenced by
Ausyouth (2001e, 2003a) and four are new. Three of these new examples respond to suggestions from the YDOPs and one addresses issues identified in the literature. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss two of these examples of action which link the provision of a safe physical environment with education (Actions 2 and 4).

Actions 2 and 4 support the use of an educational approach to safety supported by a policy framework, rules and guidelines. Action 2 focuses on engaging everyone in creating and maintaining a safe physical activity environment using information, induction and ongoing training (Ausyouth, 2003a, p. 29; ESC, personal communication, 2008; Impact, personal communication, 2006; Working-Group, 2006). Being aware of the safety rules is reflected in the majority of program practice experiences reported by young people in the YDRP. Kylie (age 16, ESC) expressed it this way: “they don't try to put us in danger. They keep us well protected.”

Table 7.11. Practice: Making sure program safety rules are understood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Adults in my program group make sure I understand the rules to keep me safe (%(n))</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always true</td>
<td>Sometimes true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81.1 (197)</td>
<td>15.6 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>82.0 (150)</td>
<td>16.4 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>79.4 (77)</td>
<td>19.6 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>82.8 (82)</td>
<td>15.2 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>80.8 (80)</td>
<td>16.2 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>80.5 (62)</td>
<td>13.0 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>85.2 (46)</td>
<td>14.8 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communityb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>81.1 (99)</td>
<td>15.6 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>81.4 (171)</td>
<td>17.1 (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>82.5 (66)</td>
<td>13.8 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81.5 (347)</td>
<td>15.9 (68)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the two categories of 'always true' and 'sometimes or never true'.

a. Missing cases=0, 0.0%; b. Missing cases=14, 3.3%.
To further explore young people’s view on safety practices in the program environment we asked them if young people are made aware of the safety rules. A three point scale was used: always true, sometimes true, not true. As shown in Table 7.11, when we asked young people in the questionnaire whether adults had made sure they understood program safety rules, they overwhelmingly reported always (81.5%). Out of the 19 practices examined, education about safety is the practice experienced the most (1/19) (Appendices-9). Only a small proportion (2.6%) felt never informed about safety rules. There are no significant differences in young people’s experience of this program practice, associated with age, sex or community.

Youth-centred organisations balance the need for safety with young people’s need to practice making decisions, taking responsibility and learning from making mistakes (Edginton, Kowalski, & Randall, 2005, p. 4; Delgado, 2004, p. 33; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005; Settersten, 2005, p. 533). Bessant, Sercombe, and Watts (1998, p. 31) make the point that when young people experiment, take risks and make mistakes they are also gaining invaluable experience. This experience, they maintain, equips young people with skills and knowledge which can support positive decision-making. Strength-based organisations and programs, as Petrie (2011, p. 141) argues, facilitate safe spaces for kids and young adults to “learn to assess and manage risks, in association with their peers and without over-reliance on adults”. As Ursula (age 23, Guides) explains to Karen:

*We learnt to identify... risk management strategies.... You know we now have to do it for excursions and things like that, it kind of put it into*

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40 YDRP question 5 in full: How true are the following about your personal experience in [program]: r. Adults in my [program] group make sure that I understand the rules to help me stay safe.
everyday activities where you go ‘okay what could possibly go wrong with this activity?’, ‘what am I going to do if something does go wrong?’, like I automatically do that in my head now, before I do anything...

Action 4 recognises that strength-based practice treats risk as “something to be assessed and managed, rather than avoided” and this characterises spaces where young people and their developing autonomy are respected (Petrie, 2011, p. 142; also Ausyouth, 2003a, p. 7). As discussed in Chapter 2, fostering this kind of learning environment where young people have the agency to learn to experience and to manage risk is, as Larson (2006, p. 678) intimates, a challenge. Chris (age 16, PCYC) feels his responsibility when he has leadership responsibilities keenly: “People are looking up to you. You’ve got a responsibility to keep them safe.” A key to balancing these responsibilities is for youth organisations to support program leaders to learn how and when to let go of an activity and to have the confidence to know they do not have to control everything (Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005). Many young people who participated in the YDRP talked about the freedom they had known in their program to experiment and the effect this had on their program experience:

...we did a lot of barbecues and lolly drives and that always seemed to raise a lot of money and we always had fun accidentally setting the barbecues on fire, so we have a lot of fun stories from that (Sheila, age 23, Leos).

...like it was you’re with your peers and have a game of cricket or throwing tennis balls at each other or you know, doing sleepovers and watching movies til four/five in the morning... So, I mean, we had um, a lot of fun (Kevin, age 21, PCYC).
...the messy games we have are really good...there’s not really that much rules to it... so that’s really fun (Ralph, age 15, BB).

Finding this balance does, however, create challenges because youth organisations are responsible for the care and safety of kids in their programs across the three areas of physical, social and psychological safety. They are also responsible for the spaces in which young people meet (Bolzan & Gale, 2011, p. 277). Bolzan and Gale (2011, p. 277) therefore argue that youth workers must articulate these responsibilities to young people at the start. As discussed in Indicator 6, strength-based practice involves working with young people to articulate the rules. In designing activities where making decisions on safety and risk-taking can be experienced, there is a need to pay attention to how these experiences can build confidence. Youth Scotland (2008, p. 1) explain: “We all need confidence, but it is especially important for young people as they try out new experiences and challenges. Shattered confidence at 16 can be devastating.” This, Ausyouth (2003e, p. 12; also Martinek & Hellison, 2009, pp. 30-31) suggests, points to the important role organisations play in helping youth workers to build the skills to assess the right level of expectation and challenge for each young person and to ensure activities are not experienced as negative ordeals. This links with Indicator 7’s emphasis on sequential learning and building on existing strengths and capabilities. As Ursula (age 23, Guides), talking with Karen, expressed:

...I am petrified of heights but I love abseiling, um (laughs) but like you freak out and you think I can’t do this, I can’t do this, and then you go and do it and by the end of it, it is fun.
Marnie (age 22, PCYC), in conversation with Jonathan, talked about how she supports kids in younger groups face challenges, overcome their fear and gain confidence:

Yeah, and I think the other thing is I like going on the camps. I enjoy the adventure development half of it, which is your high ropes, your canoeing, getting out there and having fun, and watching the kids actually get to that level and go ‘oh this is fun’, like they first look at it and go ‘this is scary’. And um, I had some of the younger ones there in the, that are in grade five, they just couldn’t do it, they couldn’t do it, and I was just like ‘come on, you can do it, I’ve got hold of you, don’t be scared, you’re safe in what you’re doing’ and they sort of, yeah, they got to the stage where they got up to the top and they did it all and it was really good.

Vygotsky’s (1978) Social Development Theory helps to explain these learning outcomes by showing how learning is most successful when it occurs in an environment where there is a balance between challenge and support. The stories shared by young people well illustrate the value they place on participating in a program environment where a balance between risk and safety has been achieved.

7.7. Indicator 6. Using diverse learning and development methodologies

The sixth indicator was adopted following in depth discussions with Impact, ESC and the PCYC (personal communication, 2008) and is based on an Ausyouth

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41Indicator 6 in full: Innovative, supportive and integrated approaches to learning and development are adopted using a combination of instruction, observation, experience and reflection.
(2002e) program indicator. The focus has been changed from specific outcomes self-esteem, confidence, leadership and team membership to a broader focus on learning and development. The mixed delivery and teaching methods of activity, instruction, service and reflection have also changed to a focus on instruction, observation, experience and reflection. This wider focus recognises the diversity of delivery methods used to support learning in the program environment (Bandura 1977; Cunningham, 2009; Holdsworth et al. 2005, pp. 7, 70, 101; Pianta & Allen, 2008; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, pp. 53-54). This indicator highlights the use of innovative, supportive and integrated approaches to kids and young adults learning and development using mixed learning methodologies (instruction, observation, experience and reflection).

The practical application of this indicator is demonstrated by the nine supporting examples of activity outlined in Table 7.12. These actions evolved during individual and group discussion and an exploration of the youth literature. They recognise the learning process is complex because: young people have multiple learning styles (Allen, Humphries, McBurney, & Makushev, 2005; Perkins & Borden, 2003, p. 333); face different barriers to learning and participation (Indicator 2) (Principle 2 and Principle 3, Chapter 6); and come to program activities with different skills and development levels (Indicator 7). Of these nine examples of activities, three are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e, 2003e) and six are new examples. Four of these new examples respond to YDOP suggestions and two address issues identified in the literature. The different learning methodologies

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42 Ausyouth (2001e, p. 29) principle 4, program Indicator 6: Integrated approaches to develop self-esteem, confidence, leadership and team membership as skills (rather than only personal attributes) are provided through activity, instruction, service and reflection.
which underpin this indicator are explored through a discussion of Actions 1, 5, 8 and 9.

**Table 7.12.  Actions: Supporting innovative, supportive and integrated learning and development approaches using instruction, observation, experience and reflection.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action under Indicator 6 may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Developing a core program structure enabling the creative delivery of activities using instruction, observation, experience and reflection learning methods (Impact, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bringing together program leaders to discuss and learn about new methods and approaches to learning and using this knowledge to update existing and develop new program materials (Huebner, Walker, &amp; McFarland, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Providing training and information resources to equip program leaders with the materials and skills they need to recognise, understand, and respect the different ways young people learn and develop (Perkins &amp; Borden, 2003, p. 333; Roundtable, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Supporting young people to feel confident about the approach to learning and development they are practicing, asking them for feedback and acting on the information they share (Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing numerous opportunities for modelling, practising and reflecting on newly learnt skills (Kress, 2006, pp. 48, 49).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Keeping abreast of emerging research and methodologies in learning and teaching and using these to inform program practices (Ausyouth, 2001e; Roundtable, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Working in partnership with young people to develop innovative approaches to learning and development that are suitable for use in the program environment (Roundtable, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Encouraging young people to practice being effective role models, learning from others and respecting and valuing other people’s skills, knowledge and experience even if it is different to their own (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Supporting program leaders to practice their own and guide young people’s reflective practice following activities and events to maximise learning outcomes (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 37; Guides, personal communication, 2008; Impact and PCYC, personal communication, 2008; Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Action 1 recognises that young people can be engaged in learning more effectively when innovative and mixed approaches to learning are incorporated into the program curriculum (Impact, personal communication, 2008; also Skinner, 2010, p. 47). According to Codling (2010, p. 40) being aware of the audience and tailoring the teaching methodologies to maximise attention and interest is essential. This understanding is modelled by Orson (age 17, ESC) who explained to me how, when he is leading a group, he uses multiple approaches as a strategy to reduce boredom:

Sometimes, if it is a theory lesson, I usually - I'll try to make it a lot more practical. I don't like doing intensive theory. I'll always have a practical icebreaker. This helps if someone is being disruptive because they are bored by the theory.

Nicholls (2012, pp. 217-218) promotes the inclusion of critical thinking opportunities into activities to support young people's learning about the world they live in:

Informally educating a young person through a cookery project in a youth centre that certain fridge temperatures are safer than others, or pricing the results of cooking reasonably so friends can afford the cake are moral courses of action, and are worthwhile exercises in themselves, adding to the fun and learning of life. Talking about food markets and the power of supermarkets might add a twist of real endeavour.

This is perhaps what Ursula, (age 23, Guides), is suggesting when she said to Karen:
Everything you do has a purpose. So like even if you’re going out for a shopping trip with the girls, you’re still encouraging the fun and the friendship, you’re encouraging the social skills, you’re widening their exposure to things in the world…. the girls see it as ‘we’re going on camp, how fun’, but then they don’t see that you’re teaching them cooking skills, you’re teaching them organization, so there is all of those life-skills that come into every activity that’s done, even the messy games…

Donald, (age 19-25, BB), talking with Zoe about the most important thing he had learnt, reveals how unexpected situations can be used by program leaders to support young people to develop new skills:

…it’s funny because you learn unique skills that I wouldn’t have learnt anywhere else. Like I know how to read a map and hike somewhere and I know how to glaze a window because we’ve got these old timber framed windows… and we always broke them so we had to repair them, so I learnt how to glaze a window… I know how to cartwheel too.

Gambone (2001, p. 287; also Sullivan & Larson, 2010, p. 115) promotes experiential activities to provide opportunities for young people to “try on the adult roles”. She suggests that by enabling youth to share control and power, through group rule and activity decision-making, young people can practice and develop skills they will need as adults. This links to Action 5 which recognises the importance of nurturing the development of new skills by providing multiple opportunities for modelling, practicing and reflecting on the use of recently acquired skills (Kress, 2006, pp. 48, 49; PCYC, personal communication, 2008).
Bers (2012, pp. 27,32; also Ito, 2010) describes activities which make use of new technologies, such as robotics and gaming, to illustrate the importance of providing opportunities for kids to be creative individually and as part of a team. Creative activities she argues can help them to learn and to exercise many developmental life-skills including collaboration, problem solving and building self-confidence. For Bers, (2006, p. 201) collaborative learning opportunities are essential. Working with a group of early school leavers, Codling (2010, p. 40) also found creative innovation and reinvention of program activities is a key element keeping them engaged for the five month program. Methods which gained positive results included using experiential interactive hands-on formats, minimising the use of monologues as instruction to convey information and, as discussed in Indicator 9, using fun or the spectacular to start off the day’s activity and ensuring activities hold relevance for everyday lives. Creation and innovation over time is also necessary as Joe, (age 19-25, BB), explains to Zoe:

*Being the main leader for the boys has helped me put in where I want to see them go and I think that’s one thing because times have changed so we have to change their activities for them and I think that’s something that I brought in. It was something where [older leaders] had these ideas and I said no, we need to change them because that’s not going to apply to the boys these days.*

When asked by Zoe what sorts of things he had introduced, he explained:

*Well, we’ve introduced a lot more physical activities... A lot less of the crafts and stuff... If we do crafts it has to be more extravagant, we can’t just do a little thing for older boys, we need to do something big and get them excited.*
So I think their latest one was building suits of armour. And, uh, they all seemed to have a good time.

Action 8 continues the emphasis previously introduced in relation to Indicator 2 on supporting others learning by being effective role models. Program leaders and young people can support others learning by practicing and modelling appropriate emotional literacy skills such as problem solving, keeping calm, listening, showing empathy and positioning mistakes as opportunities for learning (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 16; also Hoffman, 2000, p. 289; Jones & Deutsch, 2011, p.1402; Martinek & Hellison, 2009, p. 35; Stacey et al. 2010a, p. 58). Here, Wood (2006, p. 8; also Bolzan & Gale, 2011, p. 278; Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, p. 5) suggests that by modelling life-skills and pro-social behaviour older people can positively influence the development of younger people’s social and emotional health. Joe, (age 19-25, BB), talking with Zoe about risk believes program leaders can be role models and positively influence young people’s activity choices:

As for risky activities I guess it’s just the world out there at the moment with drugs, with alcohol, with cars and everything. It’s trying to just promote I guess showing them that there is another way, like showing through example is a good way, one of the strongest ways. And that’s where I’m really proud of all of our leaders because we all have a good example, we all show there is a way you can get through the world without having to succumb, I guess.

Bandura (1977; also Bandura & Walters 1964, pp. 47-108) addresses the importance of this type of learning in his Social Learning Theory which explains
how we learn by observing and then modelling or imitating the actions, behaviours and opinions of people around us. As Kress (2006, p. 49) summarises:

*Instruction works best by modelling desired behaviours of value to learners and by providing situations that allow learners to use or practice that behaviour to improve retention [of the new knowledge].*

Taylor and Bressler (2000, pp. 53-54; also Holdsworth et al. 2005, pp. 7, 70, 101) agree and argue that while instruction and observation are essential components of the learning process the provision of opportunities to actively practice the skills being taught in programs can increase learning. The combined use of instruction, observation, practice and reflection improved the learning outcomes of Kevin (age 21, PCYC) who in conversation with Jonathan said:

*I guess you grow as a person in what you’re doing and then... your leadership skills, I guess you learn from not only, say, taking an active leadership role within, you know, your core group of people, you know, in SYLP [State Youth Leadership Program], I guess, but then, you know going through the programs and learning about different styles of leadership skills and then getting the chance to like.... see how they work in, you know, reality.*

Other young people talked about how observing the choices of others and reflecting on what they had seen influenced their own decision-making. *Action 9 focuses on the importance of reflective learning.* David (age 20, SLS) talked with Jonathan about how the combined use of observation and reflection had helped him resist negative peer pressure:
Um, yeah I think it has. Um, in life saving, like, in the morning’s and you’re doing patrol and you get a lot of um, like, drunks, passed out at the beach, and – or – you’ve done a lot of rescues with people that have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol. And you look at that and you say “well, there’s no way I’m doing that because that’s what can happen”, like, do a rescue – you have to do resus on ’em, like, if I do that then, you know, that could be me one day. That could be me lying on the sand passed out, unconscious.

Critical, adaptive skills such as leadership and the development of character cannot be taught didactically through instruction; they need to be learnt and developed through experience and reflective learning (Kress, 2006, p. 48). This understanding is encapsulated in Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience which emphasises the experiential nature of learning. He argued that some things are better learnt through experience. Dewey (1938, pp. 37-38) not only recognises the importance of young people learning through interactions with their environment, but that each young person’s learning experience will be different depending on their previous learning and their existing skills and abilities. Dewey called this “the organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). This connection helps to explain why tailoring activities to different ages and developmental phases (Indicator 7), and linking young people’s learning with their everyday life experiences (Indicator 9), supports positive learning outcomes.

7.8. Indicator 7. Structuring activities to build positive learning outcomes

The seventh indicator was adopted by the Working-Group, and is based on an Ausyouth (2001e) indicator. This indicator points to the link between

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43Indicator 7 in full: Activities are structured sequentially to build and maintain positive learning outcomes.
structured, age and developmentally appropriate activities and positive learning outcomes. An emphasis on positive learning recognises that negative outcomes for young people can result from activity participation (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003, p. 29; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). The need to build positive learning and development outcomes for program leaders is addressed in Indicator 8. Underpinning this indicator is the fundamental recognition that kids and young adults come to program activities with different levels of skill and knowledge (MacCallum & Beltman, 2002, p. 4; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12). Each young person’s development will differ by age and, as the Jacobs Foundation (2011, p. 10) explains, “in relation to his or her general biological, cognitive, emotional, and social development”.

The practical application of this indicator is demonstrated by the six supporting examples of action shown in Table 7.13. These actions evolved during individual and group discussion and an exploration of the youth literature. Of the six supporting examples of action, three are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e, 2003a, 2003e) and three are new examples. Two of these new examples respond to YDOP suggestions and one addresses issues identified in the literature. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss two of these examples of action which point to the importance of program curriculum structure and design (Actions 1 and 3).

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44 Ausyouth (2001e, p. 29) principle 4, program indicator 1: Activities are structured sequentially to build and maintain positive learning outcomes.
Table 7.13. Actions: Supporting structured activities delivered sequentially to build and maintain positive learning outcomes.

Action under Indicator 7 may include:

1. Offering a variety of structured and unstructured activities at each level of the program designed to sequentially build and maintain learning outcomes (Lions, personal communication, 2008; also Loder & Hirsch, 2003, p. 10).

2. Providing training for program leaders equipping them with the skills they need to assess the changing skill levels and capabilities of young people as they progress through the different stages of the program (ESC & SLS, personal communication, 2008).

3. Designing activities to have different components/roles to help program leaders consider what each member of the group does well and engage them in the group’s activities in a way that is inclusive and builds on and stretches their existing skill level (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29, 2003a, p. 7; also McLaughlin, 2000, p. 12).

4. Structuring activities sequentially to encourage young people to take increasing responsibility for self and to learn to value the benefits of taking ownership of their own participation (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; also Bell, Vromen, & Collin, 2008; Holdsworth, 2006; Tisdall, 2008).

5. Teaching program leaders how to support rather than control young people’s own discovery of their unique self as they negotiate their way through the program activities (Jones & Perkins, 2006; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005; Stacey et al. 2010a).

6. Monitoring, supporting and encouraging each young person’s progress (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 18).

The structure and design of activities, outlined in Actions 1 and 3 can support program leaders in applying these skills (Lions, personal communication, 2008; Loder & Hirsch, 2003, p. 10). Positive developmental outcomes are strongly associated with structured, rather than unstructured, programs or activities (Catalano et al. 2004, pp. 115-117; Kirshner, 2008, p. 95; Nelson & Gastic, 2009, p. 3). Action 1, however, recognises that the inclusion of some unstructured activities in a structured program curriculum is also important (Lions, personal communication, 2008). By providing a mix of structured and unstructured activities, Loder and Hirsch (2003, p. 10; also Darling, 2005) suggest, programs can
provide space and time in which young people can develop their social networks and friendships. Mekinda and Hirsch (2014, pp. 227-8) agree that some unstructured time can be beneficial because it allows young people to socialise informally and to seek out one-on-one interactions with significant adults whom they like.

The importance of social networks is further explored in Principle 6 Partnerships and Social Networking (Chapter 6). Some young members did talk about the unstructured opportunities they had on camp to “just sit around and talk sometimes” (Jade, age 15, Guides), or after having finished training to “go out and sit in the middle of the water and just talk to your friends” (Shiela, age 14, SLS). Others specifically spoke about how unstructured time allowed bonding time with friends (Emma, age 13, Guides). However, the stories young people told do seem to suggest that organised or planned unstructured time is viewed the most favourably. For some young people unplanned free-time can, as discussed in Indicator 9, lead to feelings of boredom and disappointment (Emma, age 13, Guides; Jade, age 15, Guides).

Action 3 focuses on the design of activities to have different components or roles to help leaders engage young people in the group’s activities in a way that is inclusive and builds on and stretches their existing skill level. McLaughlin (2000, p. 12; also Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; 2003a, p. 7) argues that when activities have been designed with multiple components and roles, leaders are more able to use what each member does well to engage them in the group’s activities and build on their skill level. This is supported in the Ausyouth (2003e, p. 14) interviews with young people where there is a clear preference for a flexible approach to skill development “self-paced”, “at your own pace” and “well supported”. Interviews in
the YDRP also revealed the importance of supporting young people during their participation to develop self-awareness about their own competencies, capabilities and participation. In talking with Karen, Arial (age 27, Guides) said the most important thing she had learnt is to:

*Challenge yourself by what you’re capable of and what your abilities are and not by what others are…. by your personal best and not the best of others.*

Arial’s experience also links to Indicator 2 and the opportunities individual development plans can provide to support the growth of self-awareness.

### 7.9. Indicator 8. Delivering mentoring, support and training for program leaders

The eighth indicator was adopted by the Working Group, and is based on an Ausyouth (2002e) indicator. It introduces an emphasis on *training* to address the Working Group, opinion that training needed to be embedded more fully across the framework. A focus on accessible mentoring, support and training for program leaders incorporates the BB opinion that youth workers must be able to access support when they need it. This indicator builds on and supports the operationalisation of leader core competencies in Indicator 3 and is influenced by the knowledge that skilled leaders are at the heart of successful work with young people, each other and the community.

Mentoring, supporting and training program staff can help to improve organisational learning and performance, professional practice, job satisfaction and staff retention (Smith & Akiva, 2008, p. 195; Lloyd-Jones, 2010, p. 23; Miller,

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45 Indicator 8 in full: Program leaders can easily access mentoring, support and training.
46 Ausyouth (2001c:29) principle 4, organisation Indicator 3: Mentoring and support is offered to new leaders.

The practical application of this indicator is demonstrated by the eight supporting examples of action shown in Table 7.14. These actions respond to YDOP individual and group opinion. They illustrate how an organisational culture of life-long education can support the professional development of program leaders, see their potential recognised and developed (Grossman & Furano, 2002; Meyer, Miller, & Herman, 1993, pp. 100,102; Skinner, 2010, p. 50), and their existing skills and knowledge valued and utilised (Hunter, 2010, p. 35; Jones & Perkins, 2006, p. 102; Speer, 2008, p. 217).

Four of these examples of action are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e, 2002e) and four are new examples developed in response to YDOP suggestions. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss two examples of action which focus on using mixed teaching and delivery methods to support volunteer and paid youth workers build their skill, knowledge and confidence (Actions 1 and 4).

There are numerous actions which can support the provision of effective mentoring, support and training for paid and volunteer program staff. Action 1 sees more experienced staff involved in coaching and mentoring as important methods to support program leaders to improve their youth work practice (BB, personal communication, 2008). Miller, Kobes and Forney (2008, p. 183) suggest the importance of a coaching program lies in its potential to help program leaders change their approach and adjust their behaviour rapidly.
Table 7.14. Actions: Supporting program leader access to mentoring, support and training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action under Indicator 8 may include:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Offering coaching and mentoring meetings with a more experienced paid or volunteer staff member (BB, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Setting up a dedicated support person or hotline (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 45; Roundtable, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Supporting experienced program leaders to act as volunteer mentors or contact people for new program leaders (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 42; BB, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Developing a shadowing or internship scheme for new volunteers who are placed with effective long-term volunteers for a specified period of time before they have sole responsibility for a role or position (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 42; Lions, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Using research and literature on good practice in volunteering to help build, update and monitor mentoring, support and training services for program leaders (Ausyouth, 2001e; Dukes, personal communication, 2008; Working-Group, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Encouraging program leaders to actively make use of local, regional, national and international formal and informal networking opportunities with other youth development practitioners (Impact, personal communication, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Providing program leaders with accessible formal and informal training opportunities to equip them with the necessary skills to be successful in their role and to maintain their skills (BB, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Establishing a dedicated area on the organisational website for program leaders so they can easily access relevant information and resources to support them to excel in their role (Impact, personal communication, 2010).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grossman and Furano (2002, p. 12) argue it lies in its potential to help volunteers improve their performance and deal with complex or difficult situations. Salter (2010, p. 53) believes it lies in its potential to teach the art of critical reflection and to ensure the many different and continual opportunities for learning, including those provided by young people themselves, are not missed. Meyer, Miller, and Herman (1993, p. 103; also Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011, pp. 297-306; Pianta & Allen, 2008, p. 31) promote the practice of experienced staff coaching new staff using “observation and corrective feedback” because they argue it is difficult for program leaders to observe themselves or their youth group.
objectively. Smith and Akiva (2008, p. 195) warn it is essential for any individual development or coaching system to use positive incentives such as “useful feedback, encouragement to improve your craft, and a sense of shared effort on the part of a team working toward a shared purpose.”

Providing quality staff mentoring, support and training is important for all staff but particularly so for program leaders because they are responsible for providing consistent and continuous support to the young people in their care (Youth Scotland, 2008, p. 1; Hilfinger Messias et al. 2005, p. 332; Skinner, 2010, p. 46). The opportunity to witness and reflect on experienced staff practices in action can be a powerful education method. Action 4 provides the example of using a shadowing or internship scheme for emerging young leaders to learn from observing current young and older leaders (Ausyouth, 2002e, p. 42; Lions, personal communication, 2008). Lucy (age 16, PCYC), when asked by Zoe about what she had learnt from her program leader, responded:

_“I think there would be a few things that I’ve learnt from her. She’s kind of the inspiration for me to be a better leader. If I was to step up and become a facilitator of the YMT then she would be the one person that I would get a lot of opinions and ideas from for running meetings and that kind of thing.”_

A number of young people gave examples showing how they gained a deeper understanding through mixed teaching methodologies. For Lia (age 15, SLS), part of learning how to be a surf coach involved shadowing and being mentored and trained over the summer season by the current surf coach and then practicing what she had learnt. She explains:

_“I pretty much go with the coach now, listen to what he says with the kids and I take the younger group. Because they think that the older group won’t...”_
listen to me just yet, which is fair enough. I get taught how to talk to the kids, how to show them how to ride a board properly, how to swim. Tell them where exactly they can go.

Eventually, Lia says she will complete a more formal structured training course in winter so she can become a qualified surf coach for Nippers. In her experience the older people in her club are there to help young people learn because “they want you to become future leaders and stay in the club.”

Overall, these results suggest that for the majority of aspiring and current youth workers the use of mixed delivery and teaching methods are effective. Using mixed methods to support learning and development can, as Hirsch, Deutsch, and DuBois (2011, p. 301) argue, not only increase accessibility but also support paid and voluntary staff “learn together, plan together, and act together on behalf of youth.”

7.10. Indicator 9. Designing activities to be engaging and meaningful

The ninth indicator evolved after the Working-Group, argued for the inclusion of a reference to activities having “a correlation to everyday life and real world experiences”. While there is no specific Ausyouth (2001e) indicator which this new indicator builds on, it is influenced by Ausyouth (2001e) Principle Four. Specifically, the theme of fun is drawn from the title and meaningful activities from program Indicator 3. The importance of activities fostering a positive vision for the future is drawn from the Ausyouth (2003c, p. 43) interviews with young people. This indicator highlights five key elements which researchers, youth and

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47Indicator 9 in full: Activities are engaging and meaningful.
48Ausyouth (2001e) Principle 4: A commitment to an experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases
49Ausyouth (2001e) Principle 4, Program Indicator 3: Activities are interesting and meaningful, reflecting young people’s needs and wishes, and not rigid replications of adult instructional regimes.
practitioners suggest are important for sustaining engagement. These elements are that activities are fun, meaningful, relate to everyday life experiences, and help to foster a world view, and a positive future vision.

Activity design, important for achieving engagement, retention and positive developmental outcomes, is discussed across this Principle Learning and Development. The importance of designing activities to support safety is addressed in Indicator 5, to support mixed teaching and learning is addressed in Indicator 6, to sequentially build on developing capabilities and to support program leaders deliver quality programs is addressed in Indicator 7. This indicator highlights the link between an engaging and meaningful curriculum and continued participation.

Table 7.15. Actions: Supporting an engaging and meaningful curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action under Indicator 9 may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Incorporating a mix of fun, meaningful and purposeful elements into the design of activities appealing to diverse young people (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; 2003c, p. 46).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Including content in program leader training on youth culture and adolescent and early adulthood development to help program leaders deliver an appropriate and engaging program of activities which relate to everyday life experiences and foster a positive vision for the future (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29; Impact &amp; PCYC, personal communication, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Supporting young people to be involved in designing both the fun and the meaningful activities that are included in a programs calendar of activities (Bell, Vromen, &amp; Collin, 2008; London, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helping young people to understand and reflect on how the things they learn and do are related to their everyday life and the world they live in (ANTA, 2002; Camino, 2005, p. 5; Stacey et al. 2010b, p. 81; Taylor &amp; Bressler, 2000, p. 54).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Equipping program leaders with the skill to set realistic high expectations that positively challenge young people to extend themselves (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Providing young people with the opportunity to try activities they may not otherwise have access to including activities outside their program leader’s expertise by, for example, initiating joint activities and partnerships with other program groups (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practical application of this indicator is demonstrated by six examples of action outlined in Table 7.15. These actions evolved during individual and group discussion. Of these six examples of activity, four are influenced by Ausyouth (2001e, 2003c) and two address issues identified in the literature. To illustrate this indicator, I discuss three of these actions showing the combined importance of activity design (Actions 1 and 4) and partnerships (Action 6) in creating and delivering an engaging activity curriculum.

The capacity for program leaders to deliver an engaging activity curriculum requires having access to a program curriculum which enables them to deliver the right mix of age and developmentally appropriate activities (Auszouth, 2003a, p. 11; Ausyouth, 2003d, p. 28; Codling, 2010, p. 40; Gambone, 2001, pp. 279, 287). Indicator 7 addresses the provision of age and developmentally appropriate activities. According to Holdsworth et al. (2005, pp. 3, 102), Loder and Hirsch (2003, p. 10) and Bolzan and Gale (2011, pp. 273-275) ensuring these activities are fun is also vital. **Action 1** argues for a *mix of fun, meaningful and purposeful elements in the design of activities* (Auszouth, 2001e, p. 29; 2003c, p. 46). Young people interviewed by Ausyouth (2003e, p. 36) agree. They argued the element of having fun while learning is crucial for continued involvement. This is also a strong theme across the YDRP interviews. I asked Amber (age 16, Leos) to explain why barbecue fundraising is fun:

> Just ‘cause you’re all together, and like your friends and stuff and you’re just cooking and having fun and helping people…. So it’s good. It’s not a chore you know, it’s like and it feels good to kind of do something that’s like
beneficial kind of, like even, and it’s going to sound so corny, but, beneficial
to the community. It’s like I’m giving something back.

For Amber, linking friends and doing something meaningful helps to create
a fun activity. Likewise, when I asked Jaimie, (age 16, SLS) what the word fun
meant to her she explained:

It’s just having a really good time - and wanting to come back, to stay
involved with everyone and stay involved with everything that you’re doing
because you’re just having such a good time and you’re meeting such great
people and they are all really lovely to you. It’s the people who push you and
build your confidence and make you feel good.

Many other young people also made a similar link between fun and the
people involved with the program. Some youth talked about activities they really
enjoy:

Hanging with my friends... I like always do the barbecue, I’m like the main
head person and then selling all the stuff is fun and you get to talk to the
people who come to the counter. It’s just fun. Then setting up and making all
the food look pretty and everything (Suzie, 14, talking with Zoe about Leos).
I hate to admit this but I actually do enjoy doing drill. They know as well but
I tend to protest on a night when you’ve got to do it and go ‘oh drill’. But we
all do that. It actually is fun. There is a sense of pride if you do it well. Like
yeah, I can march really well. It gives you a good sense of pride. I enjoy doing
games. That is always fun. I enjoy hikes. I enjoy everything really but my
favourite would be drills, games, hikes and just the friends you make. That’s
the main attraction for me just the friends I make (Peter, 17, talking with Jonathan about BB).

Oh camping. You had to do three or four expeditions for each award which was good, it was fun. I did that through the school mainly and we just went camping. Once or twice we helped the environment and stuff so it was good (Lukas, 18, talking with Karen about Dukes).

Each young leader interviewed also indicated that having fun and seeing meaning and enjoyment in what they do is important to them. Donald (age 19-25, BB) in conversation with Zoe expressed it this way:

*The thing I enjoy about it all is teaching, I actually enjoy teaching, whether it be teaching, uh, drill, like marching... or doing something like gymnastics... The camps are always fun... They’re still fun for the leaders as well. Yeah so I enjoy playing the games, taking them through the games.*

Interestingly, knowing older people are also having fun is something a number of young people mentioned as important because it positively changed the way they could relate to them. Marnie (age 22, PCYC), talked about how it means a lot to see older people actively connect and have fun with them. Reflecting on why this is important she told Jonathan that when older people in the club make the effort to go and connect with young people they get “a better understanding of what their members are doing and what’s going on within the club.” Mekinda and Hirsch (2014, p. 226) suggest this kind of interaction also provides opportunities for older people to be role models and mentors. This link between fun, friendships and relationships is addressed in Principle 5 *Partnerships and Social Networks.*
Bengoechea, Strean, and Williams, (2004) argue fun is important for initiating and sustaining engagement. To further explore young people’s view on the importance of fun for sustaining their engagement, we asked them in the questionnaire how important it is that they do things that are fun.\textsuperscript{50} A four point scale was used: very important, important, not very important, not at all important. To explore young member experiences of fun in the program environment we asked them if young people were encouraged to have fun.\textsuperscript{51} A three point scale was used: always true, sometimes true, not true.

**Table 7.16. Engagement: Doing fun things**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Doing things that are fun (%(n))</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Not very important</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex\textsuperscript{a}</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55.1 (134)</td>
<td>41.9 (102)</td>
<td>2.9 (7)</td>
<td>100.0 (243)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54.9 (100)</td>
<td>41.8 (76)</td>
<td>3.3 (6)</td>
<td>100.0 (182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age\textsuperscript{a}</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>49.5 (48)</td>
<td>47.4 (46)</td>
<td>3.1 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>57.1 (56)</td>
<td>41.8 (41)</td>
<td>1.0 (1)</td>
<td>100.0 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>59.6 (59)</td>
<td>37.4 (37)</td>
<td>3.0 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1 (44)</td>
<td>40.3 (31)</td>
<td>2.6 (2)</td>
<td>100.0 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>50.0 (27)</td>
<td>42.6 (23)</td>
<td>7.4 (4)</td>
<td>100.0 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community\textsuperscript{b}</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50.0 (61)</td>
<td>46.7 (57)</td>
<td>3.3 (4)</td>
<td>100.0 (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>58.9 (123)</td>
<td>38.3 (80)</td>
<td>2.9 (6)</td>
<td>100.0 (209)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>53.8 (43)</td>
<td>42.5 (34)</td>
<td>3.8 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total\textsuperscript{a}</strong></td>
<td>55.1 (234)</td>
<td>41.9 (178)</td>
<td>3.1 (13)</td>
<td>100.0 (425)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated, chi-square is based on the three categories of ‘very important’, ‘important’ and ‘not very important’ responses (there were zero responses to ‘not at all important’ for this engagement characteristic). a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%; b. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

As shown in Table 7.16, when we asked young people for their views in the questionnaire on how important fun was for their continued engagement, almost everyone (96.9%) reported it was central to their experience. More young people

\textsuperscript{50} YDRP question 6 in full: How important are the following things in making you want to belong to [program]: a. Doing things that are fun.

\textsuperscript{51} YDRP question 5 in full: How true are the following about your personal experience in [program]: y. young people are encouraged to have fun at my [program] group.
(55.1%) felt that doing fun things is very important rather than important (41.9%).

Out of 18 engagement characteristics examined, fun achieved an overall very important ranking of fifth (Appendices-9). There are no significant differences in attitudes towards fun associated with the socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex or community.

Table 7.17. Practice: Encouraging fun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Young people are encouraged to have fun at my group (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>80.6 (195)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>81.4 (149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>82.3 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>84.8 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>77.8 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>83.1 (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>74.1 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community(^b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>76.2 (93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>83.3 (174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>81.3 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(^a)</td>
<td>80.9 (344)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated, chi-square is based on the two categories of 'always' and 'sometimes true or not true'. a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%; b. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

Analysis of the practice of encouraging young people to have fun in their program revealed over three quarters (80.9%) of young people reported this practice always occurred (Table 7.17). This is the case for both males (81.4%) and females (80.6). Less than one quarter (19.4%) reported this practice rarely or never occurred. Being encouraged to have fun is the second highest occurring program practice. There are no significant differences in the practice of encouraging young people to have fun based on the socio-demographic characteristics of sex, age or community. These results show that the use of fun
activities and experiences to support youth engagement is strongly reflected in program practice.

Nevertheless, while more than three quarters of young people (80.9%) reported they are always supported to have fun (Table 7.17), this practice is lower than the proportion of young members (96.9%) who reported doing fun things is important for their continued engagement (Table 7.16). This has implications for sustained program engagement. Analysis of the relationship between this practice and its importance for continued engagement reveals that of those young people (n=411) who reported doing fun things helps to sustain their engagement, almost all report that they are always encouraged to have fun (99.3%, n=408) (Table 7.18).

Only a very small proportion of this cohort (0.7%, n=3) reported they are only sometimes or never encouraged to have fun. For the small group of young people (n=13) who reported doing fun things is not important for their engagement, the majority experience always being encouraged to have fun (69.2%, n=9). These patterns linking the experience of having fun with engagement are highly significant ($x^2(2, N = 424) = 18.962, p=.000$). There are no significant differences related to age, sex or community. These results suggest young people’s experience of the practice of being encouraged to have fun, and the importance they give to doing fun things for their continued engagement, are not significantly influenced by their age, sex or community.
Table 7.18. Linking practice and engagement: Encouraging fun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Always true</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>88.4 (206)</td>
<td>10.7 (25)</td>
<td>0.9 (2)</td>
<td>100.0 (233)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>71.9 (128)</td>
<td>27.5 (49)</td>
<td>0.6 (1)</td>
<td>100.0 (178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>69.2 (9)</td>
<td>30.8 (4)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80.9 (343)</td>
<td>18.4 (78)</td>
<td>0.7 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (424)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the two categories 'always' and 'sometimes true or not true' for practice and the three categories of 'very important', 'important' and 'not important' ('not very important' and 'not at all important') for engagement. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 7.16 and 7.17 due to missing cases.

Youth practitioners interviewed by Ausyouth (2003a, p. 11) argued fun is an essential element of a program. For them, providing fun requires a balance to be found between safety, freedom and guidance. As outlined in Indicator 5, getting this balance right is important for different reasons. It can help young people to value the activity, the experience gained and to achieve learning outcomes.

Designing a balanced curriculum can support young people to gain a sense of personal achievement. Experiencing risk and challenge in an activity is important regardless whether it is a physical (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012, p. 1374; Gambone, 2001, p. 287) or a cerebral (Bers, 2012, p. 32) focused activity. Facing, experiencing and overcoming challenge while having fun has been shown to help young people learn new things, master new skills, achieve new goals and imagine their future (Bers, 2012; McLaughlin, 2000, p. 27). A program curriculum underpinned by the element of fun can therefore help to expose young people to continual new learning experiences and make repetitive or dull activities more enjoyable (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 16). Jolly (E. 2010, p. 1) argues fostering curiosity is an essential part of the learning process. From the perspective of program leaders...
this can be challenging because activities or content they consider interesting or important to include, young people can find boring or uninteresting. As Joe (BB, age 19-25) explained to Zoe:

*I know the boys, most of them don’t really enjoy the more strenuous thinking or spiritual activities but I think that’s a, they want the games, they want the fun. But we try to make everything as enjoyable as we can and I think a lot of them do enjoy it. I personally don’t find anything there that I don’t like.*

Only a few young members talked about activities which they found boring. Emma (age 13, Guides) nominated “when we don’t have anything to do” as the least favourite aspect of her program experience. When explored in more detail with Jonathan this emerged as something that did not happen very often. When it did happen it is usually due to the weather preventing planned activities from taking place or it is due to a leader forgetting to bring necessary materials. When pressed to explain further Emma clarified: “I guess if you’re doing it like two weeks in a row it gets a bit boring”. The positive side of not having anything planned to do, she reflected, is that “we have to make stuff up, that’s just as fun sometimes because it like lets you bond I guess with your friends, and you just make up your own games.” This links to Indicator 7 which recognises there are pro-social benefits to be gained from including some unstructured time or activities in a structured program curriculum.

*On the importance of imagining futures, Beck and Purcell (2010, p. 13) point to the use of activities which enable kids to explore their experience of the world. Here, Jolly (E. 2010, p. 1) points to the importance of young people “learning to make connections [between different bodies of knowledge to] enhance their*
understanding of the world”. Action 4 looks at the important role youth-inclusive programs have in supporting youth to understand and reflect on how the things they learn and do are related to their everyday life and the world they live in (ANTA, 2002; Camino, 2005, p. 5; Stacey et al. 2010b, p. 81; Taylor & Bressler, 2000, p. 54). Youth programs provide opportunities to meet and interact with different groups of young and older people, to visit different programs and to travel to different locations (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 10; Mekinda & Hirsch, 2014, p. 224). In this way, programs can “promot[e] intergroup and community understanding and tolerance” (Witt, 2005, p. 124). Young people value these opportunities because they help them to develop a better understanding of society (Ausyouth, 2003e, p. 21; Pianta & Allen, 2008, p. 26). On this, Lucy (age 16, PCYC) told Zoe her favourite aspect of being involved is learning about people and society. She explained:

The one thing that has always stood out for me in my mind is the YMT because the people who come through it and the things you learn about people and that kind of thing. You learn a lot about people and it kind of makes you step back and think I have things in life a lot easier than some other kids do.

Sheila, (age 23, Leos), also felt that doing community service gave her a better understanding about society: “you get to learn a lot about the community and the needs of the disabled and people who need help.” For her, the biggest lesson learnt is that “you don’t have to make a big contribution to make a difference.” Roker, Player, and Coleman (1999, p. 192) found that opportunities to work with different groups of people in society is a transformative experience. These examples all illustrate the act of reflective learning discussed in Indicator 6. Taking part in these kinds of activities, Beck and Purcell (2010, p. 13) argue, also
helps build trust and reciprocity while nurturing understanding about the
collective nature of issues and everyone’s role in building social capital. All of
which, Ausyouth (2003c, p. 26) asserts, helps kids to develop a clear and positive
vision of the future.

Table 7.19. Engagement: Learning new things important for the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Learning new things important for my future (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61.7 (150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66.9 (121)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>67.0 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>67.3 (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>57.6 (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>67.1 (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>59.3 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63.9 (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>62.0 (129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>67.5 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63.9 (271)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Chi-square is based on the three categories of 'very important', 'important' and 'not important' ('not very important' and 'not at all important').
a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%; b. Missing cases=16, 3.8%.

When we asked young people in the questionnaire how important learning
new things for their future is for their sustained engagement almost all young
people (97.4%) reported it is a key factor (Table 7.19). More young people felt
learning new things for their future is very important (63.9%) rather than
important (33.5%). This program engagement characteristic achieved a top five
very important ranking of 3 (Appendices-9). There is no demonstrated influence of
the socio-demographic characteristics of sex, age or community on youth opinion
about learning new things.
### Table 7.20. Practice: Supporting the development of new skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Always true</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>77.8 (189)</td>
<td>20.9 (51)</td>
<td>1.2 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (243)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>82.0 (150)</td>
<td>18.0 (33)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (183)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>78.4 (76)</td>
<td>21.6 (21)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>84.8 (84)</td>
<td>15.2 (14)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>76.8 (76)</td>
<td>23.2 (23)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>77.9 (60)</td>
<td>18.2 (14)</td>
<td>3.9 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>79.6 (43)</td>
<td>20.4 (11)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong>&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>76.2 (93)</td>
<td>23.8 (29)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>100.0 (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>81.4 (171)</td>
<td>18.1 (38)</td>
<td>0.5 (1)</td>
<td>100.0 (210)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>81.3 (65)</td>
<td>16.3 (13)</td>
<td>2.5 (2)</td>
<td>100.0 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>79.6 (339)</td>
<td>19.7 (84)</td>
<td>0.7 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (426)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Chi-square is based on the two categories of ‘always’ and ‘sometimes true or not true’.

<sup>a</sup>Missing cases=0, 0.0%;  <sup>b</sup>Missing cases=14, 3.3%;

When we asked young people in the questionnaire how often they are helped by adults to develop new skills, only a very small proportion (0.7%) reported *never*. As shown in Table 7.20, over three quarters (79.6%) of young members reported they are always helped to develop new skills. Out of the 19 program practice characteristics examined, this is the fourth highest occurring practice. There are no significant differences in the occurrence of being helped to develop new skills associated with age, sex or community.

Young members gave a range of examples of the kinds of learning and development opportunities which they felt are important for their future careers, goals or identity development. For Leela (age 17, ESC), learning practical skills is important for her future. As she explained to Jonathan:
Through Cadets you can gain a Certificate 2 which helps at school because you have to get a certain number of points to pass and this is one way you can get some points and it is also possible to get your Duke of Edinburgh Award. Even if you don't use them directly through your career or use them directly in your life you get like invaluable knowledge. It's like common sense. It just helps you out with everything.

For Emma (age 13, Guides), many of the things she had learnt carried on into her daily life. In exploring this further with Jonathan she explained:

I guess like in some areas, like cooking and sewing, whatever, you have more knowledge and stuff, and like if you went rock climbing you probably like know more and then if you went abseiling you already know, like how to work the ropes whatever, so yeah.

For David, (age 20, SLS), the many opportunities to gain nationally and internationally recognised skills directly relevant to future employment opportunities is a very important feature of his involvement. For Emily (age 15, Guides), it is learning the values underpinning the Guide rules which are most important for her. These rules, she explained to Zoe, had taught her to “Respect animals, things and other people. Be like a sister to all other Guides; so be kind to people and stuff.” When pressed further about why these rules are important to her she replied: “Probably because I would use them in everyday life; like to respect people, to make good use of your time, like doing things for other people ... The Guide rules make you think differently about what you should be doing and what you shouldn't be doing"
Taylor and Bressler (2000, p. 54; also Stacey et al. 2010b, p. 81) point to the important link between understanding newly taught skills and knowledge, everyday life and how these competencies can be applied at school, at home or in the community. Eckersley (2010, p. 17) points to the important link between having meaning in life and psychological wellbeing. Schmid et al. (2011, p. 1133) demonstrate that having a hopeful future is predictive of positive youth development. Both the Search Institute (2005; 2007b) and Catalano et al. (2004, p. 107) have highlighted, in their different models of positive youth development, the importance of optimism and hope for the future (Chapter 2). For the Search Institute (2005; 2007b) this capacity is an important internal developmental asset (Positive Identity). For Catalano et al. (2004, p. 107), this ability to imagine a positive future, is an important developmental construct linked to a range of important developmental outcomes. These, they argue, range from developing higher levels of positive attitudes towards and experiences in formal educational institutions and an increased capacity to deal positively with stress.

*Action 6 suggests opportunities to try activities otherwise not accessible* can keep young people engaged (Ausyouth, 2001e, p. 29). To explore young people’s view on how important trying new things is for their sustained engagement, we asked them in the questionnaire how important it was to try new things. A four point scale was used: very important, important, not very important, not at all important. To explore young member experiences in the program environment we

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52 YDRP question 6 in full: How important are the following things in making you want to belong to [program]: j. trying new things.
asked them if they were supported to try new things. A three point scale was used: always true, sometimes true, not true.

Analysis of the importance of trying new things for continued program engagement revealed young members overwhelmingly reported it is a key factor (97.4%) (Table 7.21). More youth, however, felt it is very important (68.6%) rather than important (28.8%). Overall, out of the 18 engagement elements examined, trying new things is the number one very important engagement elements. There are no significant differences linked to the socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex or community.

Table 7.21. Engagement: Trying new things

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Trying new things (%(n))</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Not important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex(^a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70.8 (172)</td>
<td>26.3 (64)</td>
<td>2.9 (7)</td>
<td>100.0 (243)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65.7 (119)</td>
<td>32.0 (58)</td>
<td>2.2 (4)</td>
<td>100.0 (181)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age(^a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>69.1 (67)</td>
<td>29.9 (29)</td>
<td>1.0 (1)</td>
<td>100.0 (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.3 (65)</td>
<td>30.6 (30)</td>
<td>3.1 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>67.7 (67)</td>
<td>31.3 (31)</td>
<td>1.0 (1)</td>
<td>100.0 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.6 (59)</td>
<td>18.2 (14)</td>
<td>5.2 (4)</td>
<td>100.0 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>62.3 (33)</td>
<td>34.0 (18)</td>
<td>3.8 (2)</td>
<td>100.0 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community(^b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64.8 (79)</td>
<td>32.8 (40)</td>
<td>2.5 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>71.8 (150)</td>
<td>25.8 (54)</td>
<td>2.4 (5)</td>
<td>100.0 (209)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>68.4 (54)</td>
<td>27.8 (22)</td>
<td>3.8 (3)</td>
<td>100.0 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(^a)</td>
<td>68.6 (291)</td>
<td>28.8 (122)</td>
<td>2.6 (11)</td>
<td>100.0 (424)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated, chi-square is based on the three categories of ‘very important’, ‘important’ and ‘not important’ responses (‘not very important’ and ‘not at all important’).
\(^a\) Missing cases=1, 0.2%; \(^b\) Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

---

\(^{53}\) YDRP question 5 in full: How true are the following about your personal experience in [program]: e. I am supported to try new things.
Table 7.22 shows that over three quarters (80.0%) of youth reported they are supported to try new things. Out of the 19 program practice characteristics examined, this practice achieved a ranking of three (Appendices-9). There are no significant relationships between the socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex or community. These results suggest supporting young people to try new things is strongly reflected in community youth development program practice and is not influenced by the age, sex or community characteristics of young members.

Table 7.22. Practice: Trying new things

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristics</th>
<th>I am supported to try new things (%(n))</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always true</td>
<td>Sometimes true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>80.7 (196)</td>
<td>17.3 (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>79.1 (144)</td>
<td>19.8 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>77.3 (75)</td>
<td>20.6 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>75.8 (75)</td>
<td>20.2 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>81.8 (81)</td>
<td>18.2 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>85.5 (65)</td>
<td>13.2 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>81.5 (44)</td>
<td>18.5 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>76.2 (93)</td>
<td>22.1 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>82.3 (172)</td>
<td>16.3 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80.0 (64)</td>
<td>18.8 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total*</td>
<td>80.0 (340)</td>
<td>18.4 (78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D=disadvantaged community. M=middle-advantaged community. A=advantaged community. Unless otherwise stated, chi-square is based on the data presented in this table.

a. Missing cases=1, 0.2%; b. Missing cases=15, 3.5%.

Importantly, while over three quarters of young people (80.0%) reported they are always supported to try new things (Table 7.22), this practice is lower than the proportion (97.4%) who believed trying new things encourages their continued engagement (Table 7.21). Analysis of the relationship between this practice and its importance for continued engagement shows that of those young people who believe that trying new things helps to sustain their engagement
the majority (98.3%, n=405) reported they are always supported to try
new things (Table 7.23). Only a small group of this cohort (1.7%, n=7) reported
they are rarely or never supported to try new things. These patterns linking the
practice of trying new things with engagement are moderately significant \(x^2(4, N = 423) = 11.084, p=.026\). There are no significant differences related to the socio-
demographic characteristics of sex, age or community. These results suggest the
experience of being encouraged to try new things and the desire to try new things
to sustain their engagement are not significantly influenced by age, sex or
community socio-demographic characteristics.

**Table 7.23. Linking practice and engagement: Trying new things**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trying new things to sustain engagement</th>
<th>The practice of supporting youth to try new things (%(n))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>84.1 (244)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>70.5 (86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>81.8 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80.1 (339)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Unless otherwise stated chi-square is based on the two categories 'always' and 'sometimes true or not true' for practice and the three categories of 'very important', 'important' and 'not important' ('not very important' and 'not at all important') for engagement. The numbers and proportions reported in this table may not exactly match those presented in Table 7.21 and 7.22 due to missing cases.
a. Missing cases=3, 0.7%.

The importance of having opportunities to try new things is perhaps
explained by Ellis (SLS, age 14) when she told me she'd stopped going as regularly:
“I've kind of just grown out of the habit of doing it for seven years. It gets old after a
while and you're looking for something new to do.” For Lukas (age 18), Dukes
taught him to “try stuff; try new things” and his favourite experience, camping, was
an activity he would never have experienced otherwise:
I never would have done - my family’s never done camping... it was
challenging and it was fun and I guess I just enjoy camping because it’s
completely different. It makes you appreciate what you have and what you
don’t have.

As Karen explored his Dukes experience further, Lukas returned to his
camping experience and noted that through the camping experience he had met
and worked with people who are not directly associated with Dukes. For him this
opportunity was an important one because “the people out there were pretty
inspirational.” Overall, these results suggest that for the majority of young
members, new activities and experiences and opportunities to develop new
knowledge and skills are strongly reflected in the program curriculum. These
young member experiences point to the important benefits that can be gained
when programs are able to include activities outside each leader’s expertise and
enable interactions with new people. This can be achieved by, for example,
initiating joint activities and partnerships with other groups (Ausyouth, 2001e,
p. 35), utilising external professional expertise (Chan & Short, 2011, p. 138;
Sullivan & Larson, 2010, pp. 107, 118) or internal young member expertise

7.11. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented an exploration of the first principle in the new
framework of youth program practice on Learning and Development. I illustrated
how this principle is linked to and supports the other principles in the new
framework. As discussed in Chapter 6, this synthesis of links between the
principles illustrate the many common contextual, theoretical, operational,
structural and outcome concepts which run through youth work and program practice. I demonstrated the core learning and development characteristics of community programs and I illustrated the ways young members talk about how their learning and development experiences have impacted on their lives.

This chapter outlined the two key arguments which underpin this first principle and the supporting nine indicators and 70 examples of action. Firstly, I showed how community youth development organisations and programs play an important role in the education of young and older people; supporting them to be active participants and contributors to society. Secondly, I discussed how an active commitment to education can help to build organisation and program sustainability by supporting the recruitment, development, and retention of young and older members. I presented the nine key indicators which underpin Principle One, Learning and Development. These nine indicators point to the need for safe, positive and diverse learning, development and recognition experiences. Together, these indicators reflect the use of mixed teaching methodologies to foster learning, development and recognition opportunities which support individual, group, age-based, developmentally appropriate and role-based education experiences.

As discussed in Chapter 2, positive learning and development has been identified by scholars as the most important outcome which can flow from program participation. The research presented in this chapter suggests that from young people’s perspective, learning and development outcomes are also valued the most. This is indicated by the practices which are identified as most important for sustaining program engagement. Out of the 18 sustaining engagement characteristics examined, three out of the top five very important engagement
characteristics relate to learning and development. These are: trying new things; learning new things important for the future and doing things that are fun (Appendices-9). Young people also reported that out of the 19 practice characteristics examined, four learning and development practices are in the top five always experienced. These are: safety education; encouraged to have fun; supported to try new things; and helped to develop new skills (Appendices-9). These findings suggest learning and development practices and opportunities are prioritised by both young members and community youth development programs.

There is, however, a gap between the level of occurrence and the level of importance for the three operational areas – verbal recognition, fun activities and trying new things – which are examined both as an engagement and a practice characteristic. These gaps between practice occurrence and the importance of the practice for sustained engagement may have implications for sustaining young people’s involvement. Further research may help to better understand the complexities of the program elements which underlie these findings and sustain engagement.

The work presented in this chapter also shows there are few learning and development practice and engagement characteristics which are significantly influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics of age, sex or community. Socio-demographic differences are only found to influence young people’s experiences of verbal recognition and tolerance of mistakes. Sex is a significant socio-demographic characteristic influencing how mistakes are experienced in the program environment with a significantly higher proportion of females than males reporting a mistake tolerant program environment. Not everyone reported that
young people are made fun of if they make a mistake. Not everyone who did report that young people are made fun of if they make a mistake indicated this is a problem for their sustained engagement. This evidence does, however, suggest there is a case for an increase in efforts to foster mistake tolerant program environments especially for males.

Age and sex are shown to be significant socio-demographic characteristics influencing how verbal recognition is experienced. Verbal recognition is significantly more important for the younger than the older age groups and significantly more important for the younger females than the younger males. These results suggest that programs can provide more, rather than less recognition, especially to the younger age groups and, in those programs involving females, young girls in particular.

It is however, important to note that these program practice and sustaining engagement characteristics only reflect the opinion of participating young members – they do not address the opinion of young people who have left. Exactly how young people’s program experiences of mistakes and verbal recognition impacts on their development or their continued engagement is unknown. Further research may help to better understand the complexities of the program elements and youth experiences which underlie these findings.

Importantly, the research presented in this chapter indicates that, on the whole, young people are not treated differently according to their socio-demographic characteristics of sex, age or community status. In general, these results are suggestive of a relationship between a program’s theoretical, contextual, structural and operational characteristics, young people’s program practice
experiences and their opinion on the importance of these practices for sustaining their engagement. Together with Chapter 5 on the theoretical, operational, structural and contextual program elements and Chapter 6 on the fifth program characteristic element, outcomes, this chapter contributes to my two central research questions which sought to better understand the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs and the characteristics of young people who participate in them.

In the next chapter, I discuss the main findings of this research and implications for future youth research, policy and practice. I argue that from young people’s perspective, participation in community youth development programs makes a positive difference to their lives. The research presented in this thesis demonstrates the diversity of community youth development programs and the young people who take part in them. While the seven programs participating in this research attract a diverse membership, I suggest there is a need to consider the initiating and sustaining engagement issues for young members, particularly for those young people who are underrepresented in the youth membership.
Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

This thesis presents a new perspective on community youth development programs in Australia, drawn from the comprehensive data gathered during the Queensland Youth Development Research Project. In the previous chapter I reported findings from a case study on the first principle, *Learning and Development*, in the new framework of good program practice. This chapter examined the interrelationships of the young member characteristics presented in Chapter 5 and the program characteristics explored in Chapter 6. My argument is that the learning and development principle is distinctly different from the other five principles in the new framework, yet it is interlinked with and supports each of them. This synthesis of links between the principles illustrates the many common contextual, theoretical, operational, structural, and outcome concepts which run through youth work and program practice. My analysis has identified the core learning and development characteristics of community programs and the significance of learning and development practices for keeping young people engaged.

In conclusion, I return to the question first posed in Chapter 1: How, and in what ways, do community youth development programs influence young people’s lives? I want to emphasise here, the two foremost achievements of the work presented in this thesis. First, this work brings *clarity to the debate on the characteristics of the youth program sector*, how to define it and where community youth development programs and volunteer youth workers fit in it. Gaining clarity about these programs supports a better understanding about the work they do, and how they can best support the
positive development of kids and young adults. Second, this work brings clarity to the debate about the characteristics of the young people who participate in these programs. A clearer focus on young members supports a better understanding about the characteristics of those youth who access and shape these programs, what the participation benefits are for these young people, and, ultimately, whether there are young people who are missing out on developmental opportunities and supports because they do not have the opportunity to participate.

In pursuit of these outcomes, I have addressed two central research questions:

(1) What are the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs?

(2) What are the characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs?

These two questions were explored through two separate, but linked studies engaging practitioners and young people involved with the following eight Queensland youth sector stakeholders: Impact: Youth organisations reducing crime (Impact); The Boys’ Brigade (BB); The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award (Dukes); The Emergency Services Cadets Program (ESC); Girl Guides Queensland (Guides); Lions Clubs International Leo Clubs (Leos); The Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC); and Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLS). Each study contributed to the narrative presented in this thesis about these community programs and the young people who participate in them.

The first study employed a participatory action research methodology to examine the characteristics of community programs and how these programs apply the
strength-based approach to youth development in the program environment. Three questions were explored by Study One:

(1) What are the program characteristics identified by practitioners and scholars as most important for supporting young people to achieve positive developmental outcomes?

(2) Which program characteristics do young members believe are important for sustaining their engagement?

(3) What program characteristics do young members experience in their group?

The second study presents the first large data gathering exercise examining these programs from a youth perspective using both questionnaires (n=440) and interviews (n=37). Four questions were addressed in this study:

(1) What are the contextual socio-demographic characteristics of young members?

(2) What are the structural involvement characteristics of young members?

(3) What are the outcome characteristics of young members and what impact does involvement have on the development of these outcome characteristics?

(4) How do the characteristics of 12-13 year old young members compare to those of 12-13 year olds from a more representative sample of school students?

In exploring these questions, I was inspired to start questioning how strength-based approaches to working with youth intersect with the ways in which research is conducted. I formulated two methodological questions to guide this work:
What might a strength-based approach to engaging young people in research look like?

How can such research be reported using strength-based practices that are consistent with inclusive participatory methodologies?

The significance of these research questions is that they have guided my scholarship and enabled me to fill an important gap in scholarly knowledge about Australian community youth development programs; to argue that these programs have a largely positive impact on the young people who participate in them; and to show how youth inclusive methodologies can be developed and applied in multiple ways.

There is a growing body of scholarship that is improving our understanding about strength-based youth work and programs. There is, however, as argued in Chapter 1, a patent need for a better understanding about what characterises a high quality program and its conceptual, practical and evidential elements. Australian scholars have had limited engagement with volunteer youth workers and community youth development programs. This limited engagement has led to a tendency for Australian scholars to conflate the strength-based approach and the deficit-based approach to youth development, to focus predominantly on professional youth work to the exclusion of voluntary youth work, and to de-value the work of community youth development programs. By working to build scholarly knowledge about community youth development programs, volunteer youth work, and their young members, this thesis has made a significant contribution to the Australian scholarly and professional youth work discourse.
8.2. Community youth development program characteristics

My thesis presents a new argument about the core characteristics of effective community youth development programs. This argument was introduced in Chapter 2 with the development of a new analytic tool comprising the five conceptual elements of youth programs - theory, context, structure, operation, and outcomes. This innovation was developed in Chapters 6 and 7 with the articulation of the new good practice framework describing the core characteristics of good program practice and illustrating the intersection between the five program elements in the program environment.

My key argument is that successful youth development programs have a complex ecological nature. Many scholars, while not explicitly describing their research in this way, examine a single element or combination of these five elements. My contention is that scholars have not clearly recognised the complex interlinked and bi-directional nature of these elements. This has resulted in a high level of confusion about the characteristics of youth programs. My analytic tool helps to clarify this enduring problem.

My argument emphasises that the work of community programs is supported by a positive youth development theoretical approach, rather than a risk theoretical approach. This positive youth development theoretical approach focuses on the strengths of young people but in doing so it recognises the contextual characteristics of youth problems, inequalities and vulnerabilities. To engage with diverse young people community programs necessarily negotiate complex interlinked contextual and operational incentives and barriers to participation. My study reveals that successful community youth development programs have three key structural characteristics. These relate to the program curriculum which is designed to be age and
developmentally appropriate; structured rather than unstructured; and delivered sequentially over an extended period of time. In exploring community youth development program operational characteristics, I identified three key elements: voluntary participation, universal eligibility and youth work practices. I have argued that these interlink to support a youth-inclusive and strength-based program environment. In the program context, outcome characteristics are the end results of youth development program participation.

As illustrated by the examples shown in Chapter 1 and 5, there are program specific differences. The YDRP data that could not be included in this thesis shows these have an effect on outcomes. These results are consistent with the wider literature presented in Chapter 2. Diverse programs will have a mix of similar and different life-skill, specialist or technical, cerebral and physical skill outcomes. Some of these differences can be traced back to the characteristics of the program, illustrating the strong bi-directional link between positive developmental outcomes and the theoretical, contextual, structural and operational characteristics of a program. This research points to a clear policy direction: supporting the provision of a diversity of programs for young people in their local community. The availability of a diverse range of programs would increase the likelihood young people will find at least one program which fits their interests and needs. Further analysis using the YDRP data will contribute to a better understanding of the differences between Australian community youth development programs.

My new good practice framework, presented in Chapter 6, comprises six strength-based principles along with 36 indicators and 288 examples of action describing quality youth program practice. This framework is at once the most comprehensive and...
practical developed to date based on practitioner, scholarly and youth opinion. These six principles address the broad themes of education, leadership, decision-making, inclusion, community service, relationship building and ethical promotion in the program environment. A key innovation in my framework is that it shows how the theoretical, operational, structural and contextual program elements introduced in Chapter 2 meld together in the program environment in a way that reflects the operation of these six principles. The bi-directional links between these four elements and the fifth program element, outcomes are described in the Chapter 7 case study of Principle One, Learning and Development. This work shows that, as is the case with professional youth workers, volunteer youth workers apply the same fundamental youth work principles and practices, facing similar challenges in the creation of a diversity of youth-focused safe spaces for young people. The reception to date of my good practice framework indicates a demonstrable need across Australia for the development of program tools, research and policies favouring strength-based youth development approaches.

Positive learning and development has been identified by scholars as one of the most important outcomes which can flow from program participation. By supporting young people to develop important life-skills, community youth development programs are also supporting them to thrive: to be happy, active, confident, healthy, and contributing family, peer group and community members (Balsano et al. 2009; Catalano et al. 2004, p. 103; Lerner, 2004, p. xv, 127). My findings strongly indicate that young people in community youth development programs value learning and development practices the most, and do experience these practices. This is indicated by the practices identified as most important for sustaining program engagement. Out of the 18 sustaining engagement characteristics examined, three out of the top five very
important characteristics relate to learning and development: trying new things; learning new things important for the future, and doing things that are fun. Young people also report that out of the 19 practice characteristics examined, four learning and development practices are in the top five always experienced: safety education; encouragement to have fun; supported to try new things; and helped to develop new skills. While these findings are limited to the items in the questionnaire as the means for testing engagement and practice factors, they do indicate a priority focus on learning and development outcomes by community youth development programs and young members.

Significantly, young people indicate that there are few learning and development practice and engagement characteristics which are significantly influenced by their age, sex or community socio-demographic characteristics. Socio-demographic differences only influence young people's experiences of verbal recognition and tolerance of mistakes. A higher proportion of females than males reported a mistake tolerant program environment, and verbal recognition was significantly more important for the younger than the older age groups, especially for girls. In terms of practical policy implications at the program level, this research suggests there is a case for an increase in efforts to foster mistake tolerant program environments, especially for males. There is also a case to widen the provision of intentional recognition to include more young people, especially younger age groups and, young girls in particular.

It is however, important to note that these program practice and supporting engagement characteristics only reflect the opinion of participating young members – they do not reflect the opinions of young people who were no longer participating. Exactly how young people's program experiences of mistakes and verbal recognition impacts on their development or their continued engagement is unknown. Further
research may help to better understand the complexities of the program elements and youth experiences which underlie these findings. My identification of the five interlinking program elements - theory, context, structure, operation and outcomes – support Guest and McRee’s (2009, p. 53) contention that it is most likely the dynamic interaction of the multiplicity of program parts, rather than one single element, which has the greatest overall effect on young people’s development. Future research using the YDRP data can contribute to our understanding of community youth development programs by exploring the dynamic interaction of the multiplicity of program parts with young people’s development.

8.3. Young member characteristics

One of the unique features of my research is that it opens a window on the key characteristics of young people who participate in Queensland-based community youth development programs. These key characteristics are their socio-demographic features, their structural involvement, and their life-skill outcomes.

My research shows, first, that there is a diversity of young members engaged in community youth development programs. There is, however, a need to improve the accessibility of programs to specific groups of young people whose lower participation rates suggests they are underserviced. By increasing the participation rate of males aged 12 to 13, females aged 15 and over, young people from disadvantaged and advantaged communities, and young girls with a disability, community programs would further improve the diversity of their youth membership. These findings point to a need to better understand why these groups of youth, and, in particular, young people from disadvantaged communities, are underrepresented in community programs. A critical part of this research would be to focus on how community programs can more
effectively address the local barriers and incentives to participation to increase program accessibility. Given the evidence, discussed in Chapter 2, that shows disadvantaged youth have access to fewer developmental asset building opportunities than their advantaged peers (Anderson et al. 2007, p. 36; Blomfield & Barber, 2011, p. 592), and community investment in programs is related to an increase in positive developmental outcomes (Youngblade et al. 2007, p. 48), their underrepresentation in these community programs requires particular attention. This work would need to be sensitive to the largely volunteer nature of youth-work in these organisations and programs.

Second, both male and female involvement rates reduce as young people age, but female participation falls at a significantly higher rate than male participation. This finding adds a new dimension to the literature discussed in Chapter 2 exploring the link between the sex of young people and their involvement. New research may shed light on why there is a greater female drop-out rate. A critical part of this research would be to investigate whether the dropping out reflects mainly positive life-influences, such as involvement in other activities, or negative life-influences, such as the cool factor.

The structural involvement dimension of young member characteristics reveals four key research outcomes: First, the majority of young members are engaged in a breadth of other youth and sporting clubs, programs and activities. This pattern is replicated in the YDRP sub-sample of 12 to 13 year olds and is also present within the AHWS sub-sample. These high involvement levels illustrate the argument of McGee et al. (2006, p. 3) that participation in a diversity of organised youth clubs, groups and activities is relatively common. While young people in the AHWS report that a variety of activities, including community programs, are available in their local community, it is not possible to estimate how many actually participate in these programs. It is,
however, likely that the proportion participating would be lower in the AHWS compared to the YDRP. Balsano et al. (2009, pp. 256; also Nelson & Gastic, 2009, p. 1181), found that in their sample of young people in out-of-school care, the proportion involved in community programs was low. However, when they included participation in other programs, the proportion of involved children was much higher.

Second, there are no significant differences in breadth of involvement for males or females in the YDRP sample for either participation in other youth clubs and programs or sporting clubs and activities beyond their primary program. These findings are both typical and unusual. As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have not reported gendered influences on level of involvement. They have, however, consistently found significant gendered patterns of activity choice with males choosing sporting activities more than females (Crean, 2012, p. 186; Fredricks & Eccles, 2010, p. 329; Wimer at al. 2006, p. 5; Zambon et al. 2010, p. 93). Analysis of involvement in sporting programs, clubs and activities in the two sub-samples also revealed a non-significant gendered pattern. Consistent with the literature, more males than females in the AHWS were involved in sporting activities.

Third, there is a distinct pattern of age-based involvement in the YDRP sample with engagement in youth clubs and programs increasing and engagement in sports activities and clubs significantly decreasing as young people age. These findings are again both typical and unusual. As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have found that as young people age their involvement rate decreases (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003, p. 40; Baldwin Grossman et al. 2002, pp. 16-17; Deschenes et al. 2010, p. 4; King, Imms, et al. 2013, p. 203; McGee et al. 2006, pp. 7, 12). While non-significant, the increased participation in youth programs and clubs is unusual. This pattern may be partly explained by the argument that older youth are attracted to programs and
activities where they have increased freedom from supervision, independence, and leadership and decision making opportunities (Jones & Perkins, 2006, p. 102; Libby & Sedonaen, 2006; Rhodes, 2004, p. 154). Increased involvement in youth development programs for some young people as they age suggests that there is continued intrinsic and extrinsic value to be gained from these programs. The commencement eligibility age of 14 years for Dukes, discussed in Section 1, may explain some of the increase in program engagement as young people age. Dukes is, however, largely youth-led and youth-determined (Dukes, 2006) and this may partly explain why older youth complement their primary program with participation in Dukes. This research points to an important and potentially significant role which Dukes may play in keeping older youth engaged in a breadth of youth development programs, exposing them to a wider range of experiences and widening developmental outcomes.

Fourth, young members in the YDRP sample living in advantaged communities have a broader breadth of engagement in other activities than their peers living in middle-advantaged and disadvantaged communities. For the 12 to 13 year olds this significant pattern was replicated within the more representative AHWS youth sub-sample but not the YDRP sub-sample. Overall, these findings are consistent with the scholarly work discussed in Chapter 2, which has shown how disadvantage and poverty can shape and limit youth involvement choices (Borden, Perkins, & Villarruel et al. 2006, p. 201; Bottrell, Armstrong, & France, 2010, p. 63; Cuevo, 2011, p. 135; McGee et al. 2006; Skattebol, et al. 2012, p. 69; Wimer et al. 2006, pp. 14-15).

My analysis of life-skill outcomes by age, sex and community socio-economic status reveals key research outcomes across the program and individual domains. For the program domain, analysis of the influence of the program on young people's development reveals three key outcomes. First, young people reported their program
helped them the most with learning how to work things out (82.3%), followed by helping them to share their feelings and thoughts (66.8%) and lastly with learning to control their temper (59.6%). Over four-fifths (85.3%) reported a program environment with a highly positive attitude towards volunteer fundraising.

Second, learning problem solving and learning to share feelings and thoughts in the program environment are not influenced by young people’s age, sex or community. While learning temper control and peers’ attitudes towards volunteering are not influenced by community or age, they are influenced by sex. Males benefited slightly more than females in learning temper control in the program environment. In contrast, more females than males reported a highly positive attitude towards volunteer fundraising in their program group.

Third, for all four life-skills, the relationship between the influence of the program environment and the level of skill or behaviour was highly significant. The majority of young people who reported some program influence also reported high-level skill or behaviours. Only a small proportion of young people who reported they had learnt skills in their program were unable to translate these skills into their daily lives. This suggests a high level of program efficacy. For each life-skill a small proportion of young people who reported having skills or positive behaviours did not credit the program with influencing their learning or behaviour. This suggests there is a group of young people for whom taking part in their program is related to other intrinsic or extrinsic incentives that are not associated with gaining the life-skills examined in Chapter 5.

In addition to these program-specific findings, I also have three key findings specific to individuals. First, of the four life-skills examined, young members reported their best skill was letting their friends know they are liked (96.7%), followed by
temper control (84.5%), and problem solving skills (79.8%). The intersection between these skills and the influence of youth socio-demographic characteristics reveals problem solving and temper control skills are not influenced by age, sex or community. Skill in communicating with friends is not influenced by age or community, but females report superior skills in letting friends know they like them compared to males. Young members are also shown to be active volunteers (81.5%). Analysis of the intersection between volunteering and the influence of youth socio-demographic characteristics showed sex, age and community did not influence the number of times young members volunteered.

Second, compared to a more representative group of 12 to 13 year olds, young members the same age reported significantly better ability to work their problems out, control their temper and communicate with friends. Comparison of volunteering activity showed a considerable number of young members and their more representative peers participate. Young members, however, still reported significantly higher levels of volunteering activity. Here, it is important to note these differences between young people in the youth development sub-sample and the more representative sub-sample are not due to young people in the AHWS being uninvolved. As discussed previously, there is a high level of breadth of activity involvement in the AHWS sub-sample. This reaffirms the observation that these differences between sub-samples are indicative of different developmental outcomes associated with different activity portfolios. The few program specific differences illustrated in this thesis, underscore the importance of understanding how characteristics of different programs may interact differently with life-skill outcomes. These differences may also link to research discussed in Chapter 1, which suggests program and activity quality influences
whether, and how much, participation will have a negative, neutral or positive effect on a young person’s life (Feldman Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006, p. 515).

Third, analysis of the intersection between these life-skills and socio-demographic characteristics for 12 to 13 year olds suggests that participation in community programs may act to level the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on life-skill outcomes. While age led to few differences within the two groups of 12 and 13 year olds, sex and community revealed a number of clear differences. In the majority of instances where sex and community was shown to influence life-skills there was less of an impact in the young member group than there was in the more representative group of young people. Returning to the data patterns already discussed to illustrate this observation: Analysis of sex, for example, showed females are significantly more likely than males to report skills in letting their friends know they like them. Within the AHWS this difference between the sexes was highly significant and within the YDRP this difference was moderately significant. Analysis of community, for example, showed a link between community advantage and better life-skills within both the YDRP and the AHWS. Within the AHWS, however, but not the YDRP, this link between increased advantage and increased life-skill was significant for problem solving, temper control and skill in letting friends know they like them.

This levelling pattern is consistent with the findings of Witt (2005, p. 124) and Skattebol, et al. (2012, p. 82) presented in Chapter 2 that community youth development organisations and programs are uniquely positioned to bring together young people with different class, race, age, sex and ability characteristics, and to help them address their experiences of exclusion. However, whether this levelling pattern reflects self-selection effects or participation in the community programs is not clear.
The majority of young people’s self-report testimony suggests program participation is a key influence on their life-skill development and acts to level difference. On the majority of measures explored in detail for this thesis, young people are not treated significantly differently according to their sex, age or community status. While Stanley et al. (2011, p. 231) note that children’s self-report data can be skewed by memory bias, given that the young people participating in the YDRP were actively involved at the time of the questionnaire and interviews, this is unlikely to be an significant issue for this sample.

These initial research findings suggest there is a case for better recognition and revaluing of Australian volunteer youth workers and community youth development programs. Since there has been such a limited engagement by Australian scholars with community youth development programs there is a general need for more research to better understand these programs, their volunteer youth workers and the young people who take part in them. The YDRP has collected a rich body of quantitative and qualitative data which has the potential to contribute beyond the research presented in this thesis to filling some of the knowledge gaps I have highlighted. There are also knowledge gaps I have highlighted which are beyond the YDRP and require further research using a variety of methodologies, including quasi experimental methodologies involving pre and post-test and carefully selected control and test groups.

8.4. Youth-inclusive research

A distinctive element of my research has been the use of adult-led, intergenerational, highly participatory, collaborative, and iterative research methodologies involving a diversity of young and older people, groups and organisations. While I am not the first scholar to have explored participatory youth-
inclusive research methodologies, my use of adult-led and intergenerational research approaches to youth research has been sustained across my whole study. The strength of this approach and the resulting research is the achievement of relevant and practical research outcomes that are firmly grounded in young member and youth-worker knowledge, skills, values and experiences.

My description of a youth-inclusive, strength-based approach to engaging young people in research was presented in Chapters 3 and 4. In these chapters I linked an analysis of the key theoretical, ethical and practical issues in the literature with the practice of doing research. I argued through *five case-studies of adult-led and intergenerational models of older and younger people working together* that there are many factors influencing the development, scope, implementation, failures and successes of youth-inclusive research.

First, I provided compelling evidence that well-designed strength-based research can bring benefits to the research process, researchers and young people. This requires paying attention to the complex challenges characteristic of youth research. I demonstrated four key challenges related to strength-based participation - power, consent, privacy and incentive use - the resolution of which will support effective, professional and ethical youth-centred collaborative research.

Second, I demonstrated that the effectiveness of a methodology is not determined by the extent of youth engagement, which differs from project to project. In some projects the emphasis will be on how to most effectively engage with young people as subjects so they experience the research process positively. In others, like the YDRP, there is a broader emphasis on addressing issues to do with actively and positively engaging with youth as subjects and as researchers in partnership with older people using diverse methods.
Third, I emphasised the importance of using a mix of measures for both young and older people to motivate, support and recognise their participation as researchers, subjects and supporters. Research with young people in the role of subjects will be more successful if a targeted range of information and incentives are developed for young people and the significant adults who surround them. Indeed, Hooven et al. (2011) suggest recruitment in disadvantaged communities may be more successful when concerted attention is paid to addressing the individual needs of both youth and significant adults. Given the role significant adults often play in facilitating child and young adult participation in research, any future projects would benefit from a more targeted, active and detailed adult participation strategy. This would add new ethical and resource challenges to be systematically considered.

Fourth, I explored the idea that future research projects would benefit from understanding more about participant decision making in research (Mapstone et al. 2007). It is possible some young people felt pressured to take part in the YDRP and some young people who wanted to take part could not because their parent or program leader did not support their participation. This observation points to a need to more actively seek out and document young people’s opinion about why they do or do not choose to take part in research and what it feels like for them. Given the role significant adults often play as gatekeepers a better understanding from their perspective about why they do or do not support youth participation in research may also help to improve future research.

My approach to how youth research can be reported in a strength-based way that is consistent with inclusive participatory methodologies was presented in Chapter 1. I have shown how the words we use can include others. I also considered how the ways we write can have an impact on both those who are written about and
those who are doing the reading. This involved deliberating on the ways in which words can act to exclude or marginalise through entrenched dichotomies. I presented four examples focussing on the ways we demarcate young people from adults, paid from unpaid workers, targeted from universal programs, and the ways in which an academic, de-personalised style of writing about research can obscure the role of the participants in that research. Crucially, enacting a strength-based approach requires a form of expression that is inclusive. The quest for inclusiveness in communication is never-ending, and has presented a series of challenges in writing this thesis for a scholarly audience. Nonetheless, that task once undertaken reveals manifold ways in which others can be unintentionally excluded merely by a choice of words. If there is one insight to be gained from my experience in this regard, it is that the quest for inclusive language and practice must be undertaken wholeheartedly together.

8.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the significance of this thesis is threefold. First, it presents the findings from an extensive survey of young people and practitioners involved in community youth development programs in Queensland. The YDRP has been the largest study to date of its kind, collecting a rich body of quantitative and qualitative data with these community programs and the young people who participate in them. This work makes a major contribution to scholarship on this subject in Australia and internationally. Secondly, this thesis presents an argument for a strength-based approach and language that can be used in fostering further inclusive dialogue in the development of program policy, research and practice. Such an approach contributes to extending policy on youth development in Australia away from a solely deficit approach. Thirdly, alongside the production of this thesis, I have developed a new good practice
framework which will provide practical guidelines for the design of positive strength-based youth programs. This framework has been informed and enlivened by my use of inclusive language and an active collaborative engagement with practitioners and young members guided by the latest scholarship in Australia and worldwide.

Together these three elements suggest that scholarship on youth work and youth development in Australia can learn much by engaging with young people and volunteer youth workers. Importantly, the framework and related arguments I presented in this thesis provide a foundation for the development of further knowledge about youth programs informed by contextually relevant values and norms sensitive to the diversity represented by young people, volunteers, programs and communities. It is my hope that this thesis, the good practice framework and publications exploring this unique database will continue to make a positive scholarly contribution to this vital area of policy, practice and research worldwide.
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D


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E


F


G


IEAA, see International Education Association of Australia.


K


L


Lions, see Lions Clubs International.


MCEETYA, see Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.

MCYA, see Minister for Children and Youth Affairs


O


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Characteristics of effective substance abuse prevention programs for high-risk


YWA, see Youth Workers Australia.

Z


