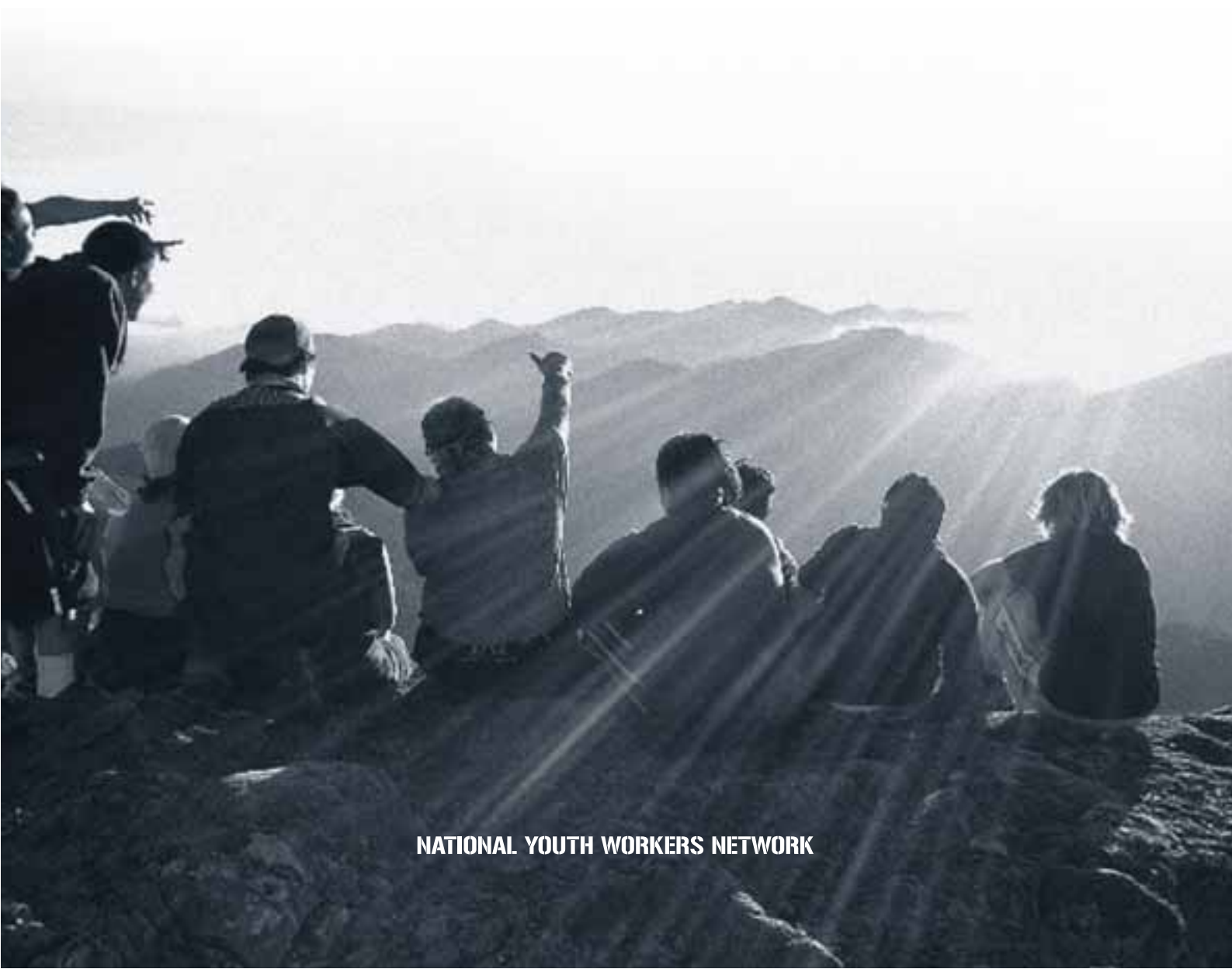


REAL WORK

a report from the national research project on the state of

YOUTH WORK IN AOTEAROA



NATIONAL YOUTH WORKERS NETWORK

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by

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Real Work

National Youth Work Research Project 2005

Acknowledgements.....	3
Foreword.....	6
1. Is youth work a real job?.....	7
1.1 Introduction.....	7
1.2 Navigating this report.....	9
1.3 A definition of youth work.....	11
1.4 Summary of findings.....	12
Profiles:.....	13-16
2. Methodology.....	17
3. Youth Workers.....	23
3.1 Locations.....	24
3.2 Age, culture, gender.....	25
3.3 Length of time in youth work.....	26
3.4 Where from, where to?.....	27
3.5 Employment.....	28
3.6 Employment conditions.....	29
3.7 Salaries and wages.....	29
3.8 Stress.....	31
3.9 Values (kaupapa).....	32
Profiles:.....	33-36
4. Youth Work Practice.....	37
4.1 Who do they work with?.....	37
4.2 What do they do?.....	39
4.3 Where do they do it?.....	42
4.4 Non-contact time.....	42
4.5 Code of Ethics.....	43
4.6 Youth Development Strategy.....	44
4.7 Good practice.....	45
4.8 Youth Development outcomes.....	47
4.9 What difference do youth workers make?.....	49
Profiles:.....	50-52

Training and Support

5. Training 53

- 5.1 Involvement in workshop training 53
- 5.2 Entry qualifications 54
- 5.3 In-service training 55
- 5.4 Access to training 56
- 5.5 Training Subject areas 56

6. Supervision 57

7. Networks 57

- 7.1 Involvement in youth worker networks 57
- 7.2 The National Youth Workers Network 58
- Profiles: 59-62

8. Discussion 63

- 8.1 Youth workers 64
- 8.2 Youth work contexts and styles 66
- 8.3 Good practice 67
- 8.4 Youth development outcomes 67
- 8.5 Professionalisation do we need it? 68
- 8.6 Training vs Education 69
- 8.7 Networks – weaving the strands together 72
- 8.8 The role of local youth worker networks 73
- 8.9 The effectiveness of local networks 74
- 8.10 A last word 75
- Profiles: 76-78

9. Recommendations 79

Appendix 1 83

About the National Youth Workers Network
Research information

Appendix 2 89

A background to youth work in Aotearoa/NZ (paper by David Hanna)

Appendix 3 93

References
List of abbreviations
Maori terms



Foreword

There has never been such a comprehensive survey of the youth work sector and this report is a major milestone for the development of youth work in New Zealand. This research will allow youth workers, employers, government agencies and other funders of youth work to cooperate on the implementation of the recommendations, so that youth work can gain the recognition it deserves in society and increase the support available for any young person who wants or needs it.

The project has helped support the development of regional youth worker networks throughout New Zealand and has encouraged youth workers to talk more openly about the wide range of issues that impact on their practice and the sector in general.

The National Youth Workers Network is committed to making sure this report doesn't get dusty on people's shelves. We want to make sure that the issues raised are discussed, debated and addressed with appropriate responses by decision-makers so that youth work becomes a more widely valued volunteer activity and professional practice with better resources and support for individuals and organisations working with young people.

The Working Group of the NYWN would like to thank the project investors: Local Government and Community Group of the Department of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Youth Development; and the JR McKenzie Trust. We also acknowledge the six hundred and thirty-seven youth workers who completed the survey, the twenty-two people who coordinated the survey process, the hundreds of participants who were part of the fifty-five focus groups, the eleven youth workers who allowed themselves to be profiled and a huge thanks to Lloyd Martin who coordinated the whole project. Thank you to the youth worker networks that organised and hosted the research Road Show and to Rebecca Blaikie for connecting the networks, organising the Road Show and co-facilitating the focus groups with Lloyd. Without all of the above organisations and people involved this project would not have been the success it has been.

This research will set the scene for discussion and action. The National Youth Workers Network will be using the evidence collected during the project to support arguments for increased support and further research but encourages youth workers, employers, training providers and funders of youth work to use this research to make changes at the local level as well.

John Harrington

National Youth Workers Network

Is youth work a real job?

1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

What difference do youth workers make?

How safe are they?

Youth workers only last 18 months!

Isn't youth work just a branch of social work?

The development of youth work in NZ is way behind other countries.

Qualifications in youth work are a waste of time.

Comments and questions such as these have circulated around youth work in New Zealand since it began to emerge as a distinct occupation in the late 1970's¹. Since that time, youth workers in this country have operated across a wide ideological spectrum ranging from politicised counter culture movements, to uniformed and faith based groups, to state employees charged with implementing a changing array of government initiatives. Current and former youth workers have also been to the fore of Maori political and cultural struggle.

Despite a growing awareness of the need for services that support and build connections for young people, the value that youth workers add to communities, schools and whanau has often gone under the radar in this country, largely because little research has been done on it.

In 1995 David Hanna (then of the Ministry of Youth Affairs) released a paper which tracked the development of youth work in New Zealand². He noted that, following trends in the UK and Australia, youth work emerged in New Zealand as a distinct vocation aimed at supporting young people and helping them to participate successfully in society. Initially community youth work was targeted at gang members and those identified as 'at risk'. There is now a widespread recognition that effective

¹ See Appendix 2 for A background to youth work in Aotearoa/New Zealand, (David Hanna 1995)

² Hanna 1995

support services for all young people across a spectrum of educational, employment, recreational, social, identity and cultural issues are essential to ensure a successful transition into adulthood.

Traditionally youth work in New Zealand has existed as a 'grassroots' movement. Many people have become involved through informal participation and a desire to support young people in their communities, their whanau, at their church or at their school. Most people have become involved in youth work without any formal training in the field. A growing recognition of youth needs, and a shortage of youth workers, means that employers have few options for recruitment and often have to take 'who they can get'. This has contributed to anecdotal evidence around inadequately supported, trained and supervised youth workers in the field – raising questions about effectiveness, and the sort of comments that introduced this section.

Although there is a growing range of employers of youth workers (including government agencies, councils, iwi, church and community groups), Hanna (1995) notes that New Zealand lags behind the UK and Australia in recognising, formalising and resourcing these services. And since he presented his paper back in 1995, there remains a lack of information around questions such as how many youth workers there are, what they do, how they are trained and supported, and how effective they are in their work.

Completed over two years, this is the most comprehensive study of youth work that has yet been undertaken in New Zealand. It aims to provide a snapshot of youth workers and their practice, and a discussion of some current issues in youth work in this country.

From it, a picture has emerged of a group of people who are passionate about what they do, who contribute huge amounts of volunteer hours, who creatively find ways to meet the needs of young people – often with inadequate resources, and who sometimes operate in tension with funders and employing organisations that have little understanding about the nature of their work.

This report has been commissioned by the National Youth Workers Network (NYWN), an emerging association of regional youth worker networks which seeks to advance the development and quality of youth work in New Zealand. Further information about the National Youth Workers Network appears as part of Appendix 1.

This research project has aimed to achieve the following goals:

- **Develop baseline information against which the building of capacity within the field can be measured.**
- **Identify the most important and pressing issues within the sector.**
- **Identify areas for further research.**

It is intended that this research project will also contribute to the following outcomes for the development of youth work in New Zealand:

- **Increasing consensus within the sector on what youth work is and how it should be evaluated.**
- **Increased recognition of youth work by communities, government and other organisations, its contribution to the wider community, and the unique role of youth workers.**

- **In the light of increased recognition, a review of the resourcing available to the sector, and improved support for both paid and volunteer youth workers.**

The information in this report is intended to help youth workers, youth worker networks and the National Youth Workers Network inform funders, employing organisations, local bodies and government about the state of youth work in New Zealand, help to build capacity and advocate for excellence in the development of young people in our country. It is intended that further information will be released from this project in the form of a series of supplementary reports which summarise specialised information and issues for central government, local bodies, funders, employers and youth work training providers.

1.2 NAVIGATING THIS REPORT

This research project has drawn from three sources of information:

- Over 2004, a total of 637 people who identified themselves as youth workers completed a written survey. Most of the statistical data throughout this report is based on an analysis of the survey results. All statistics have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
- Over 2005, information generated by the survey was taken around the country to networks of youth workers in 22 locations. A total of 56 focus groups were asked to comment on the results, and discuss a range of issues arising from them. Brief samples from taped recordings of 30 of the focus group discussions are included in boxed inserts throughout the report.
- Eleven youth workers who, between them, approximately match the overall profile of the survey sample in terms of gender, cultural background, location and values, were interviewed individually.

An outline of the information gathered from the sources mentioned above is organised into three sections, each of which is briefly outlined below. This part of the report concludes with a discussion of the data, and a set of recommendations. These are organised by the groups of stakeholders that they are addressed to. A translation of Maori terms and abbreviations used throughout this report is included on the final page.

Youth Workers

Using the written survey sources, this section builds a profile of the people who participated in the 2004 written survey. Within the resource limitations of the project (which are identified in the methodology section), this section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of who is doing youth work in this country.

Because youth work is not just about facts and figures, a group of people, who between them represent the current ‘face of youth work’ in New Zealand (as indicated by the statistical profile), were individually interviewed to find out what they do, and why they do it. Their stories are scattered through this report with the intention of communicating something of the ‘heart’ of what is happening in youthwork.

Youth work practice

This section uses information from the written surveys and the focus group discussions to provide an overview of practice in youth work; who are youth workers working with, what do they do, and where do they do it?

The report then summarises on a series of focus group discussions around the question of ‘what is good practice?’ The focus groups were asked to put themselves into the shoes of funders and asked to identify indicators of good practice in youth work and to discuss measurable outcomes against which youth work can and should be evaluated by funders and other stakeholders.

Training and Support

Training

A range of questions around the education of youth workers are addressed, including: What qualifications are youth workers accessing? What barriers and support do they experience in attempting to access in service training? What areas of training do youth workers consider the most relevant?

Networking and Support

This section focuses on involvement in local and regional youth worker networks, and includes recommendations from focus groups about the place and role of the National Youth Workers Network. Some observations and recommendations based on visits to 22 local or regional networks are included.

Discussion of findings and recommendations

A concluding discussion identifies some key themes that have emerged from this report, and makes a series of recommendations to different stakeholders in youth work in New Zealand.

1.3 A DEFINITION OF YOUTH WORK

People were asked to participate in the project if they identified themselves with the term ‘youth worker’. We don’t have a widely accepted definition of what the term *youth work* actually means in New Zealand, and there is some confusion about whether it includes anyone with a focus on young people as part of their work.

The definition proposed below suggests that across a range of contexts, styles and ideologies, all youth work will have three things in common.

Youth workers enter the worlds of young people aged 10-24³ and contribute to their development by:

- **Providing services and meeting needs**

Youth workers find entry points into the worlds of young people through running activities, providing services or simply being present in those worlds. Therefore youth work is not defined by any particular activity; kapa haka, employment training, the arts, sports, youth clubs, political action, church services, language programmes, outdoors and educational programmes are all examples of valid activities with (or services) to youth, which a youth worker may facilitate. Two key issues are whether the activity is being facilitated in a safe manner, and whether it is actually meeting the needs of those involved (often indicated by whether they are involved!).

- **Building relationships**

It is the place of relationships that distinguishes youth work from other professions which also include young people in their scope. Most other professions build relationships in order to deliver a service (eg. social work or education). Youth workers provide a service in order to build a relationship. Connecting with young people in their worlds, in ethical and wholistic relationships, is at the heart of youth work practice. Research suggests that significant connection with adults in the context of meaningful activities is central to the development of young people⁴.

- **Building connection to and participation in communities**

If adolescence describes a period of transition between childhood and adulthood, the end goal of youth work is the integration of the young person into various expressions of community. These expressions could include: whanau, iwi, employment, further education, culturally focused groups, church, the arts, sports, and a range of less formal connections⁵.

In the realities of our society we all exist within a collection of communities. A key role of youth work is helping young people, and especially those that have become alienated or isolated, to discover healthy communities, build connections and develop skills for participation in them as an adult.

³ There is a range of definitions of ‘youth’, a 1994 Ministry of Youth Affairs report defined youth or young people as those aged 15-24. The World Health Organisation defines young people as aged 10-24, youth as 15-24 years, and adolescents as 10-19 years. These definitions also have cultural considerations, and some of these include a much wider age range (Ref Martin 2002, p 14).

⁴ For example; *Programs for At Risk Youth*, Withers and Batten (1995) p. 35. This publication is a survey of American and Canadian literature.

⁵ See *The Invisible Table* (Martin) 2002 (chapter 4) for a more complete discussion on the role of relationships and community.

1.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

13 needs that have been identified from this project:

1. Value youth development as an issue for the whole community, and not just for young people who are 'at risk'.
2. Define youth work and promote what youth workers do.
3. Develop further research into effective approaches to the support and development of New Zealand youth.
4. Improve job security for youth workers and resourcing for community organisations.
5. Encourage development of roles of youth workers alongside other professionals in other social service sectors, such as education, welfare, employment, justice and community development.
6. Negotiate the tension between raising standards of professional practice and maintaining the currently high level of grassroots community involvement in youth work.
7. Research youth development needs of Asian young people, and promote the recruitment of Asian youth workers.
8. Clarify and promote indicators of good practice in youth organisations, and define youth development outcomes. Link these to evaluation and funding.
9. Recognise schools as an important context for youth work, and develop funding for youth workers in schools.
10. Recognise local youth worker networks as a key to developing safe and ethical practice. Promote effectiveness in networks, and provide resourcing for them to operate.
11. Link current youth work courses into degree programmes, and promote NZ-based postgraduate research into youth development.
12. Recognise and resource the role of the National Youth Workers Network.
13. Promote and reward volunteerism in youth organisations.

PROFILE

Leona Tiraa (Porirua)

Lunchtime, outside the cafeteria at a local secondary school, Leona and a handful of other youth workers are sizzling sausages and handing out pamphlets. Students hang around in groups chatting with the youth workers, many of whom they already know. Today youth workers from different organisations in Porirua are working on this project with a local health provider to visit schools, give out information about 'P' and chat with students about their contact with the drug.



'Hey there' – Leona hands over a sausage and bread to a 14 year old – 'what do you know about 'P'?'

'It's good for doing the housework' he grins as he sidles off to join his mates. Seeing the look of disbelief on her face, one of the other youth workers at the barbecue leans over. 'He's right you know' he mentions in a low voice. 'They get so wired they have to do something, so they clean and clean the house.'

My background is the Cook Islands, but I've lived in Porirua for most of my life. For the last seven years I've worked for an organisation called Wesley Community Action, we mainly work with young ones between the ages of 7-18, at the intermediate and the colleges.

For the formal side of our work the schools identify students with particular needs, and we develop short term interventions aimed at helping to meet those needs, things like; anger, isolation, social skills. Then we facilitate them in the schools. It's an important area of education that the teachers often don't have time to get to with a large class. I do one-to-one as well, I only work with females, young guys need positive male role models, so mine has been a conscious choice to work with females, and for me it works really well.

Youth workers have an important role in society because we help to bridge what is an increasing gap in communication between people of different ages. So how I see myself is hopefully as a brick in a bridge that helps some young people walk over and reconnect with society and the adult world. It's at a time when many of them are getting most of their info and ideas just from their peers. Lots of kids grow up without the influence of an older more mature person, who has lived a bit.

What is it that youth workers have? For myself I think that 95% of the job is to listen, I just sit and I listen, and we have a laugh sometimes, and for me it's about journeying with them wherever they go whether it's up or down. It's about being somebody that will stick, somebody that they can count on, and that's it. I can't make their choices

for them, but even if the consequences are bad ones, they know I'll still be around for them.

The goal of all this is seeing a young person move on from where they are. To do that I try to get involved with them on heaps of levels: I live in the community that they live in, I go to their schools, I meet their families, I see them at the supermarket, and if I'm seeing them as part of groups that I work with in the school. With the ones I'm working with one-to-one, I also connect with their families when we see each other around the community, I often get my best feedback from parents who pass on what their kid says about me – sometimes things that I didn't even see as significant have become very important for them.

I was created to do this, that's how I see it. You know, I'm a Christian, but even before then I had that strong love for people. I love talking with people, I love listening to people, finding out about what makes them tick. When I became a Christian I realized 'oh my gosh', this is why God created me, to be a youth worker. I reckon I'm going to be 50 or 60 and I'm still going to be a youth worker, and I think I'm going to be an effective youth worker as well. I know I could never do this job if I was married and had children. Right now with what I'm doing I need to be single, I need to be available, I've had young people and parents ring me at 2am saying come and get this girl she's smashing up the house and I've gone around picked her up taken her out and come back when she's calmed down, and I wouldn't be able to do that if I had a family.

PROFILE Sharon and Jimi Greene (Reefton)

It's really hard for kids growing up in Reefton, it's isolated and there's little drive to achieve in anything outside of rugby, especially academically. Jimi works at Reefton School, he teaches kapa haka and coaches the under-13 boys' rugby team, and I work for the local chemist 3 days a week. On Friday nights we run the local youth centre.



For some time there's been nothing for young people to call 'their place'. When some of them started to form a youth centre, they asked if I'd be willing to help out and I said 'Yes, I could be a treasurer or something.' The first attempt didn't work out, so Jimi and I ended up getting more involved in helping them to do the things that they wanted to do. So the kids still had their committee, but they needed someone older to co-ordinate with the wider community, and help find resources.

Jimi and I have ended up in a 'mother and father' role with many of the kids. We talk about everything – from sex, drugs to violence, family break-ups and whatever is going on for them. And my role is to get to know them, their high points and their low points. Help them to feel good about themselves. So I aim to find one good thing about every single young person who comes into the youth centre. I get to know their names, where they've been, how they're going at sport, if they're good at the guitar, that sort of thing. We've set up places where they can play their music and impress the others, you know, so they've got a role.

We also role-model the family thing. Like for Friday night dinner we cook what Jimi calls 'Māorese'. It's Chinese, but cooked by Māori. And so they see Jimi cooking and there's all these little important messages that go through about the role of men. They watch to see how we relate, especially the boys who don't have dads around.

If Jimi takes them on school camp they turn up to the centre on Friday night and tell me all about it. He went on the form two trip to Wellington and got a picture of himself with Irene Van Dyk and then the first thing they did was come and tell me that he has another woman. Yeah right! On the rugby final night, Jimi's team came and they watched the rugby with us. We bought chips and dip and just hung out.

He's my security guy when things go wrong, because he can tell better than me when they come stoned or drunk. Usually I take them into the kitchen and give them a coffee and a lecture, and we talk about what's happening and why it's happening. We don't turn them away, although we do have a strict no drinking, no drugs policy while they are here. But it's a very fuzzy line. Jimi is my strength when I can't deal with things.

Sometimes I wonder what difference the youth centre makes around Reefton because the young people change all the time, they get to 18 and go off to do their thing, especially the leaders, so often we don't see much from what we do.

It's not the money that keeps us doing youth work. Ha! It's the fact that a school kid comes over and gives me a hug when he knows that things are bad. The fact that kids come back to Reefton at 21 or 24 years old, and they'll still come back and see us here. I remember being at the shop one day and a young girl came in and stood in front of me and she said 'You don't remember me, do you?' And I said, 'Oh your face looks familiar.' She would be 24 now. And I stood with her when a young girl from around here died in a car accident – it was about 7 years ago. And we went through this grieving thing together. She came back and told me she was doing teacher training and about how things were going for her, and then she said 'I've just come for a cuddle'. That's what keeps me going. I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have that. It's being part of something really special in this community.

Methodology

2

INTRODUCTION

In its design and implementation, this project has aimed to be consistent with best practice in youth work. Therefore it has sought to reflect approaches which are inclusive, participatory and empowering for those involved. With these ideals in mind, the methodology was designed around three guidelines:

- Although the design and delivery of the initial survey has imposed certain constraints, other facets of the process should be open-ended to encourage youth workers to identify their own issues and questions. Therefore, qualitative approaches should sit alongside the gathering of quantitative data.
- Information taken out of communities should be returned to those communities and youth workers encouraged to create their own dialogue around the results of the data.
- That the voices of participants should emerge, the style and presentation of the results remain accessible principally for youth workers and community groups.

It should also be noted that this research project has attempted to find out what is happening in youth work by looking through the eyes of the people who do it. It is important to acknowledge that, because of the scope of this project, there is a range of other stakeholders whose perspectives are not represented in these findings. These include: funders, employers, whanau (families), community leaders and, most importantly, young people themselves. These are important voices, and this work has been completed with the hope that further research might focus on these areas.

Finally, there is a range of interest groups and sectors within youth work. A lack of communication between some of the groups has hindered the overall development of the field in New Zealand. The intention of this project has been to honour all of these sectors, and attempt to reflect each of them fairly based on the extent to which they have appeared in the research sample. Unfortunately the limitations of this research mean that not everybody will be completely happy with it. The under-representation of a group is not intended to reflect on the value of that group but instead, is a reflection on the limited resources available for this project. As mentioned previously, further research is needed to ensure that all voices are heard.

DATA SOURCES AND SAMPLE SELECTION

The project was carried out over a two year period. During that time, the data was drawn from three sources:

1. Over 2004, a written survey was distributed nationally and completed by 637 people who identified themselves as youth workers.
2. Over 2005, information generated by the survey was taken back around the country to 22 youth worker networks, at which a total of 56 focus groups were asked to comment on a presentation of the survey results and discuss a range of issues arising from them.
3. On the same trip around the country, 11 youth workers were individually interviewed about what they did and why.

The methods used to gather information from each of these sources are discussed in more detail below. While the project has aimed to generate a national snapshot of youth work, its scope was also limited by the resources and time available. As a result the following limitations have been identified:

- There is not widely agreed definition of youth work, and some confusion exists about whether it includes anyone who includes young people in their work. To attempt to separate out participants was seen as problematic, so people were simply asked to participate if they self-identified as a youth worker, or with one of a number of related terms; youth leader, youth mentor, rangitahi development worker, youth pastor/minister, youth worker, youth advocate, youth development worker, youth liaison worker, or youth work volunteer.
- Not every community in the country was able to be included. We were reliant on local contacts around the country to distribute surveys and set up focus group meetings. In some areas where there is no functioning network we were unable to find anyone to help and these areas were not able to be included in the research.
- The project was not a survey of young people, their perceptions, participation or views on youth work.
- The project aimed to include a diverse range of particular groups (ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, context and types of youth work). However the project cannot be exhaustive in achieving full representation of every youth work context as there are as many contexts as there are youth workers.
- There has been no similar study done in New Zealand, so it has not been possible to compare the sample with other results in order to evaluate how representative it is.

STAGE ONE (WRITTEN SURVEY)

A written survey was developed by the project management team and the researcher. The project management team consisted of members of the National Youth Workers Network committee over 2004/05. The survey was critiqued by staff at the research section of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), who also designed data collation files. The survey was then piloted with a group of youth workers in the Hutt Valley (Wellington) in December 2003, and subsequently revised. Because the final version differed in several key aspects, data from the pilot version was not included in the final results. A copy of the survey (questionnaire) form used is available on the NYWN website¹.

The project management team helped to identify a group of people to distribute the survey, and an event was held with them in March 2004 to explain the purpose of the project and discuss how the survey was to be administered.

It was important that the survey was completed by a cross-section of people from different sectors. To assist in achieving this sample the survey was distributed by paid workers and volunteers, networks of Maori, Pacific, women, faith-based, rural and city-based youth workers. Most of these groups were reasonably represented in the surveys returned and this report has included some comparisons between the sectors, as well as a general overview of youth work in our country.

Others were added to this initial group of distributors, and by November 2004, 31 volunteers had taken the survey to personal contacts in the field, network meetings, hui, conferences, and other events attended by youth workers. A copy of the survey was posted on the NYWN website, and several larger organisations distributed it within their networks. Five of the volunteers were training providers who took it with them as they travelled around the country. Two thousand copies of the survey were distributed, 637 were completed and returned.

Within the scope of this project it was impossible to find every youth worker, or even to guess at how many there are. Most people who attended some sort of event for youth workers in 2004 got asked to fill in the questionnaire. However, because many events tend to attract paid rather than volunteer youth workers, we need to acknowledge that volunteers are probably under-represented in these results, as are youth workers who don't often attend network meetings, training events or conferences.

¹ www.youthworkers.net.nz

Feedback from youth workers on the focus group process*

Good – very informative process

This workshop should have been longer

Very interesting – great presentation maintaining interest

Excellent method of gaining information

More korero please, I could not understand Q5

It was an awesome interactive process

Getting feedback from the research was great

Great process

Effective combination of visual and interactive discussion

More time needed for brainstorming within the group

I like this format, it was relaxed and led to good discussion

Keep up the 'real' difference

Really enjoyed it

* quotes from a section on the chart asking for group feedback on the process.

STAGE TWO (FOCUS GROUPS)

Between March and the end of June 2005 the researcher visited 22 youth worker networks and facilitated group discussions involving a further 317 youth workers in 56 focus groups consisting of 4-6 people in each. The locations of these groups are noted in the maps in Section Three (Youth Workers).

At each focus group we checked the number of people who had completed the written questionnaire in the previous year, a count of hands suggested that 121 (38%) of those involved in the focus groups had also completed the survey in 2004.

Approximately 90% of those who attended the focus group meetings were actually youth workers. In some of the smaller towns, numbers of social workers, DIA staff and local council workers also came along (we even had one mayor!). In most cases these people self-identified that they were not involved in youth work and most were aware of not introducing their own bias into the recorded results.

The focus groups combined an opportunity to let youth workers know some of the results from stage one of the project, and to discuss issues arising from them. Each focus group session lasted between one and two hours.

The focus group questions were displayed on PowerPoint, and repeated on an A2 sized chart, with space next to each question for one person, elected by the group, to act as a recorder and take notes of the group's discussion. At the beginning of each presentation the groups were also asked if they were willing to have their conversation (audio) recorded. Where consent was given, a member of the group was shown how to work the tape recorder and asked to record their group's discussion of each question. Thirty-five groups agreed to be recorded. Five of the recording volunteers didn't master their machine, so we ended up with a total of 30 (audible) tapes which were each transcribed. Direct quotes from the different focus groups are included throughout the report in boxed inserts, as shown on this page.

An initial set of focus group questions was designed; these were piloted with a small group from the Canterbury Youth Workers Collective, and then run with 13 groups in another five locations (mainly around the greater Wellington area). These questions are listed in Appendix One.

On the whole, the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches seemed to work well. The commitment to taking the stage one results back around the networks and engaging them in discussion was appreciated by focus group participants. A list of the networks and areas which were visited is included as part of Appendix One.

One suggestion from some participants was that they would have liked to have seen comparisons between their region and the national figures. This was a great idea which we were unable to follow up on because of the time available. The data is still available and creating some specific data sets for these and other interest groups (for example government, or employers) could be a helpful next stage for this project.

STAGE THREE (PROFILES)

One of the difficulties in representing youth work is that it goes beyond facts and statistics. The people, their passion and their stories are at the heart of it, and any approach which attempts to describe youth work only in terms of graphs and statistics may have missed the point (as youth workers themselves have told me several times). A series of interviews undertaken with several youth workers is intended to add some faces and stories to the profile of youth work in New Zealand. Much of the information gained through the quantitative methods is reflected and given context through this qualitative approach.

A statistical picture of the gender, culture, kaupapa and location of research participants emerged in stage one. The eleven participants in the profile interviews were selected to (approximately) represent this picture, and they were mainly identified using local network co-ordinators. As the focus group 'road show' moved through the country, these people were individually interviewed and asked about what they did and why they did it.

The only area where this group is not representative is in the age range. This sample group tends to be a little older as network coordinators were asked to identify people who were established in their work and who had the general respect of their community and other local youth workers.

Their comments were typed up, edited back down to approximately the same length, and then returned to the participants for checking.

Youth Workers

3

Over 2004, 637 people who identified with the term 'youth worker' completed an eight-page written survey'. The surveys were distributed by 31 volunteers who took them to youth worker conferences, network meetings and training events. This section profiles the people who participated in the survey.

One of the initial hopes for this project was that it would generate an estimate of how many people are involved in youth work in New Zealand. However, as the project progressed two problems emerged in trying to arrive at a reliable figure:

1. A broadly agreed definition of youth work does not exist within New Zealand, especially as an occupation that is distinct from the other professional services that deal with children and young people. This became apparent during the focus group sessions in 2005 – in some places people assumed that youth work was inclusive of anyone who worked with young people, and so some of these events were attended by RLTB teachers², council community liaison staff, counsellors and social and health workers. For this reason, a definition of youth work has been included in the introduction to this report, in the hope that some discussion and consensus will develop around it.
2. It is certainly feasible to track down most of the full-time paid youth workers in the different regions, but the task becomes far more complicated if volunteer and part-time youth workers are also included. Thirty-eight percent (241) of those who filled in the written survey classed themselves as volunteers, and a further 22% (142) as part-time. These figures are almost certainly lower than they should be, as volunteers and part-time youth workers are often under-represented at the sort of events that the survey was distributed at (for example only 17% of focus group participants described themselves as volunteers). In short: there are far more volunteers out there than have been included in these results.

When we visited the regions in mid-2005 to facilitate the focus groups (8-12 months after the written survey was completed) we found that approximately one third (38%) of focus group participants had filled out the survey in the previous year. However, this figure needs to be qualified by noting that, in rural areas, such as Reefton, where over 40 people turned up for the focus group meetings, we must have found nearly **all** of the youth workers on the West Coast. But in West Auckland, where only 6 arrived, we realised that we had found virtually **none of them!**

¹ A copy of which is included in Appendix 2

² Resource Teachers For Learning and Behaviour

As a result it became apparent that the best we could aim for was to get a sample profile that would be accepted as broadly representative of a total picture of youth work.

Based on the fact that over 600 youth workers completed the written survey, and that only a third of those we encountered a few months later had filled it out, it seems reasonable to predict that there are at least three times as many youth workers as the number that completed the survey. Therefore a very conservative estimate would suggest that there are at least 2,000 youth workers who are connected into regional youth worker networks, and we expect that the actual total of youth workers is much higher than this.

3.1 LOCATION

While acknowledging the limitations discussed above, the following picture has emerged from the people who completed the survey in 2004.

- 60% of participants were based in the North Island and 35% in the South Island.
- 53% (336)³ were based in one of the main centres⁴, 23% (147) in one of the smaller cities, 23% (148) in small towns and rural areas.

The maps below indicate where the surveys were returned from, they do not suggest how many people are doing youth work in each area. What the numbers do indicate is the strength of youth worker networks in some areas in that year. Where strong networks do exist⁵ it was much easier to distribute surveys and collect information. The small dots indicate the 22 locations where focus groups were run between March and June 2005.

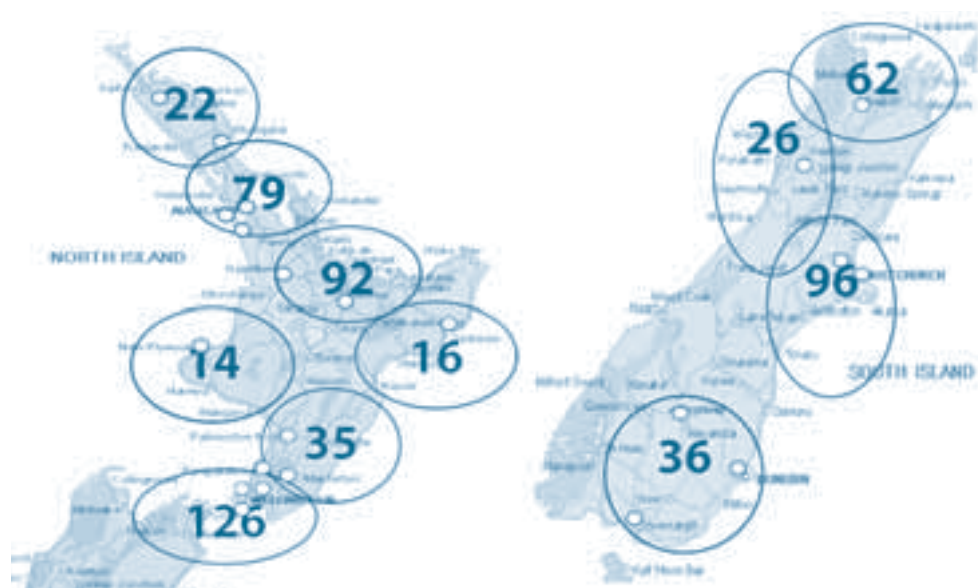


Figure 1. Surveys returned and where focus groups were held

³ Figures in brackets indicate the actual number of responses.

⁴ Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin

⁵ For example; Christchurch, Wellington, Nelson, The West Coast, Central Otago and Bay of Plenty.

3.2 AGE, CULTURE GENDER

- 52% of survey participants were women, and 44% men⁶.

There is a high degree of involvement by Maori as youth workers, a finding which is supported by an earlier study (*He Taanga Manawa*, 1990)⁷. This study found that the majority of youth workers supported through the Detached Youth Worker Funding Scheme were Maori. The results later in this report found that only 4% of youth workers are employed by Maori organisations (iwi-based or urban), suggesting that Maori youth workers are spread across a range of employing organisations.

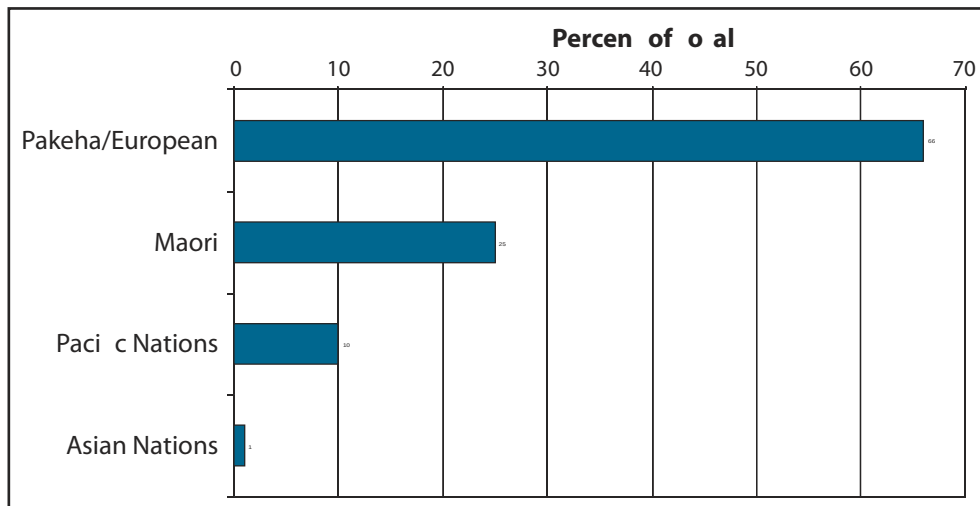


Figure 2. Cultural backgrounds of youth workers

The number of Pacific youth workers is in proportion to the overall Pacific youth population, but the results suggest that there are few youth workers from Asian backgrounds. A similar gap is identified in the number of Asian youth who are involved in youth programmes. This issue is discussed in more detail in the next section (Youth Work Practice).

About half of youth workers are aged under 30. If there is a stereotype of youth workers as people who are involved for a couple of years while they look for a ‘real job’, it is not supported by the results of this survey which found that the other half (approximately) of participants was aged **over 30**.

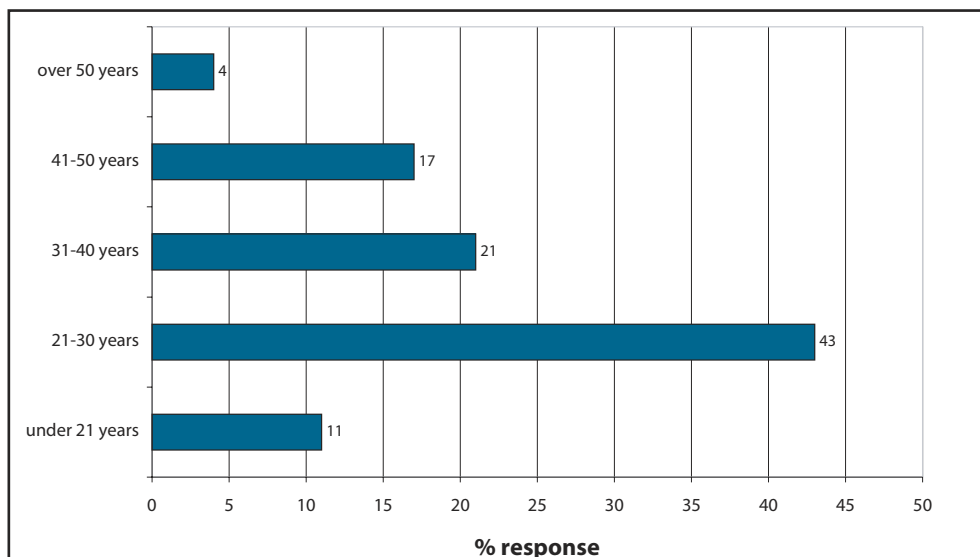


Figure 3. Age of youth workers in sample

⁶ Where a question wasn’t filled in, this amount is missing from the final total or percentage.

⁷ *He Taanga Manawa –An Evaluation of the Detached Youth Worker Funding Scheme* (1990, page 99) completed by the Department of Internal Affairs (funders of the Detached Youth Work Funding Scheme). It is the most recent substantial report into youth work in New Zealand.

3.3 LENGTH OF TIME IN YOUTH WORK

The largest group of participants was those who indicated that they have been involved in youth work for 2-3 years, with a steady decrease from there. There is also a relatively large group who have been involved for 10 years or more. This may reflect the relatively large proportion of older people who are involved.

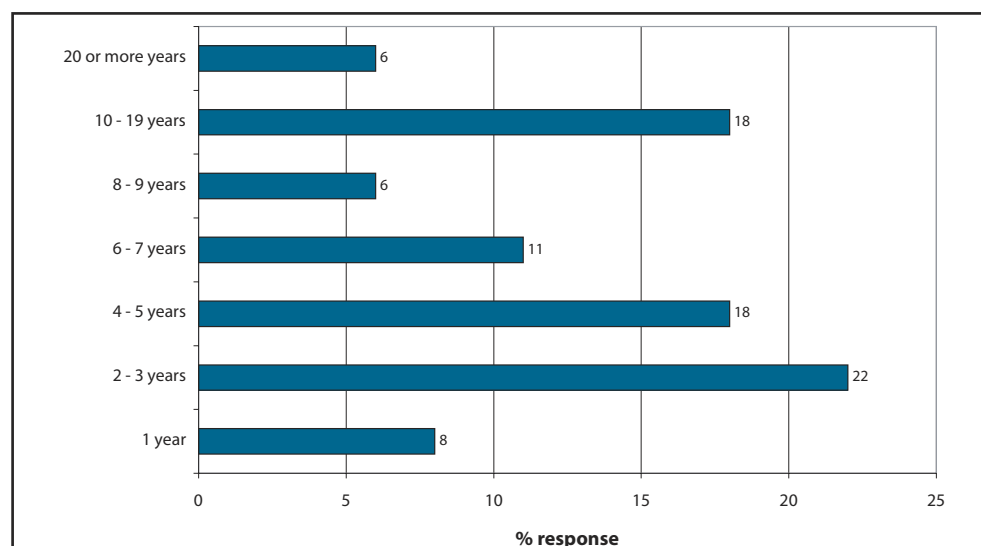


Figure 4. How long have you been involved in youth work?

A 1979 study of the Detached Youth Work Funding Scheme⁸ noted that workers were only staying for 18 months on average. A later study, (*He Taanga Manawa*, 1990) found that while the stability of projects had improved slightly, over half of the youth workers in them had been there for less than one year.

Despite the shortcomings of a report which focused on only one funding scheme⁹ the figure of '18 months' has been applied generally to youth workers in New Zealand ever since.

Although these studies do not provide a direct comparison¹⁰, this study found that the median length of time for involvement in youth work among survey participants was five years. The survey question didn't ask people to distinguish between paid and voluntary youth work, so some participants have probably combined time spent in both capacities.

There does not appear to be much variation in the average length of time spent in youth work between the different sectors¹¹, although the median length of involvement differs slightly between paid youth workers (six years) and volunteers (five years).

The results showed that the median length of time for a paid youth worker in one organisation is 24 months¹². The median length of involvement in their current organisation for a volunteer is 12 months, suggesting that many organisations may struggle to retain volunteers. In comparing these figures to the overall length of time in youth work, the results indicate that the average youth worker has moved through two or three organisations in their five years, with some possibly doing it full time when there is funding, and working in part-time or voluntary roles when there is not.

The focus groups were asked if their perceptions of how long youth workers were staying in their roles matched the survey result. Most of the groups (79%¹³) agreed that

⁸ Established by the Dept of Internal Affairs in 1977, *Preliminary Evaluation of the Detached Youth Worker Funding Scheme* by Jennifer Hutt 1979 (Ministry of Recreation and Sport).

⁹ Although it was possibly the largest at the time

¹⁰ Because the DYW results were only for people involved in one funding scheme.

¹¹ The sectors which were compared included; male/female, city rural, Maori/Tauitiwi, faith based/secular.

¹² The mean (average) is 30 months, the difference is created by a wide range in the upper quartile, which is composed of people who have been with their organisations for periods ranging from 3 to 19 years.

¹³ These percentages are of the 56 focus groups that were asked to discuss the question, and therefore represent the views of the majority (as recorded in the notes from each group), and don't necessarily represent each individual within a group.

¹⁴ Some people listed more than one occupation, all entries have been counted, and the percentages represent the proportion of survey participants who ticked each category.

youth workers **did** seem to be staying involved for longer. The three main contributing factors to the changes were identified by these groups as:

- A growing recognition of youth work as a career path due to an increasing demand for youth workers – and the corresponding growth in employment opportunities (86%)
- A widening support for and involvement in youth workers’ networks (54%)
- The growth in availability, quality and recognition of training in youth work (29%).

3.4 WHERE FROM, WHERE TO?

Survey participants were asked to identify what they had been doing prior to getting involved in youth work.

Table 1: What was your occupation before you got involved in youth work?¹⁴	% of total (n=580)
Student	32
Retail / sales / office work / tourism / hospitality	17
Education	12
Social service sector	11
Labouring / Unskilled work	8
Trade	6
Family / parenting	6
Self employed / business / farming / other profession	5
Police / army / clergy	5

The greater percentage of participants (32%) were secondary or tertiary students as they became involved in youth work, although the vast majority were not doing study related to youth work.

The results suggest that youth workers are drawn from a wide range of occupations. Many start their involvement while they are still a student (secondary or tertiary), suggesting that youth work is perhaps something that many people ‘find themselves in’ (especially as a volunteer initially) rather than as the result of a deliberate career choice, for which they study and then seek a job.

As new courses in youth work become available, it will be interesting to see if they begin to affect this dynamic.

Table 2: What sort of occupation would you like to move into after your current involvement as a youth worker?	% of total (n=540)
Other social services (includes education/teaching)	24
Other jobs within youth work OR no change at all	21
Don’t know	13
Education / teaching	10
Management or policy role	7
Church leadership / overseas mission	6
Other (includes business, tourism, arts, events, retire, politics, start a family)	18

Do you think youth workers are staying around longer?*

Yes: Youth work is now considered to be a legitimate job. A job to be proud of.

No: Not really. They get more skills then move on and do something like social work.

Yes: There’s been a backlash around the 18 month short commitment thing.

No: especially in the cities, there’s much higher burn-out.

Rural life is hard too, because you can’t run and hide from the community. Everyone knows where the youth worker lives.

Yes: Perhaps the people who stick around for years are helping to create a culture that says ‘this is a long-term career too’.

Tends to be that workers are around for a couple of years or else stick at it for years and years.

Youth work is a stepping-stone into other work. It’s good because people in high-up roles in policy-making carry with them an understanding of youth.

Yes. The groups that we work in have been around for a while and there is a culture of sticking around.

** quotes from focus group discussions*

The majority of participants expects to remain involved in some area of the social services (including education or a policy role).

It is unclear whether a significant number of youth workers are people who trained in related areas (social work, teaching etc) and then found their way into youth work, using the career they had trained for as a backstop, or whether people decided to become a youth worker, but chose to train in the other areas – either because of a lack of youth work courses at a degree level, or because they felt that completing other qualifications would give them a greater mobility for the future.

3.5 EMPLOYMENT

In terms of their present employment, the youth workers surveyed fell into three categories; full-time, part-time and voluntary. In each category the written survey produced different proportions to the focus groups.

Table 3: Comparison between employment status	% in the written survey¹⁵ (2004)	% in the focus groups (2005)
Full-time (30 hours or more)	26	56
Part-time	22	26
Volunteer	38	17

The volunteer figures probably include some part-timers who worked more hours than they were being paid for. There is no evidence to claim that either of these figures represents the actual proportions of youth workers who operate in these categories in New Zealand. However, it is worth noting that while the written surveys went out to youth workers at a wide range of events, the focus groups were all run during the day on weekdays, and this may explain why less volunteers have shown up in the focus group statistics.

- The median amount of volunteered time was 8 hours per week per person (based on the figures returned in the written survey).

Survey participants were asked what type of organisation they worked for. The data was then split between those who were paid (full-time or part-time) and those who weren't; this information is compared in **Table 4** (below):

Table 4: Types of employer	% of paid youth workers	% of volunteer youth workers
Community trust or incorporated society	49	25
Church or other faith-based organisation	28	60
Government or local body agency (incl schools)	15	8
Maori organisation (iwi based or not)	4	5
Business	3	2

There is some overlap in the figures above because a Maori or faith-based organisation is probably also a trust or an incorporated society. Because of this some people ticked more than one category of employer, all ticks were counted.

¹⁵ 91 or 14% did not answer this question

¹⁶ NGO; Non Government Organisation

The results suggest that the majority of paid youth workers in New Zealand (85%) operate in the NGO¹⁶ sector. And the majority of volunteer youth workers (60%) are found in the faith sector.

Participants were also asked whether their organisation was only youth focused, or whether youth work was part of a wider (multi-disciplinary) focus, for example alongside teachers, clergy or social workers:

- 40% indicated that youth work is the main focus of their organisation
- 54% indicated that they work as part of multi-disciplinary teams.

3.6 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Survey participants were asked if they had received an employment contract (or other written agreement) with their agency/employer:

- 87% of paid participants reported having received an employment contract from their employer.
- Only 29% of volunteers had some sort of agreement with their organisation.

The paid participants were asked about the security of their position, and only 38% believed that it was ongoing. For those who reported that their funding was on a limited time frame, the median amount of time that they expected it to continue for was the next twelve months.

These results suggest that the majority of paid youth workers work outside the government sector and most do not have a secure position. As may be expected, this issue comes up again when we asked about the stress that they experience.

3.7 SALARIES AND WAGES

The following figures are based on 93 survey participants who claimed to be paid full-time and who opted to supply their income details. The figures they supplied for their annual (gross) wages ranged from \$1,800 to \$57,000. Based on these figures:

- The median wage for a full-time youth worker in New Zealand in 2004 was \$34,000 per year (the mean or average wage was \$35,300).

Table 5: Comparison of average wages of youth workers to general population¹⁷.	June 1989	June 2004
Average wage general population	\$26,293	\$40,067
Average wage for youth workers ¹⁸	\$24,500	\$35,300
Percentage comparison of youth workers' wages to general population	93%	88%

¹⁷ Source: Statistics New Zealand 21/10/2005

¹⁸ This figure is based on total wages for Detached Youth Workers in 1989 (the only figures available), source: *He Taanga Manawa* p. 70. I have used means here to be consistent with the older figures which I don't have the medians for.

The figures in Table 5 suggest that wages for full-time youth workers have fallen slightly behind those of the general population.

There are some small variations in pay rates between youth worker contexts and sectors:

Table 6: Variance in rates of pay between youth workers		Median wage ¹⁹
Location:	City	\$34,000
	Rural or town	\$32,000
Involved for:	2 years or less	\$33,111
	2-5 years	\$35,523
	More than 5 years	\$34,000
Tauiwi		\$33,055
Maori		\$35,000
Gender:	Female	\$33,000
	Male	\$35,000
Faith based		\$32,000
Non-faith based		\$35,000
Age:	21-30	\$32,000
	31-40	\$35,000
	41-50	\$36,200

These figures suggest that pay rates may actually decrease slightly with length of service in youth work. Only one person under 21 claimed to be paid as a full-time youth worker.

Pay rates, when compared to qualifications, indicated that 58% of participants in the upper quartile for income (earning \$38,000+) have a diploma or degree level qualification (only 6% of them have one in youth work). In contrast, for those in the middle two quartiles for income (earning \$26-38,000), only 42% have a diploma or degree²⁰. The qualifications of those in the upper quartile are more likely to be unrelated to youth work (or social services generally), suggesting that employers²¹ are currently looking for any degree level qualification rather than one in youth work or an area related to it.

A further 28 people stated that they received a part-time wage as a youth worker. The range for this group was from \$2,650 to \$41,000. The median wage for a part-time youth worker is \$15,660; the data does not reliably indicate how many hours part-timers are working for this amount.

¹⁹ Excludes missing and zero values

²⁰ Only 2% of youth workers in these two quartiles have a diploma or degree in youth work.

²¹ Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the higher paying employers are government or local body agencies.

3.8 STRESS

Participants in the written survey and the focus groups were each asked to identify what they found most stressful about their employment as a youth worker. The written survey group were simply asked an open question about what they found stressful, their written comments were grouped, and are represented in the blue bars in Figure 5 (below).

These grouped categories were then shown to the focus groups, and each person was asked to put 3 ticks against whatever they found most stressful in their role (they were able to put all of their ticks on one category, or spread them around). The focus group responses are shown in the grey bars, and indicate a high level of consensus about what youth workers find most stressful about their jobs.

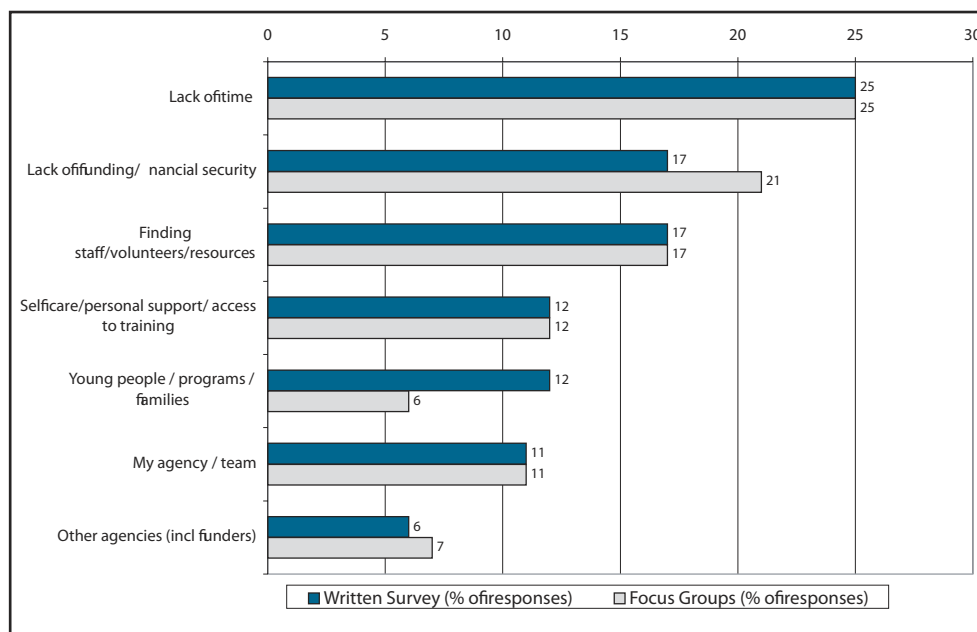


Figure 5. What stresses you out the most in your employment as a youth worker?

Given that the focus groups included a higher proportion of paid youth workers, it perhaps isn't surprising that issues of funding/financial security were slightly higher for this group.

It is interesting to see how far down the list young people themselves come!

What stresses you out the most in your work?*

Have to multi-task all the time.

Paper work. Statistics. Contracts involve too much work. Need an admin person.

Sometimes the imbalance of work and personal life.

Lack of time for preparation and finding resources.

Balancing the work with home (and paid work).

Lack of time – this often because of lack of funding.

Some youth workers let their kids get away with too much (like getting high at course) and this makes it hard for other workers to try and set down rules.

Colleagues that are not reliable – colleagues that let other youth workers down are actually letting down the youth.

Lack of support from my own agency.

Inability to get training.

Finding the right staff.

* quotes from taped focus group discussions

How do your values influence the way you operate as a youth worker?*

Want to give young people the benefit of our mistakes that we have made in our lives.

Importance of whānau – knowing each other's whānau, becoming whānau.

Christian ministry about caring for the whole person – feeding them, visiting them in prison, visiting when they are sick, bringing a spiritual awareness.

That there is hope. This encourages things like goal-setting.

Whakatauaakā: 'Ko au ko koe. Ko koe ko au'. 'I am you. You are me', connecting on the same level.

Reciprocity – that everyone has something to teach. Try to hear from the young people.

** quotes from taped focus group discussions*

3.9 VALUES (KAUPAPA)

Participants in the written survey were asked to identify the values that had influenced their approach to youth work. A list was provided and people were asked to tick from this, or else write their own statement. Most chose to tick from the existing options and then write their own statement. Most people ticked more than one value²².

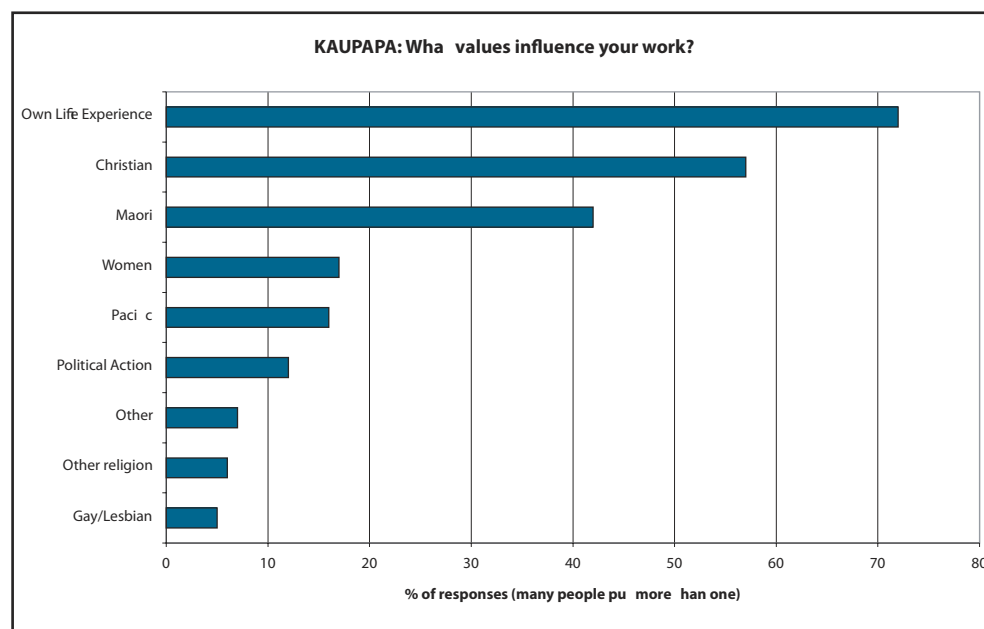


Figure 7. What values/kaupapa have influenced your approach to youth work?

Maori values were included by 42% of participants, but only 25% identified themselves as descended from Maori. Given that Maori young people make up a large client group for many youth workers, this is perhaps both understandable, and hopeful.

Over half (57%) of participants identified Christian faith as part of their personal kaupapa/values. While 42% of this group were employed by church and other Christian organisations, only 26% of them indicated that they have their main contact with young people at a church²³. This suggests that just over half of youth workers with Christian values choose to work in community rather than church settings.

The focus group survey found only 11% of youth workers had contact with youth at a church. The difference between the two results is perhaps caused by the lower percentage of volunteer youth workers that were involved in the focus groups.

²² 8 people ticked every value which is probably a statement in itself.

²³ All percentages are of the overall total of survey participants.

PROFILE

Maree Shalders (Nelson)

If I had to explain what youth work was about, I would say it is having a belief in a young person, it's about the relationships of course, but it boils down to an adult believing in them, so that they can begin to believe in themselves.

I'm a mum and the manager of an alternative education programme in Nelson, it's funded by Ministry of Ed and supported by the City Council. I also help manage my partner's commercial diving business, and I'm trying to fit in time to study towards a Diploma in Social Services. My project is contracted by the three main high schools in Nelson to provide educational options for 13-15 years olds who don't fit into mainstream education.

For me the job is about being there every day and greeting them with a smile, and accepting them, but it's also about having really good boundaries, and being consistent with the guidelines, and being firm when they step over them, but still with that warmth and nurturing so that they're not shamed out.

You know, we had a young Niuean/Maori girl come down from Auckland last year. She had been kicked out of alternative education up there and it took us five months just to get alongside her. For all that time we couldn't go near her, couldn't touch her in any way, she wouldn't acknowledge us or buy into what was happening. She had so much going for her, a stunning, lovely young girl, but unable to begin to deal with and process the hurts that had happened to her.

A lot of our work is just being consistent as adults in their lives. The same approach, the same smile and welcome at the start of each day, and the same listening, even though she wasn't talking. Giving her opportunities to begin the connection, and then after several months she just turned around and started to open up. And now you just wouldn't believe that she's the same girl.

She's typical of young people who go through our welfare system. She has been around the whanau, and all around the country, and now she's with a stable aunty who's in Nelson now. She has just turned around, and without this sort of intervention that girl wouldn't have gone anywhere, she just would have created a nuisance out in the community and been shut further out of our society. We don't have that type of success with all of them obviously, but these are the stories that get me up in the morning.

We work on numeracy and literacy, but also feel that we are working with these young people on many levels that include social skills, health and mental health, and advocacy in the justice system, as well as their education. It's very intensive on our team and one of the biggest challenges in my role as a manager is working within a limited budget to support staff who face burnout, and balancing their needs against the needs of the students. Because we do a whole lot more than just the basic academic areas it's a huge programme, but it's nowhere near enough, especially for the needs in our region.



We also face a lot of frustration with statutory agencies, we find ourselves doing a lot of the work for Child Youth and Family. A frustration for me is that once young people are referred into our programme, it seems like nobody else gives a toss about them. It feels like they just dump and forget. They can tick off the sheet in their case load and then leave it to someone else to do the actual work. I think one of the most important things that projects like ours provide is relationships, with the young people and with their whanau. If we don't make strong connections back into their other worlds (outside of the school programme) then everything we do here gets undone back at home and in the community.

I know that it's not about me but I just love seeing them come through the programme, because they don't leave without a job or going into training. And when they came to us, nobody thought that they would ever do anything. To show them that there are people out there that care, and that they can build positive relationships with adults and to change how they feel about authority figures, to introduce them to police who are okay and to change their perspective on how the community is.

If I could change one thing about what happens, it would be to challenge the wider community's perspective about them! Young people who come here experience exclusion through the fears and prejudices of local people. I wish more people could see the potential of the kids we work with, rather than seeing them just as problems, it would make it a lot easier for us to integrate and connect them with the wider community.

PROFILE

Neil Tolan (Hamilton)

I was born in Scotland and spent most of my childhood in a town called Port Glasgow. For the past 15 years I have been involved in youth work mainly focusing on the West Hamilton area. I've worked in paid and voluntary roles with schools, Youth For Christ and the Salvation Army.

I presently work for the Hamilton City Council and operate as a youth development worker based at the Western Community Centre in the West Hamilton area. In this role I operate as a link between the council and the community, particularly for young people. A lot of my work is networking within the community to provide support, solve issues, and organise community events and activities. This assists towards making the area a great place to live in for its young people. A big focus of what I do is development of local leaders; I see a really important part of my role is to create opportunities for young people to be actively involved in their community.

Nawton (West Hamilton) is where I spent most of my teenage years so I have a great love for this community and its people. Here there is a lot of connectedness and support for each other. Sure there's the influence of gangs and drugs and other negative things around the area but generally it's a safe community because of the networks and friendships people have. Each year we organise two large community events "Stars in the Park" (held March) and "Treats in the Park" (held on Halloween night). It's always exciting for me to see the community come together to celebrate, strengthen and develop relationships which I believe assists towards creating healthy neighbourhoods.

For the past few years we have put a number of initiatives in place, one in particular has been to reduce the amount of tagging around the community. By giving youth opportunities to find solutions to solve this complex issue we have seen tremendous results as well as creating a sense of pride and ownership amongst the young people and a feeling of belonging to the wider community.

Each school holidays I coordinate the school holiday programmes called Western Stars for 150 children. This has been a useful tool in developing our local youth as each programme we are able to employ 15 staff and attract 12 volunteers to assist. It's great to see their confidence and leadership skills grow as they take up opportunities within and outside the programme.

Another exciting programme is our weekly Sports and Recreation programmes based in four local parks throughout the west. This has been beneficial in getting to know various neighbourhoods at a grass roots level and has assisted towards understanding the communities' needs.

I know youth workers make a huge difference to the lives of young people. There are lots of really 'on to it' youth workers in Hamilton investing into the lives of young people each week. These shared experiences have a positive and lasting impact. The



Community
Development
Programme

longer you're in it, the more of a difference you become aware of – especially when some of the youth you have worked with go on and take up opportunities and active roles in their community. To see them develop their own ideas and solutions for the betterment of the community makes it all worthwhile.

That's what keeps me going, it's seeing the young people that I have had contact with, using the skills they have learned with me and now doing it on their own.

Keep it local.

Youth Work Practice

4

Who are youth workers working with, what do they do, and where do they do it? This section draws on information from the written survey of 637 youth workers and from a series of focus group discussions run with 56 groups of youth workers. It focuses on practice in youth work in New Zealand and then discusses participants' perceptions of good practice and measurable outcomes in their work.

4.1 WHO DO THEY WORK WITH?

In order to develop a picture of the clients of youth workers, the survey participants were asked to picture a representative sample of ten of the young people that they work with. They were then asked about the age range and cultural backgrounds of this group.

There was some discussion about trying to establish how many young people survey participants are working with, and then estimating how many (what proportion) of them were at risk. In the end we felt that the responses we were likely to get would be too subjective to be reliable. For example, one participant might consider their client group as only those young people that they saw every day, while another might include those that they only ran an annual event for, or identify a whole community of young people that they were (theoretically) available to.

Similarly, in the absence of a widely agreed definition of how 'at risk' young people should be identified, we felt that it would be inaccurate to ask youth workers to estimate how many they were working with, without a long and detailed explanation of what we meant.

Age Groups

Survey participants were asked to identify the age ranges of a representative sample of the young people they work with (see Figure 5). This information suggests that youth

workers operate across the range of age groups, with 15-16 year olds being the most common group.

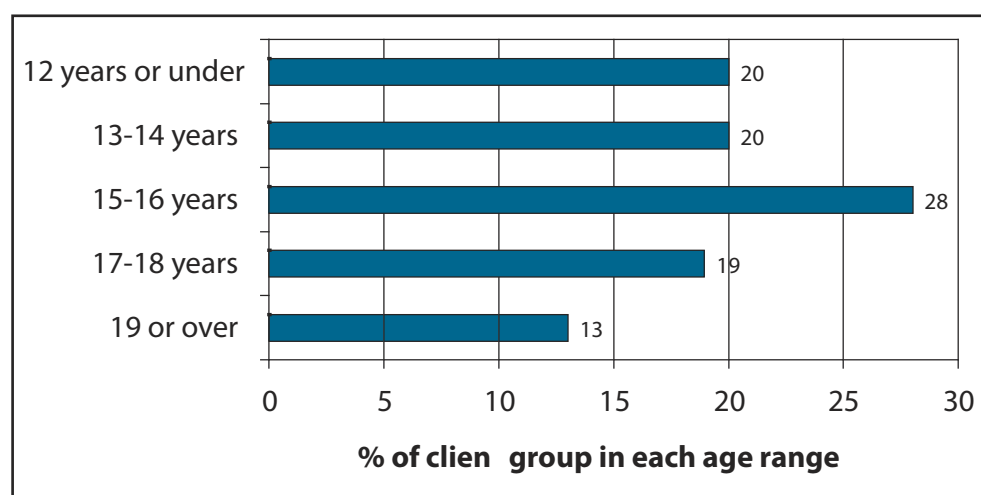


Figure 1. What age groups are the young people that you work with in?

Cultural Backgrounds

When they were asked to identify the cultural backgrounds of their sample client group, survey participants reported overall that 44% were Maori youth. This information, when compared with the general youth population (aged 12-24)¹, and with the cultural backgrounds of survey participants themselves, suggests that young Maori are a significant focus of youth work nationally (see Figure 2).

Thirty-five percent of Maori youth workers reported that they focused mainly on Maori youth ('mainly' determined as more than 60% of their client group) and 13% of Tauhiwi (non-Maori) youth workers reported the same. These figures are consistent with the *He Taanga Manawa* report, which found that 52% of detached Youth Workers (who the report noted 'were Maori with few exceptions') worked with a 'mostly Maori group'².

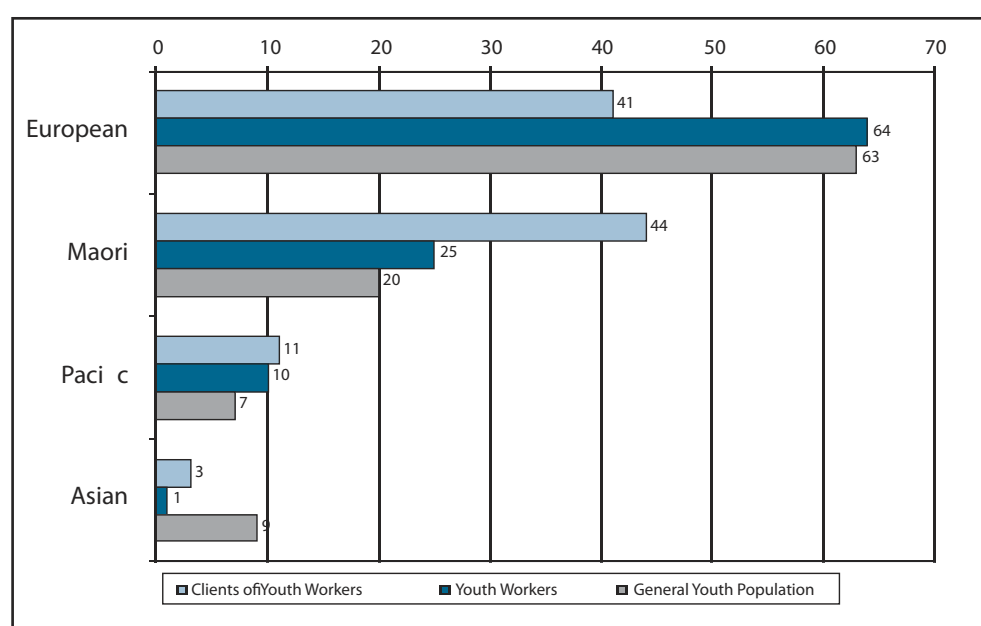


Figure 2. A comparison of cultural backgrounds.

¹ These figures are based on the 2001 Census, source: http://www.myd.govt.nz/media/pdf/yp_at_large.pdf

² He Taanga Manawa, (1990) pages 42 and 49

There seems to be an equal emphasis on the provision of youth work services for Maori youth between survey participants in city and in rural/small town contexts.

Pacific young people form about 7% of the New Zealand youth population. The numbers of survey participants from Pacific backgrounds, and the reported samples of their client groups, would suggest that Pacific youth are being adequately catered for by Pacific youth workers.

Asian young people represent a similar percentage of the youth population to Pacific youth (9%), but the results suggest that relatively few Asian young people are involved in youth projects (3%), and there were even less Asian youth workers identified in the survey (1%).

4.2 WHAT DO THEY DO?

Survey participants were asked to estimate the amount of time that they have in contact with young people in an average week³. It appears that paid youth workers are remarkably evenly spread between the different categories of time per week (see Table 1). This possibly reflects different approaches to youth work ranging from those who work in residential and educational settings (who may see young people for 30+ hours per week), to those in advocacy roles, which perhaps entail much less direct contact time.

As may be expected, the majority (69%) of volunteers reported that they have contact with young people for less than ten hours per week.

Table 1: On average how much of your time each week is actually spent in contact with youth?	Overall (%)	Paid (%)	Volunteers (%)
1-5 hours per week	28	16	41
6-10 hours per week	21	20	28
11-15 hours per week	16	19	12
16-20 hours per week	15	20	8
Over 21 hours per week	15	19	8

Survey participants were then asked to consider how they normally spread their contact time between four styles of work with young people (see Figure 3). The difference between a large and a small group was arbitrarily defined as whether the group would fit into a van (legally!).

³ Excluding camps and holiday programmes, and not counting admin or preparation

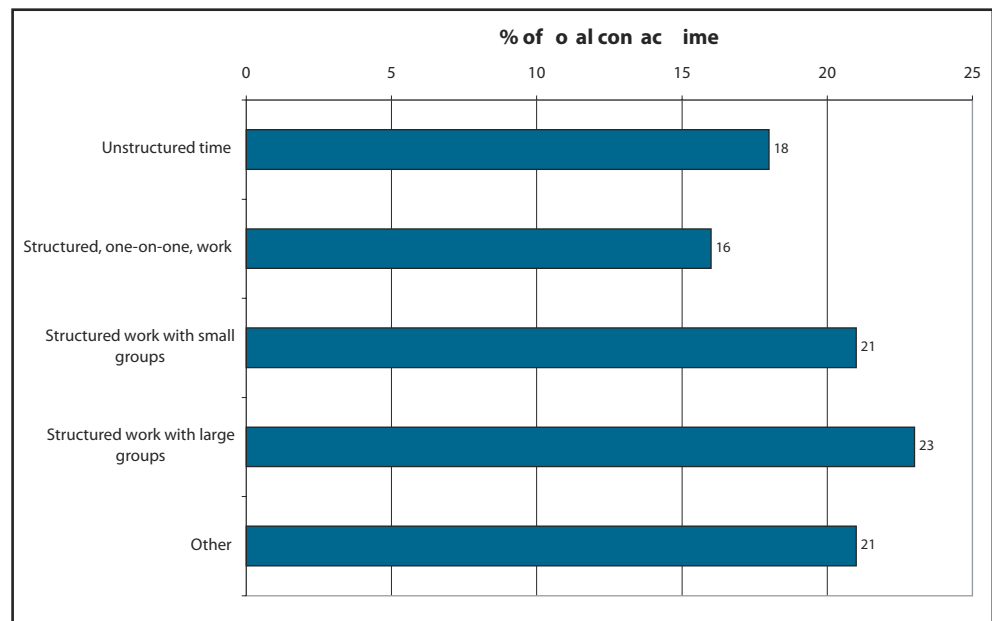


Figure 3. How do you use your contact time with young people?

Styles of structured one-to-one work were described as mentoring, counselling or individual case work. Unstructured work styles were described as informal contacting with young people around the community or situations where no formal programme was being run (such as supervising a drop-in centre). The results suggest that youth workers are spread across a range of styles in their practice. The only difference found in the written survey was that Maori youth workers (22%) are slightly more likely to work in structured one-to-one styles than Tauhiwi (14%).

In an attempt to understand styles of youth work practice further, these figures were taken back to the focus groups, where 160 participants⁴ listed what they actually did. When their styles of youth work were grouped they produced several additional categories to those that had originally been designed for the written survey, and these are listed below (Table 2).

Over 60% of those who listed mentoring included another type of activity as well (both were recorded). This suggests that, while mentoring is one of the most common activities in youth work, the majority do it in conjunction with other styles of work with young people.

⁴ About 10 responses were excluded because they named activities outside of youth work; management, nursing, social work.

Table 2: What do you actually do with young people?	Includes	Overall (%)	Number (n=160)
Structured one-to-one work	Mentoring, counselling	31	56
Education & employment	Discussion groups, life skills, employment training, alternative education, leadership development, Christian teaching	29	53
Youth clubs & activity based programmes	Youth clubs, after school programmes, outdoors, sports	14	26
Advocacy	Working on behalf of young people	11	20
Regulatory one-to-one work	Behaviour monitoring, supervising community work, statutory case work	6	10
Events	Coordinating community sporting, recreation and cultural events	4	8
Unstructured	Street work, hanging out	4	7

In some styles of work, the responses of the focus groups differ from the information gathered from the written survey. For example, only 16% of participants listed structured one-to-one work in the written survey compared to more than twice that amount (37%) in the focus group data⁵. Large group (youth groups) and unstructured styles of youth work were more common among participants in the written survey.

One possible reason is that the focus groups included about double the proportion of full-time (paid) participants (56%) and half the proportion of volunteers (17%) compared to the written survey sample which included 26% who were paid (full-time) and 38% who were volunteers⁶.

If this explanation is accurate, it suggests that a higher proportion of paid youth workers are involved in mentoring, advocacy and educationally based projects, and volunteers are more likely to be involved in youth clubs and activity based programmes (mainly large group work). This is supported by the results in table 3 (below) which indicate that participants in the written survey were more likely to be in contact with young people at a church or a drop-in centre as volunteers.

Although a number of youth mentoring programmes (which use volunteers extensively) have developed at a national level in recent years, they do not appear to show up in these results. During our travels to visit focus groups, we only met a handful of youth workers who were involved in them, suggesting that perhaps some of the larger organisations are not well connected into wider youth worker networks.

It is also worth noting that about 6% of focus group participants were using the term *youth work* to describe what appear to be regulatory activities with young people, for example; supervision of court orders (community work), and behaviour tracking⁷. There is currently debate among Australian youth workers (Sercombe 2004) about whether activities such as these should be considered to be legitimately part of youth work practice, especially if they appear to disadvantage a young person⁸.

⁵ 37% combines mentoring and regulatory one-to-one work

⁶ The written survey included 26% of paid full-time workers and 38% of volunteers, the focus groups included 56% paid full-time and 17% volunteers.

⁷ *Behaviour Tracking*; a worker is assigned to a young person (usually at school) to follow them around and help keep them out of trouble. This approach is used for a small number of young people who are considered to be a risk to themselves or others.

⁸ *Youth Work – The Professionalisation Dilemma*, Howard Sercombe, in *Youth Studies Australia* v23, n. 4, 2004 (p21).

4.3 WHERE DO THEY DO IT?

Participants in both the written survey and the focus groups were asked where they have the most contact time with young people. The results from each are compared below. Many people in the written survey listed more than one context (all were recorded):

Table 3: Where do you have most of your contact time with young people?	Written Survey⁹ (% of responses) n = 594	Focus Groups (% of responses) n = 169
Schools (including alternative education)	37	30
Churches or church buildings	26	11
Drop-in centre, skate park, or other area designed specifically for young people	25	12
In the community (streets, cafes, community events, sports fields, gym)	22	22
At an office	17	10
At the youth worker's own home	8	4
In the outdoors, on camps	6	4
On a marae	3	1
At a residential care facility	3	
On the phone/internet	1	
Other	10	7

While these results are a little mixed, they indicate that the most common context for youth workers to have contact with young people is at a school.

Although 37% of the survey participants reported that they have most of their contact with young people in schools, only 5% were actually employed by schools. This suggests that a considerable amount of student support in schools is being done by youth workers, and that their involvement is either being funded outside of the education sector, or through other avenues within it.

Participants in the focus groups were less likely to have contact with young people at churches and purpose-designed youth facilities (drop-in centres etc).

4.4 NON-CONTACT TIME

Survey participants were asked to estimate the time they spent each week on a range of tasks outside of their contact time with young people. Paid youth workers reported that, on average, they split their non-contact time between the following activities:

- 34% of their time doing admin related to their work
- 21% doing networking and liaison
- 18% managing other staff and volunteers
- 16% working at jobs outside of their youth work role to earn extra income
- 11% of their time doing personal study.

⁹ Many people in the written survey listed more than one location.

Figure 4 (below) provides a comparison between the amount of contact hours they have with young people and how survey participants spend the rest of their (non-contact) time. It suggests that as their contact time with young people increases, so does the administration workload for a youth worker.

The time spent on networking/liaison and managing other staff does not seem to vary much, but, as might be expected, the more contact hours a youth worker has with young people, the less time they spend in other forms of employment.

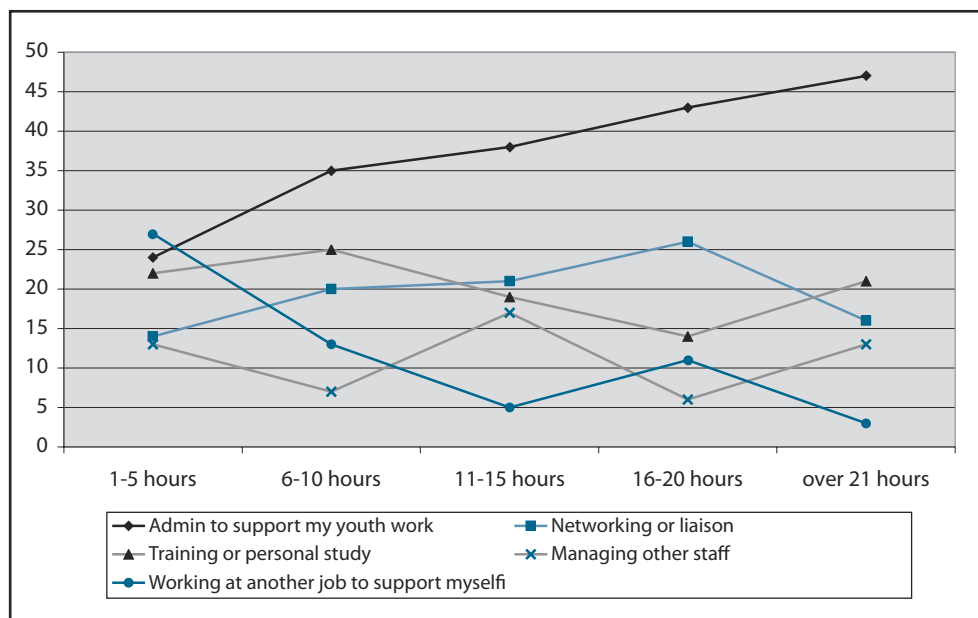


Figure 4

4.5 CODE OF ETHICS

The most well known code of ethics for youth workers in New Zealand is the one developed by the Canterbury Youth Workers Collective¹⁰. A number of other networks and collectives have created their own versions based on this one. The Canterbury Youth Workers Collective (CYWC) have now made a one-day training workshop in their code a pre-condition for membership in the Collective. However, as illustrated in Table 4 (below), the level of ‘buy in’ nationally to a code of ethics by participants in the written survey varies widely.

Table 4: What place does a Youth Worker’s Code of Ethics have in your work?	%
Never heard of one	21
Heard of it – haven’t looked at one	19
I’m familiar with the main points	32
I’ve signed up to a code of ethics	27

Overall 27% of survey participants had actually signed up to a code of ethics. While the rate of signup to a code is quite low, there is evidence that youth workers see more point to it over time as signup rates increase with length of involvement:

- 23% of participants who had been involved for 2 years or less have signed up to a code

¹⁰ Which is based in part on the Fairbridge Code of Ethics, which has been endorsed by several state wide youth worker associations in Australia (Sercombe p. 24)

- 33% for those involved for 2-5 years
- 45% for those involved for more than 5 years.

There doesn't seem to be much variation in signup rates between:

- Faith-based and secular survey participants (both 27%)
- Rural/small town (26%) and city-based (28%) participants
- Maori (24%) and Tauitiwi (28%)
- Male (29%) and women (27%).

During focus group discussions it became apparent that a number of (mainly paid) participants had signed up to other codes of ethics, for example social work, or those developed by their own agency. It seems that a widely accepted code of ethics is important for the development of youth work, for, as Sercombe notes in his discussion of professionalisation, youth work is already 'clearly a profession', whether we happen to like the term or not, because:

It is precisely a practice in which clients, at a point of vulnerability, are engaged in an intentionally limited (and therefore safe) relationship directed towards the transformation of their situation.

In the light of their vulnerability, the client needs to be able to trust the professional [youth worker] to act in ways that protect them, and which do not exploit the intimacy evoked when people talk about sensitive matters or put themselves into another's hands¹¹.

A code of ethics may not always stop things going wrong, but it does provide a basis on which youth workers and organisations can be held accountable by their peers, clients, or other stakeholders¹². We should also note that simply producing copies of a code is not sufficient, and the approach of the CYWC in requiring individual youth workers to do some training before they sign up is more likely to ensure that a code is put into practice.

4.6 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA), was released by the (then) Ministry of Youth Affairs¹³ in January 2002. The Strategy promotes 'the application of a youth development approach as a way of understanding what needs to happen for, around, and with young people in New Zealand'¹⁴. The YDSA has the following aims:

- All young people should have opportunities to establish positive connections within their key social environments
- Government policy and practice reflect a positive youth development approach
- All young people will have access to a range of youth development opportunities.

¹¹ Sercombe 2004 (p. 23)

¹² Judith Bessant, *Youth Work – The Loch Ness monster and professionalism* in Youth Studies Australia v.23, n.4, 2004 (p. 26)

¹³ Now called the Ministry of Youth Development, a copy of the strategy is available on their website, or they will mail them out for free: www.myd.govt.nz

¹⁴ From the introduction to the Strategy

An email survey of staff in a range of government departments (which include a youth focus) was completed by the Ministry of Youth Development in 2004 to assess their awareness and use of the YDSA. The wording of the questions used for the MYD survey¹⁵ are shown in brackets in Table 5 (below), and these are compared to youth worker responses from the written survey.

Table 5: What place does the Youth Development Strategy have in your work:	% of youth workers (n=637)	% of govt dept staff (n=89)
Never heard of one (not aware of the YDSA)	27	22
Heard of it – haven't looked at one	26	
I'm familiar with the main points (aware of the YDSA)	31	78
I use it as a basis for my work (applied the strategy)	14	36

Just over half (53%) of the participants in the written survey had either never heard of, or never seen, the Youth Development Strategy. Overall only 14% of the youth workers surveyed claimed to be actively implementing it in their work.

The comparison of results suggests that community-based youth workers are far less likely (than government agencies) to be aware of and consciously implementing the YDSA in their work. This result suggests that more work needs to be done to ensure that this and other information gets out beyond government agencies and to those who are doing work in the community. This is especially important considering that the majority of youth workers operates in the NGO sector.

Women participants (18%) were slightly more likely to be implementing the Strategy than men (10%).

The group least likely to be consciously implementing the YDSA were survey participants who include faith as part of their kaupapa/values. Of this group, 67% say they don't use it /haven't heard of it, and only 10% say that they do. In comparison 20% of the survey participants' workers who didn't identify faith based values, claimed to be implementing it. This may also reflect the number of volunteers in the faith-based sector, but suggests that there are sectors within youth work that are currently being overlooked in terms of the distribution of this, and perhaps other information from government agencies.

4.7 GOOD PRACTICE

Participants in 43 of the focus groups were asked to put themselves in the shoes of a funding committee, which had to travel to another town, and decide which of several youth work projects they should fund. The groups were asked to identify a short list of indicators of good practice (regardless of the type of organisation) on which they would base their decision about which project to fund. Then each member of the group was given three votes to put as ticks next to those criteria from their group's list that they personally felt were most relevant. The groups were encouraged to only choose indicators which could be discovered during a short visit to the project or the community that it was part of.

¹⁵ The percentages in the government statistics add up to over 100 because a number of people ticked both 'aware of' and 'applying the strategy'.

The responses were grouped, and the top seven indicators of good practice are listed in Table 6 below. They are presented in order of the number of individual votes (out of a total of 521) each received (listed in the right hand column).

Table 6: If you had to give feedback on another youth work project what evidence of good practice would you look for?	Votes
Positive community feedback; involvement of and accountability to the local community, history and credibility among other agencies.	117
The involvement of young people; judged by (voluntary) participation, evidence of empowerment, membership, contact time with youth.	111
The quality of staff; skills, levels of training, ability to connect with youth, good role models, committed, cross-cultural sensitivity, accountable, external supervision.	91
Good organisational processes; support for staff, sustainability, evidence of strategic planning; measurable outcomes/ goals/written plans/vision and mission statements?	71
Needs-based programmes; have they taken the time to research the identified needs of young people and the community and develop relevant and flexible programmes?	68
A commitment to safety; signed up to/practising the code of ethics, and evidence of safe practices, policies and procedures.	56

What are some indicators of good practice in youth work?*

- *Participation, creation, running, and ownership of the project by young people.*
- *What need is it meeting?*
- *What was the consultation process with the community?*
- *Meaningful relationships*
- *Some evidence of pre-planning – not just ad hoc, turn up and do stuff.*
- *Are whānau involved?*
- *Relevancy of the project to the needs of the youth. How much they are really impacted by the project?*
- *What training have they (the youth workers) had?*
- *Trustworthy and reliable leaders, good role models.*
- *Has to be a feed.*
- *Relevancy to the area and to the kids. Cultural awareness.*
- *Where did the idea come from? Was there youth involvement in the process?*
- *Building and maintenance of relationships – with youth, and schools, and other authorities.*
- *Good evaluation and accountability back to the community.*
- *Is the worker being supported, getting supervision?*
- *Relevance of the project – is there a need for this? Is it sensitive to the demographics?*
- *Enthusiasm and passion in the leadership.*
- *How much support does the community have for the project?*

** quotes from taped focus group discussions*

4.8 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

Community funding is increasingly being tied to the delivery of outcomes. One of the big questions facing those who practise youth work (and those who would fund it) is: what does their work actually aim to achieve, and how should it be measured?

Focus group participants were asked to look at this issue, and come up with at least three outcomes that were measurable, and which they felt they should be accountable for in their work. Their suggested outcomes have been grouped in Table 7 (below) showing those that were the most commonly identified. The figures in the right hand column indicate what percentage of the 43 groups included that particular outcome in their list.

Table 7: What youth development outcomes should youth workers be accountable for to funders and other stakeholders?	% of total groups (n=43)
Improved participation in the wider community; numbers going on to further education/training, staying in or returning to school, finding employment, involvement in the local or cultural community or engagement in political action.	84
Positive shifts in specific behaviours, such as reduced rates of youth crime, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm, at an individual or a community level.	63
Attendance and participation in youth programmes, how many and for how long.	44
Improving relationship skills, based on feedback from whanau, teachers, employers, peers.	44
Young people able to articulate their own development needs, set goals, communicate ideas and values. Achievement of goals set by young people.	40

The outcomes listed above reflect a wide range of perspectives on the types of goals that youth workers believe they should be trying to achieve. Taken as a whole, they suggest that a range of approaches to evaluating outcomes may be most appropriate, but the evaluation process should hold some key ideas together (rather than being an either/or approach):

- Stories and statistics
- Change in the behaviour of individuals and impact on the wider community
- Reduction in negative statistics and an increase in positive indicators (such as increased participation).

Give examples of (measurable) outcomes for young people that youth workers should be asked to report on back to funders and stakeholders*

- *Should be a voice from the youth themselves regarding outcome. This should also be presented in some way to the rest of the community – rejoin the young people with the older people of the community*
- *It's hard to measure from what other people say if they don't have the full picture. (Like the police – 'so-and-so is not stealing anymore' when really it is that they have not been caught.)*
- *We should compare with national, big-picture surveys – exam passes, suicide occurrences etc, and see how we fit into it.*
- *Record the small successes, individual milestones of the young person – like 'the young person turned up to course', or 'the young person rang me'*
- *Comparing the old and new aahua of the young people – how confidently they present themselves.*
- *Stories about positive change as case studies helpful.*
- *Assessment of the whole community – how good does the community feel about their young people?*
- *Feedback from not just youth, but whānau, businesses etc*
- *What roles they have taken in other parts of their lives – sports teams, church, jobs, etc.*

** quotes from taped focus group discussions*

4.9 WHAT DIFFERENCE DO YOUTH WORKERS MAKE?

The final question in this section was put to the first thirteen focus groups for discussion. Although it is subjective, some helpful responses emerged from their discussions, and these should sit alongside the comments about youth development outcomes.

What difference do youth workers make?*

- *Help fill in the gaps where families struggle.*
- *Help young people to make good choices.*
- *Youth workers help to improve physical, mental health of young people.*
- *Keep young people out of the courts.*
- *Keep young people alive.*
- *Help young people through a transitional period as they form/discover their identity.*
- *Give hope and confidence to young people. Help to discover their potential.*
- *A caring voice into the lives of young people who may not have good people in their lives.*
- *Youth workers can be seen as mentor, coach.*
- *Help create social groups that are safe to belong to, and to develop social skills in.*
- *Knowledge of the systems without actually being a part of them. Getting the information to young people in a fair way.*
- *A way of channelling views/opinions of young people across to other agencies/authorities.*
- *Youth workers help to get the resources from the top down to the youth.*

** quotes from taped focus group discussions*

PROFILE Paul WiHongi (Kaikohe)



I work for (Hauora Whanui), a Māori Health Organisation. My role for the past four years has been working under the Kia Piki Te Ora o Ngā Taitamariki banner, which is a national strategy for youth suicide prevention.

Projects that I have been involved with in the past are a drop-in centre called The Zone which was under the umbrella of Te Ora Hou here in Kaikohe. Development and planning of the Kaikohe skate park and other bits and pieces.

Because the organisation that I work under is into alternative education Mau Rakau has been the tool that we have been experimenting with to highlight things such as commitment, discipline, respect and more. We have made this kaupapa available to people locally and regionally.

I'm particularly passionate about promoting the importance of us investing in our young people as a whole whanau, hapu and community. So my role in working with families is to encourage them to invest in our future through seeing young people as a priority. One of the challenges for young people growing up around here is about the opportunities available to them. They are sometimes few and far between, so our young people go out into the cities, and that creates its own challenges. This is slowly changing – Kaikohe in the mid-north and Hokianga have had recent growth bringing new opportunities and with them, reasons to stay. Hopefully this will encourage young people in turn to invest into their whanau, hapu, and community and see a future here.

Youth work supports young people to move into the next stage in their life, the passion of youth workers is what makes it fun. What is important is sitting down and listening and hearing their stories and dreams, I think this helps bring about change for young people. We can't be the 'be all and end all' for a young person, but we are often part of the solution.

I come from a big family – 6 sisters and 4 brothers and all of them have kids. And we see our kids growing up with great potential, we also see the challenges that they have to cope with. We can't help but notice those ones that aren't coping, and seeing that sometimes they don't have a person who can journey with them through their struggles. So to be that person is not a job but a responsibility that drives me (it's not the money!!).

A project that I have involved with recently is focused around getting our whānau more involved with our young people, and to be honest not every whānau is at the place where they are able to put into their young people, but they need ways to get started. So we are not promoting to come and join this programme but we offer these approaches or options that families can pick up and use for themselves.

One of the options called The Buzz was designed as one of those tools where we just gathered twelve young boys, I had to set the example to show that I was investing into my own whanau so I started with six of my nephews and they invited six friends. This was one of the strategies to promote the whanau buzz. We felt that there were three things that were priorities: One was something that involved God, so like karakia or a verse or whatever. Two was, we had to find ways to involve our whānau. So like cooking a cake, and we delivered it and sung a song to the whānau, and inviting them to BBQs every so often. Three was having fun, not getting too heavy. The outcome I'd love is just that more whānau would be involved – and we've had some parents come and say 'I'd like to be involved'. I'd love to see more. Mauri ora.

PROFILE **Brian Milford (Auckland)**

I am the eldest of six, Samoan, born in New Zealand, and raised in Grey Lynn, Auckland. I'm just your average P.I. guy. I wasn't really a troubled teen or anything like that, I grew up in a Presbyterian (PIC) Church and my involvement in youth goes back to the youth group there. After school I did a Certificate at Unitec in Community Work which was what I felt like I wanted to do.

I am currently a project coordinator for Urban Hope Wesley Trust which works in the Wesley/Mt Roskill area. We run programmes to provide opportunities to let the potential of the youth in the area grow and shine. We focus in the areas in the arts, education, life skills and sports. We deal with children and young people up to ages of 17, and work alongside the local schools and community centres. So we are quite diverse in what we do.

I believe my life experiences have motivated me also to do this type of work. My parents separated when I was young and I grew up with a solo mother trying her best to provide all she can for her kids. As a result I wanted to help other young people who were going through these kind of pressures. Being the eldest also added to the load and observing my siblings growing up I saw a real lack of self-esteem and confidence in a lot of the youth. Around that time I became a Christian, and so a lot of my motivation was based on my faith – I wanted to go out there and save the world!

I think that low self-esteem and a lack of confidence is a real big issue for our Pacific young people, growing up in Auckland. All they aspire too is what they see on TV, and I feel the media have a major role in this youth culture. They are constantly bombarded to fit the media expectations of being 'cool' or 'in'. Our young people want to become a rap star or a sport star and there is nothing wrong with that, but they are not getting



influenced towards education. I think that well educated youth are as significant as any All Black, but it is just not emphasised enough. I see parents who'd rather go to watch a sports game than see their child achieve in a school graduation. How our youth see themselves is a constant battleground between friends, family, and the media. But what they really need is a "hand up" and not a "hand out!!!!"

I believe my role at Urban Hope is to give these kids an opportunity to develop some of the talents that they have within. We do this by running programmes that are a safe forum for them to express themselves freely. I believe that many of our young people are born leaders and we need to encourage and equip them with the right skills and self-confidence plus good study habits and support them to become the true leaders in our communities that they are meant to be. For me that's the biggest buzz, to see young people grow and become the community leaders of tomorrow and then in turn give back to community by using their skills and talents to help out the next generation of Youth.

I feel to be an effective youth worker you need to have a passion for the young people, and a determination to see them succeed. Plus have a whole heap of patience! Especially in the Pacific community, youth workers can play an important role in helping to bridge that gap between the generations. I have found that in many cases the gap between young people born in NZ and their parents who have been brought up in the old ways from the islands is getting bigger and bigger. Western culture and the influence of the media play a big part in widening this gap. There needs to be a way to make a compromise between the two or else there is going to be conflict.

For us as youth workers it's all about empowering our youth to succeed, but ultimately you can't do that until the family unit is strong. That's where I believe it starts, at home. We as youth workers can only do so much, but with the help of the families we can achieve so much more.

Training and Support

5-7

In his 1995 report on youth work in New Zealand, David Hanna noted that, compared to countries such as Australia and the UK, training in youth work has not developed in New Zealand. Since his report, qualifications beyond Certificate level have struggled to remain viable in this country. This section is divided into two parts; the first provides an overview of formal and informal training in youth work. The second focuses on other support structures for youth workers. It briefly looks at levels of supervision, and then focuses on the involvement of participants in youth worker networks (or collectives), and their perceptions of the role of a national network.

5 TRAINING

5.1 Involvement in workshop training

Participants in the written survey were asked to identify areas of training they had completed in a range of basic areas. Formal training was defined as having been assessed as a unit standard or as part of a course, informal training was defined as attendance only (a workshop or seminar) without an assessment component.

Table 1: What training have you completed in the following areas:	Formal/ assessed (%)	Informal workshop (%)	Total responses (%)
Treaty of Waitangi	65	16	81
Risk Management	40	40	80
First Aid	35	38	73
Tikanga Maori	37	35	72
Listening/ Counseling skills	25	33	58

Whether formally or not, the results in Table 1 suggest there is a reasonably high level of involvement in training in some basic safety areas. Of course it would be interesting to know how a person is able to access an 'informal' first aid course!

Why hasn't training in youth work taken off in New Zealand?*

New Zealand doesn't value the work – not a 'real job'.

Hardly anybody has a qualification, so there is no need to have one to get a job.

People see that youth work fits under another umbrella like social work or counselling. Youth work is only a specialisation within that.

Youth workers are too busy with their youth and they need for someone to speak out for them so that it may become publicly and governmentally recognised.

A catch job – you can only go as far as getting a diploma. This means youth work is a stepping stone into counselling, social work and psychology.

Agencies have differing attitudes towards training – some don't see it as a necessity and employ those without qualifications.

Perception that youth work is something you do when you're young and then you move into something else. Youth work is a stepping stone.

Not many training providers.

Not enough students signing up, so institutions have to cancel courses.

* quotes from taped focus group discussions

5.2 Entry Qualifications

Survey participants were asked to identify the training they had completed before entering youth work. The results in Table 2 suggest that about half of all youth workers enter youth work with no tertiary qualification of any sort.

While about half had some sort of qualification, only 7% of participants had one in youth work, suggesting that the idea of studying to become a youth worker is not widely accepted in New Zealand.

Table 2: What qualification did you enter youth work with?	%	number
Nothing	51	323
A Certificate level qualification in youth work	5	29
A Diploma or Degree in youth work	2	10
A Certificate level qualification in a related area	6	38
A Diploma or Degree in a related area	22	143
A Diploma or a Degree in an unrelated area	13	84
Did not answer	2	10

Sixty percent of participants reported being a student (at either secondary or tertiary level) when they first got involved, which suggests that most were studying something else when they decided to become a youth worker.

Of the 637 youth workers surveyed nationally, only 10 held a diploma or degree level qualification in youth work. Several of these people noted on their survey form that they had accessed it overseas.

About half of those with qualifications have one in a related area (such as social work, teaching, counseling).

The earlier figures on salary levels indicate that a greater percentage of youth workers in the top income bracket have a diploma or degree level qualification, but these are just as likely to be in areas unrelated to either youth work or other social services. This suggests that, at the moment, at least from the employers' point of view, any degree will do.

5.3 In service training

Participants in both the written survey and the focus groups were asked if they had continued to study since becoming a youth worker. Of the youth workers who had no tertiary qualification when they began, 40% have begun or completed one since. The results in Table 3 show similar responses and suggest that about half of all youth workers continue to fit study around their work. About half of focus group participants (49%) noted that they had completed the qualification that they had been studying for.

Table 3: Have you been studying towards a qualification since you started in youth work?	Yes (% response)	No (% response)
Participants in the written survey (n=637)	54	43
Participants in focus groups ¹ (n=180)	52	34

Both groups were asked to identify the level they had studied at since becoming a youth worker. The results suggest that study is fairly evenly spread across a range of levels, with diploma level being most popular among focus group participants.

Of those who said they were completing a qualification, eleven (3%) indicated that they were doing it by means of work place assessment, suggesting that this approach has not really taken off in the youth work sector.

Table 4: What level have you been studying at since becoming a youth worker?	Written Survey²	Focus Groups
Certificate	25	37
Diploma	23	43
Degree	25	12
Post graduate (<i>only focus groups were asked this question</i>)	-	8

The research only found two people who were studying at diploma or degree level in youth work (since becoming youth workers), one of whom was doing it through work place assessment. It should be noted that, as qualifications above Certificate level are not readily available in most areas outside of Gisborne and Auckland, many would have no choice about studying in other areas.

Further information about in-service study was gathered from the focus group participants. The first question put to them was about what subject areas they were studying. The results suggest that although the percentage studying youth work as a subject is improving slightly (from 7 to 17%), the majority continue to choose study in other subject areas, 80% of which are in subject areas that have some relevance to youth work (eg. education/counseling).

In what subject areas did you do your study?

% of total from focus groups doing study (n=106)

Social work	18
Youth work	17
Theology	12
Education	11
Counseling	10
Health	8
Community/social services	7
Other	13

¹ Originally 120 (66%) of the focus group participants indicated that they had done study towards a qualification, however this figure was reduced by 14 (to 52%) once we had checked what they had done a qualification in, and removed from the list those that had a) done study in an area of no relevance to youth work (eg. joinery) or b) clearly only done workshop training (eg. First Aid, Treaty of Waitangi)

² The percentages in both columns are of the total of those who identified that they were doing study. The missing percentage amount in the written survey column is of those who did not answer the question.

Table 5: Employer assistance with study	Yes	No
Did your employer help you with (paid) time off for your study?	69	27
Did your employer contribute towards your fees?	58	38

The figures in Table 5 suggest that most youth workers who continue to study, do so with the direct support of their employers in the form of either time off for study (69%) or help with fees (58%). It would be interesting to find out how much this support is a factor in youth workers being able to study.

5.4 Access to training

In 1991 the (then) Ministry of Youth Affairs conducted a review of youth worker training³, which included a question asking youth workers to identify barriers that they experienced in accessing further training and qualifications. This subject was also addressed as an open question in the written survey, and the answers were grouped back into the same categories as the 1991 survey to provide a comparison of what has changed over the last 13 years.

Table 6: What barriers do you experience in accessing youth work training?	1991 (n=183)⁴	2004 (n=594)
Money	50	33
Time	48	42
No knowledge of courses available	22	7
Access (transport/ travel/ time)	19	9
Availability of suitable course (eg higher level)	17	4
Family responsibilities	11	3
Work responsibilities / employer	11	6
None	4	14

These results suggest that time remains one of the biggest barriers for most people, but that other factors, such as cost, knowledge of, access to and suitability of courses have improved.

5.5 Subject areas

Participants in the written survey were given a list of skill areas and asked to rate the importance of training for youth workers in each area as *Very Important*, *Fairly Important*, or *Not Important*. Table 7 below summarizes those skill areas that survey participants thought were very important.

Table 7: How would you rate the importance of each of the following skill areas in your current work with youth?	Very Important (% of responses to each area)
Group facilitation skills	60
Ability to work across cultures	60
Planning and running events	60
Mediation and conflict resolution skills	52
Counseling youth	52
Communication (speaking and teaching)	38
Assessment and referral	32
Advocacy skills	32
Counseling and working with families	26
Te Reo Maori	17

³ Youth Work Training Review – Community Consultation Booklet. Ministry of Youth Affairs December 1991 (p. 17)

⁴ Percent of responses

6 SUPERVISION

Supervision

Participants in the written survey were asked if they had regular supervision sessions with an external supervisor – a person who was not their boss or employer. See Table 8.

Table 8: Do you regularly have external supervision?	% of responses
Yes	55
Usually, but not at the moment	9
No	35

These results indicate that about half of youth workers (56%) have supervision.

7 NETWORKS

7.1 Involvement in youth worker networks

Participants in the written survey were asked about their level of involvement in a local or regionally based youth worker network (or collective). Because many of the surveys were distributed through networks, the results below are probably skewed and don't reliably represent the actual levels of involvement for youth workers nationally.

Table 9: Are you part of a youth workers network or collective?	% of total
There isn't one in my area	17
There is, but I choose not to get involved	10
I get involved sometimes	29
I'm a regular member	40

When they were broken down between sectors, the results indicated that participants in city areas (35%) were less likely to be regularly involved in a youth workers' network than those in small towns or rural areas (52%). Of the three main city areas, Aucklanders (at 30%) were slightly less likely to be involved than their counterparts in Christchurch (39%) and Wellington (37%). During focus group visits, a number of the Auckland participants mentioned that they mainly stay involved by email, suggesting that perhaps the Auckland scene is more fragmented and less relationally based than other areas.

Comparisons between the other sectors within youth work suggest that those who are paid were more likely to be regularly involved in a network (47%) than volunteers (30%). People who included faith as part of their personal values (34%) were less likely to be regularly involved than those who didn't (47%).

Levels of involvement in a network did not seem to change much based on length of involvement in youth work.

What are your hopes and expectations for a national network of youth workers?*

Profile the work of youth workers to the nation through the media.

Acknowledge and support the differences between regions – local needs.

Help to raise the profile of youth work through national 'excellence awards' like they do in Wales.

Really interactive and up-to-date website with latest research, good reading, training events that are coming up.

Job information.

Youth conferences about youth issues of the day.

Disable the 'who you know' syndrome.

Help find resources and support for regional networks and coordinators.

** quotes from taped focus group discussions*

7.2 National Network

In an open ended question 43 focus groups were asked to identify their hopes and expectations for a national network for youth workers. Each group was encouraged to discuss the question and record whatever they came to an agreement on. The percentages in Table 10 (below) indicate the percentage of the total number of groups (rather than individual) for each response.

Table 10: What hopes and expectations do you have for a national network of youth workers?	%
Set standards for professional practice , have a national code of ethics, promote supervision and professional development, policies and procedures in youth work.	44
Improve profile of and resourcing for youth work through media coverage, political lobbying and advocacy at all levels. On issues such as working conditions, resources, wages and the role of youth workers.	37
Provide information and links to resources and funding at local and national levels	33
Improve communication and cooperation between local networks, for example with referrals of young people. Run an annual national hui. Run a website, include in it a forum between network coordinators	23
Support regional networks with information, resources, training and money.	23
Act as a provider or reference point for training , recommending some programmes, and helping youth workers find out about options.	21
Advocate for youth on a national level, act to benefit young people	14
Lead Nationwide Research	5

PROFILE

Vic Coster (Cromwell)

I'm employed by the Cromwell Youth Worker Trust. I originally trained as a social worker but moved over into working directly with young people, which I have been doing in paid and voluntary capacities for about nine years. Some of it has been in church settings, but in this role it is out in the community.

I moved to Cromwell from a larger city and found that a real difference with young people here is that they are very resourceful. They are good at entertaining themselves, very friendly and prepared to accept new people.

Obviously there are some ways it is more difficult for young people living in a small place, there are not so many options once you leave school. We do have a polytech here, but if you're not into viticulture or tourism or hospitality, then pretty much that's it, you have to go somewhere else. There also isn't a lot of entertainment locally, it's hard for us to access movies, skating etc, for things like that we have to travel out of town.

Most of my work in the community is with small groups, I coordinate the local SADD⁵ project, the student council at the college, and some community social events. I also do quite a bit of work with small group and one-to-one support programmes for young people dealing with grief, anger management or addictions.

The most rewarding part of my work is the relationship stuff. It takes a while to build that into what you do, but having a relationship with a young person and being able to advise and walk with them through their teenage years – that's really rewarding. Especially when you see them growing and making good decisions, sometimes making bad decisions as well but recognising and reflecting on that. Some of the best moments I've had are not part of an 'official' programme, but just sitting down over coffee and hanging out.

Youth workers are non-judgemental, non-authoritarian adults. I think young people definitely need an adult that they can trust and rely on and know that they aren't going to pull the rug from under their feet, or tell them off all the time, or be on their back about stuff. They really need to have good role models, people who understand what is going on and speak up for them.

The thing that really makes a difference for young people here in Cromwell is not so much me, but the community people who voluntarily support the trust and the projects that we run. What is happening here provides positive alternatives to the binge drinking culture, and things for young people to do. It all makes an impact and has an effect on things like petty crime and negative stuff, which happens in communities when the needs of young people are being overlooked.

At the moment we're setting up a Central Otago Youth District Council which is going really well. Our local mayor is really backing that, which is fabulous because it's just building the profile of young people and the positive contribution they can make in the community.



⁵ Students Against Drink Driving

PROFILE

Burhan Dayib (Waikato)



I was born in Somalia and grew up in Kenya. I work in this region as a migrant youth advocate, I'm employed with Whai Marama Youth Connex. I have been involved for 4 years now and I am passionate about working for youth.

I started working as a volunteer, but I am pretty happy now because I've just got a part-time job. This means I can keep working while I complete my diploma in social work, then I plan to go through into studying counselling.

My work as a youth advocate involves me in welcoming and supporting migrants and refugee young people and their families who are having difficulties with the new culture. I do orientation, and work one-to-one to help them set goals and connect them with study and career options. So that young people coming to New Zealand just make a successful transition.

I make contact with young people through schools, through their communities, and through other agencies as well. Some of the youth I work with are very isolated and their problems are mostly about trying to catch on or just to understand the way of culture for New Zealand. For most, language is the biggest problem they are facing. The other thing is socializing with other people – it is one of the hardest things because they have in their minds different ways of doing things. The current political climate and the view towards Muslims have had a detrimental effect upon our culture and especially for our youth who get the brunt of the hate directed towards them at schools, on the street, etc.

Because I am African, Somalian, I can speak both that language and English and so when they see me they know that I know something about their world and can provide some support for the problems that they will face over here. One guy who I know well is very keen on taking all his opportunities here, and sometimes I help him with his homework. He finds that he has to change his way of thinking so as to study more in order to prove himself and to meet the criteria that the New Zealand government sets and that, at the end of the day, you need to get. He is doing a degree in environmental science.

Many of the people that come over here already have goals that they want to achieve, they are motivated, and I have to work with them to realise their goals and make them into small steps. Some of them have already left school but they come to our service and they want to get advice about other things like other services which are free, how much education will cost, how to learn about computers.

Some of them are looking especially for a job. You know, they come from overseas and they want to help their parents or relatives so they need work. So what I do is liaise with other agencies and see if they can help. Sometimes people need help because they are working in many different places and they need to learn to drive. So I help them with that. Some of them are coming to learn how to transition into New Zealand

culture. They want to know about the environment, about the zoo, about all this sort of stuff. So I try to help with this.

When I came to New Zealand, I didn't know anything about youth work, but I am in a good team and they have helped me to learn, and to get organised and set goals for myself, and now I am doing study in this area. Although I am Muslim, I feel that I am accepted by my manager and staff without being judged or singled out. Together we oppose the violence and conflict that resulted in acts such as the London bombing and we condemn all such acts.

PROFILE Marcel Wilkinson (Christchurch)

I started youth work around the time of the death of a young woman. She was a youth worker for Te Ora Hou, I was at her tangi and I saw all these young people around her casket and I looked at them and thought, 'Man, these young people have just lost a leader'. At that I felt a calling from God to be the next leader, and to help fill that gap. So I just got involved. My parents are church leaders and have always been involved in the community, so it doesn't really surprise me that that is where I ended up. But it took me a long time to get there.



I work for two organisations: Youth and Cultural Development, which is for youth who are in tertiary education systems, our work is to support them and to help Maori access further education opportunities. A lot of our clients are in the justice system, or from tough family backgrounds. I also work for Te Ora Hou on a voluntary basis, that's basically where I started with youth work – supporting rangatahi Māori, running after-school programmes, and I guess sharing about my own personal faith.

Youth work definitely makes a huge difference these days, especially when lots of the young people come from broken families and are always looking for role models, especially, Māori role models because there's not enough out there. Just someone older to hang out with that knows their culture and understands something about their world and the way they think, but also knowing how to establish good boundaries and helping them through that transitional stage.

Working with Māori young people the most important thing is just being there and knowing the value of being Māori yourself. It is helping them to connect with something more than the name of their street, or the name of the gang they hang out with, or just

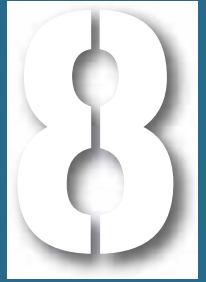
connecting with Americanised cultural values through the TV. They actually have a belonging to iwi from all over the country, to values, and to a sense of identity. They are somebody from somewhere and there is a line of people that they have come from.

In practice my work is about trying to build some sort of relationship with a young person. Just sitting down and trying to connect with them. I use a lot of humour and I put food in front of them, it helps to create a relaxing environment and helps bring out who they are and where they've come from. So it's lots of trying to listen, finding out where they are at, and just hanging out with them.

I reckon the most important thing in youth work is knowing how to laugh, and learning how to make them laugh. Plus you've got to have value in your own life. Teach them values. You have to love them as well. Learning about values and about love, these things start with us you know. What we do, is far more important than what we say.

They make me laugh. I make them laugh. I love the challenge of working with young people. I appreciate what I have received in life and want to share that. I like helping to make a difference in their lives. Especially the Māori, so just giving to them as Māori.

Discussion



As much as it has been possible to do so, this project has tried to make comparisons with earlier research in order to track the development in youth work in this country. Over the past 20 years most would acknowledge that there has been some improvement in areas such as the demand for youth workers, wage levels and the availability of entry level training. However, many would also agree that the key issues around resourcing, recognition and valuing of youth work have not progressed significantly. While there is a role for the government and employers to help, things will not really change until youth workers themselves become proactive in working for change.

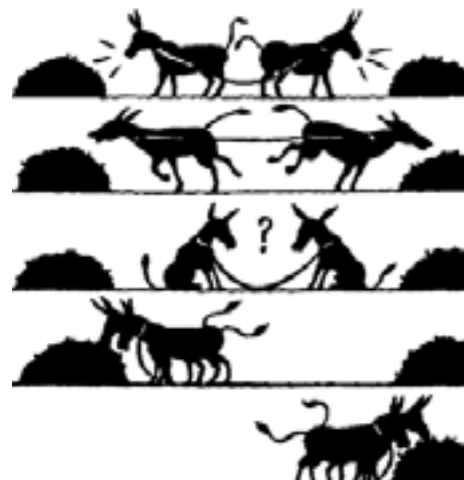
The greatest strength of youth work in New Zealand is the wide range of grass roots involvement by people who simply get involved in supporting young people in their community. However this is also perhaps its greatest weakness. A whole lot of busy people have their heads down in their own projects, trying to make them work with uncertain funding futures. Many simply don't have (or make) the time to talk to others. Perhaps the people who, through their passion and determination, are the best at making youth projects happen on the smell of an oily rag, are sometimes the worst at working cooperatively with people outside of 'their thing'. As a result there has been little work on developing the sector as a whole, especially by those who are operating in survival mode among the informal community sector.

One of the biggest challenges for the new national network is to represent and hold together the different ideologies in youth work, as well as the informal and the professional sectors, and advocate for the development of all. In this respect a smaller country like New Zealand perhaps has an opportunity that other larger countries don't. For example, in the UK, or even Australia, different groups can exist entirely within their own 'bubble' of focus or ideology. They don't need to speak to other groups because all of the contacts and resources they need are in their own bubble. David Hanna once joked that sometimes Kiwis know more about what is happening in the American youth work scene than the Americans themselves, because from here we make links between the different sectors that don't know about each other over there. In this country nobody is big enough to be self-sufficient. We usually have opportunities to get to know people who aren't 'like us', and as a result, perhaps end up with a broader and more holistic view.

However, the opposite is also true: where we don't speak to each other no one gets ahead because there simply aren't enough resources (or resource people) to allow duplication to any depth in areas such as funding, research and training. Anecdotal evidence suggests when groups with a narrow focus choose to operate in isolation, they are unlikely to be sustainable for long and in the meantime, the resources that they use mean other groups have less.

As a result nothing develops past a certain point of development, and this perhaps typifies the scene in New Zealand at present, where fragmentation and a competitive approach have stifled overall progress. Students of community development may recognize this little cartoon¹, which illustrates the point helpfully.

This discussion and the recommendations that flow from it are based on what has been learned from the research data and aim to suggest some areas for action to help the sector move forward.



8.1 YOUTH WORKERS

In the course of this project as I have met with over 300 youth workers and talked to them about what they do and why they do it, a number have joked that they 'certainly aren't in it for the money'. Poor wages, a lack of job security and high levels of volunteerism (which is not a bad thing!) have traditionally been associated with youth work in New Zealand and suggest that the majority of youth workers are motivated by a passion for what they do rather than material rewards. This comes through clearly in the profile interviews which are scattered through this report.

The picture of a youth worker as a person in their early twenties who puts in a 'couple of years' before they go off and find a 'real job' is not accurate in New Zealand, where the median length for involvement is now five years. Those involved are spread across the different stages of life and, as one focus group participant noted; 'either do it for a couple of years or stay forever'. A growing recognition of and demand for youth workers were identified by focus groups as the main reasons for the increasing length of involvement in youth work.

For the majority, youth work is not a career that people decide upon and then go off and study for. Most seem to find their way into youth work after setting out in another direction with their employment or study (some finding their way in while still at secondary school).

One area that youth work has not advanced in significantly since the *He Taanga Manawa* report (1990) is in the amount of time people spend with one organisation. That study noted that the average amount of time youth workers were spending as

¹ Julianna Kuruhiira Uganda Community Management Programme.
<http://www.scn.org/cmp/cta.htm>

employees in projects funded by the Detached Youth Work scheme, was 18 months. This report has found that although the median length for involvement in youth work is currently five years, the median length of involvement by an employed youth worker in one organisation is 24 months² – which hardly represents a great improvement.

When only 38% of youth workers believe that their position is ongoing (with many of the remainder not knowing if it will last past the next twelve months), we can suggest that it may be the availability of funding rather than personal choice that keeps many youth workers moving between organisations.

These findings are also reflected in the areas that youth workers have identified as the greatest sources of stress in their work: namely the security of their position and availability of resources to complete their work in terms of time, people and finance. It is interesting that participants in both the written survey and the focus groups identified young people themselves as among the least of their worries!

Most of the existing grant schemes are either for twelve months or for up to a maximum of three years. It may not be feasible to extend the schemes themselves, but a key recommendation of this report to the youth work sector is the need to advocate for the value and place of youth work in the health, education, employment, welfare and justice sectors and encourage these agencies to include funding for youth workers within their own teams. Secondly, this report signals that a key way forward for youth work in New Zealand is to improve funding of community organisations, which are currently the largest employers of youth workers. To achieve this, the youth work sector will need to develop a strategy for both further research into and promotion of what they do.

While some other helping professions struggle to involve Maori and Pacific workers, a low entry threshold has meant that few encounter obstacles to getting involved in youth work. If youth work is to move forward in this country, it must solve the double challenge of raising standards of practice, without losing this ethos of grassroots community involvement and volunteerism.

One area where youth work has failed to develop in this country is among the Asian community. The influx of foreign students has meant that this growing section of our society is a young one, and perhaps one of the big challenges for our society at present is to become more inclusive toward these newer members. If youth workers can follow overseas trends and become refocused as community educators rather than just as people who work with ‘naughty kids’, there is a natural development which may pave the way for further research into and work with this growing section of the community.

² The average (mean) length of involvement in this report was 30 months, this report has used figures based on the median rather than the mean because of frequent significant variations in the figures.

8.2 YOUTH WORK PRACTICE – CONTEXTS AND STYLES

One of the biggest challenges for youth work in New Zealand is to justify its existence to the wider public as a profession that does something more than ‘keep the kids off the streets’. In line with most other helping professions, youth work is currently being challenged to move from deficit models (‘what’s wrong with the kids?’) to strengths-based approaches that focus on the developmental needs of young people.

To achieve this youth work practice will need to justify its existence, not on the basis of ‘how bad young people are’, but in terms of what the sector does to promote the development of young people and their participation in society. In other countries (such as the UK), this change of emphasis has paralleled a shift out of social work paradigms, and into educational frameworks. For example, in the UK many youth work training courses are now run out of teachers’ colleges and educational faculties, rather than as part of social work courses.

The emphasis on a relational approach, and the type of relationships that youth workers seek to build with young people, mean that youth work will often sit alongside and naturally complement the work of other professionals. This research has shown that many youth workers operate as part of multi-disciplinary teams, and alongside other professionals in more formal contexts such as schools. Youth workers build relationships with young people in their own context, and the relationship (rather than the delivery of a particular service or programme) is what distinguishes their work³. A number of recent overseas studies have shown that resiliency and protective factors in the lives of young people are enhanced significantly when they are supported by caring adults who build holistic and supportive relationships with young people in their various social contexts⁴.

Maori youth have emerged as one of the key client groups of youth work practice in New Zealand, and a high percentage of youth workers are Maori. The influence of youth work in Maori communities and on the margins of society has perhaps been helped by the informal and holistic approach that characterises the way many youth workers operate.

Interestingly, schools have emerged as a key context for youth work. The evidence suggests that more youth workers operate in schools than out of purpose-designed youth facilities or churches. This has not been acknowledged by the education system in New Zealand, and as a result, the growing number of schools that want this form of support have had to find informal ways of resourcing it.

The wide range of community organisations that work in partnership with schools to involve youth workers frequently find it difficult to seek direct funding for this type of project because other funders feel (perhaps rightly) that the education system itself should be supporting it. This report strongly recommends that a scheme for funding the involvement of youth workers in schools is investigated and developed.

The research has also revealed that there is a wide range of other contexts and styles of youth work. While mentoring is one of the most common activities in youth work, the majority do it in conjunction with other styles of work with young people. It is most accurate to say that no particular activity is typical of youth work in this country. Perhaps the availability of funding is also a factor in determining some of the more popular approaches to working with young people at any one time.

³ Sercombe, H. (1997) The youth work contract: professionalism and ethics. In *Youth Studies Australia*, Vol 16 No 4 December. pp17-21

⁴ For example Benard’s comprehensive overview of recent research into resiliency among children and young people; *Resiliency – What we have learned*, (2004).

8.3 GOOD PRACTICE

In spite of the diversity of contexts, ideologies and styles, the majority of youth workers agree that (voluntary) participation by young people is one of the key indicators of good practice. The remainder of suggestions range from qualitative to quantitative⁵ perspectives and from deficit to developmental approaches to assessment.

At this stage, we can perhaps conclude that a combination of approaches to evaluating good practice in youth work is the most useful approach, certainly until they are strengthened by further NZ-based research (see discussion later on youth worker education). This combination would hold some differing approaches together, such as:

- Stories and statistics
- Change in the behaviour of individuals and impact on the wider community
- Reduction in negative statistics and an increase in positive indicators (such as increased participation).

It would be helpful to community organisations if some further discussion about the indicators of good practice, as identified in this report, could take place between the National Network and key government agencies⁶ and other funding bodies.

If these indicators were clarified and made available to funders and to community organisations it would help to make the evaluation and decision-making process for grant funding more transparent. It would also give the organisations themselves some direction in terms of self-evaluation and capacity building.

8.4 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

A key to improving resourcing is educating funders, and the wider community, about what youth work actually aims to achieve, and how that achievement should be evaluated. While individual organisations are often trying to promote what they do, it is an important role for local and national networks to promote, and celebrate, what youth workers are achieving as a sector.

Unless youth workers are proactive in defining the outcomes they are trying to achieve, and telling their stories, the sector will be squeezed by the expectations (and prejudices towards young people) of those outside it.

The effect of allowing other people to define youth work will mean that funding for youth development will reduce community organisations to reporting statistics that may be easily verifiable, but which do little to measure quality, effectiveness or impact on the wider community. For example, numbers of young people who participate in a service or programme may be an indicator of good practice, but they don't measure developmental outcomes.

⁵ Qualitative evaluation – using young people's own perceptions and stories as evidence. Quantitative evaluation – looking for evidence which can be measured with statistics and numbers.

⁶ Including; Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Youth Development, Children Youth and Family Service, Ministries of Education and Health, Lottery Grants, and local government.

When youth workers neglect to educate the wider community about what they are achieving, the prejudices of others towards young people can become a basis for funding organisations. It is a temptation for any professional group to justify its existence on the basis of how 'bad' or how needy its clients are. While these methods may be helpful for fundraising, they are often disrespectful of both clients and the communities they are part of, and lead to unhelpful (or unethical) practices.

By generating a wider understanding of what youth workers achieve, the community sector may improve its access to the corporate sector and partnerships for sponsorship. This is an area which has been exploited by a small number of organisations, who have worked out how to present themselves well in that world, at times using celebrities, and in some cases without reference to their actual effectiveness or credibility in the communities that they operate in.

The promotion of standards of good practice, positive outcomes, and stories between youth workers and among the wider community is a key role for local and national networks, and one which is well overdue. The following suggestions are ways in which networks could begin to work on this issue:

- Recognising good practice through local and national awards. Perhaps based on a successful model which has been developed by the Wales Youth Agency with their Youth Work Excellence Award project⁷.
- Improving evaluation processes, celebrating and telling the stories through local and national media.
- Helping to broker partnerships between youth organisations and corporate sponsors. Each of which is probably a bit of a mystery to the other at present.

8.5 PROFESSIONALISATION – DO WE NEED IT?

If the new national network continues to develop and becomes successful in both raising the profile of youth work and improving resourcing for it, there is a possibility that this could come at a price. All would agree that raising standards of safety and good practice in youth work is a good goal, and some see that professionalising youth work is the best pathway towards it.

However, it is helpful to learn from similar moves in early childhood education and social work. Some people within these sectors have commented that, while the level of resourcing has increased, this has often been at the cost of grassroots involvement and volunteerism. In particular, in three ways:

- Compliance demands have increased, and smaller community-led organisations have lost resourcing in favour of the larger ones that are better able to cope with the paperwork of increasing compliance demands.
- Smaller, rural or fragile communities have lost services which were previously provided by volunteers or non-professional staff. In some cases these services have been lost completely, in others local people have been replaced by those with professional qualifications but little local connection or knowledge.

⁷ See details at their website: www.wya.org.uk

- People who are underqualified or not formally qualified don't fit, and become marginalised into lower paid positions.

Are these just necessary evils that are inevitable if the sector is to move forward as a whole? The history of youth work in this country is non-institutional, and has often sat outside of the mainstream (adult) culture. Youth work is different from social work precisely because:

- It often sits outside of institutional systems and seeks to be part of the spaces that young people occupy.
- It does not maintain the same professional/client boundaries – although ethics are vital in youth work, at its heart are holistic relationships that constantly go beyond the professional boundaries that exist in other sectors.

If these distinctives become lost as a result of professionalisation, youth work may have also lost its reason to exist as a distinct practice. The tension is that better resourcing is also necessary if the sector is to move forward and become viable as a career option for more people.

Hopefully professionalisation and grassroots involvement doesn't become an 'either/or' question in this country. As stated in the introduction, one of the challenges for the national network is to hold both ends together and advocate for the development (and valuing) of both. To do this effectively, the network will need to be active in promoting research into and telling stories from both ends of the sector.

Two articles from Australian authors have been included in the National Network website in the hope that they will contribute to the discussion about the way forward for youth work in this country.

8.6 TRAINING VS EDUCATION

Perhaps training is an unhelpful word for youth work. Training implies a defined set of skills that must be imparted and learnt. There is a relatively small set of competencies that are common to all styles and contexts for youth work, and most of these are to do with safe practice. Perhaps one of the reasons that entry level courses have not become popular in New Zealand is that few of them have gone beyond these basic safety areas into practical skill areas in any depth.

Because the activities, contexts and styles of youth work vary so widely, it is difficult to identify training outcomes (beyond safety) which are practical, and relevant to everyone. And as there is not one defined skill set that youth workers need to achieve, perhaps the term 'education', which implies a more open-ended approach, is more suited to describe the development of youth workers.

While this report has identified a widespread involvement among youth workers in workshop events (many of which tend to go over the basic safety areas), survey participants have identified areas such as group facilitation skills, cross-cultural competency, event management and counseling as skill areas that many would like to see taught in greater depth as part of 'youth worker education'.

Most of the educational opportunities available for youth workers are clustered around entry level courses. The results of this study suggest that relatively few people are using training as their entry route into youth work. Most get involved by different pathways, for example through study in another related area (eg. social work), or by simply getting involved as volunteers, or through a career change. They are more likely to seek training after they get involved, not beforehand, and once they have become established in youth work, few can see the point of 'going backwards' to do an entry level course.

If youth work is to move towards better and safer practice the development of education at all levels, from volunteers to post-graduate research, is essential. The development of further education needs to be driven by employer requirements, and the resulting student demand, but if it is possible to have a 'three-way' chicken and egg situation, that is the best way to describe the impasse that we currently face in this country:

- Employers can't require (or reward) advanced qualifications if they don't exist or aren't accessible. The findings from this research suggest that, at present, most employers are prepared to accept any qualifications.
- Education providers have little incentive to offer advanced level qualifications in youth work if there is low demand for entry level courses. A situation made more difficult by pressure from some of the larger institutions to rationalise youth work courses into generic social services or social work or education courses.
- Youth workers are unlikely to invest in gaining qualifications if they are not required or rewarded by employers, and they are unlikely to get excited about courses that don't lead to further (degree level) study, or are not recognised within the wider social services sector (where over 60% believe they will stay).

To move on, each of these groups will need to be influenced, and the National Network may have an essential role in achieving some progress in this area. The following suggestions are based on informal conversations with youth workers in the course of this project, and assume that the National Network is able to gain resourcing to expand its activities and role.

Local youth worker networks should become the main vehicles for delivering training (with an emphasis on training for safety and good practice) to youth workers in the volunteer and informal sector. Especially for those who work with organisations that are unable to organise their own. The current Youth Worker Training Scheme (administered by the Department of Internal Affairs) should be re-evaluated to ensure that it is meeting this purpose, and is being used to both coordinate training and resource local networks. This report recommends that these resources should not be targeted at professional youth workers (except to facilitate better networking), and should not compete with formal training options.

Such training, at least in the areas of safety and ethics, should become a requirement of membership in local networks, following the model which has been established by the Canterbury Youth Workers Collective. The National Network should develop a resource group of facilitators for this training, and let local networks know about them.

The National Network and Ministry of Youth Development should work together to lobby government and private funders to include active membership in local youth worker networks (and the implied commitment to safe and ethical practice) as part of their criteria for approving funding to community organisations.

The number of providers of education for youth workers is slowly increasing. While nearly all are clustered around entry level, and some are under threat, the National Network could play an important role in bringing this group together as members and helping it to evolve. One assumes that the industry training organisation⁸ (ITO) gets resourced for providing some of the services suggested below. The National Network could possibly seek to subcontract to the ITO to provide these services in return for some assistance with resourcing. An arrangement like this could bring the following benefits to the sector:

- The NYWN should create a category for membership of youth worker education providers.
- There are probably between two and three hundred people enrolled in youth work courses in any year. Contact with providers would help get sector information directly to this group, and the NYWN could provide a contact point through their website for recruitment and job placement.
- The NYWN could provide an endorsement for courses and qualifications, perhaps including an advisory service for helping providers with quality management, and course development.
- The NYWN could develop dialogue between providers in order to promote the sharing of ideas and resources, perhaps by hosting an annual forum.

In the end education will only become part of the culture of youth work if employers, funders and youth workers themselves begin to take it more seriously. This is more likely to happen if higher level education develops in this country, and if the existing courses create pathways into it. The research suggests that, usually with the help of their employer, over half of youth workers continue with their education after they become involved. Conversations with a number of them indicate that some have chosen to study social work simply because youth work courses at degree level and higher are simply not available, and they see social work as the closest alternative.

To move forward in this area, the National Network is encouraged to develop a relationship with one or more universities with a view to achieving the following outcomes:

- Develop papers, and then qualifications at degree and postgraduate level, with a goal of having at least one research-based Masters level qualification in youth development.
- Encourage more NZ-focused research into youth development
- Develop a relationship with the University of Tasmania-based Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies (ACYS) to encourage the publication of academic research from this side of the Tasman. And in the process perhaps encourage them to develop a trans-Tasman (or whole Pacific) focus.

⁸ Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi ITO

8.7 NETWORKS – WEAVING THE STRANDS TOGETHER

Previous attempts at bringing the youth work sector together (and there have been several in the past twenty years) have not succeeded, largely because they have not achieved a broad base of support among the different sectors within youth work. One focus group participant commented that there has never been a better time to develop a national identity and momentum for youth work and that ‘if we fail this time we may never achieve it in this country’.

Our history suggests that a network initiative, whether local or national, must engage with the range of sectors if it is to remain sustainable and credible. Depending on the region, these sectors can include; Maori, Pacific, faith-based, volunteers, NGO and government employed youth workers. The findings of this research suggest that a number of barriers to engagement across the sector exist at present, and examples of these include:

- Volunteers are often overlooked when information and resources are distributed.
- Government agencies have been more successful at getting information and policies out to other government agencies than to the community sector.
- Faith-based and some rural organisations are even less in the loop for information and policies that affect them⁹.
- Although several large youth mentoring programmes (which use volunteers extensively) have developed at a national level in recent years, they do not appear to show up in these research results, suggesting that they are presently not well connected into wider youth worker networks.

Not all of these failures can be laid at the door of the institutions themselves. In some cases there has been a reluctance to engage with, or suspicion on the part of community groups towards, government agencies which sit in Wellington. Also when many community organisations operate with big caseloads and inadequate resources, there is often little time to attend briefings, read long documents or do networking.

However the issue remains that the best chance of the sector to move forward as a whole will be the ability of the national network to weave the different strands together by involving youth workers and organisations right across the sector.

At the moment membership in the National Network is through membership in a local network, and this seems to be a good model. But two other forms of network should be recognised and considered for membership in the emerging National Network. The first is of education providers as discussed above.

The second is to recognise that a number of faith-based youth workers (and especially volunteers) are already part of national or regional networks which exist within their own organisation, some of which also provide their own training. Baptist Youth Ministries (BYM) is a good example. While all youth workers should be encouraged to support local networks, for some this will be in addition to commitments to their other regional and national networks. It would be helpful if the National Network can engage with these other networks and involve them as members on the same basis as local networks.

⁹ For example no faith-based training providers are registered with the ITO.

On the other hand, one of the key roles for any professional association is to determine who can belong to it. A broadly accepted definition of youth work will help to define who is in the circle, and who sits outside of it. This becomes important as there are some approaches to working with young people that most youth workers would prefer not to be associated with – for example services which operate outside of the best interests of young people. So the circle needs to be big enough to be inclusive of a range of values, contexts and styles, but not so big that it becomes meaningless.

8.8 THE ROLE OF LOCAL YOUTH WORKER NETWORKS

As part of running the focus groups we visited youth workers at 22 network meetings, ranging in size from a handful of people to over 60. Surprisingly, some of the larger groups were in rural or provincial areas (over 40 in Reefton!), and some of the smallest were in the larger cities. While some of the networks we visited were only just getting established, I thought it worthwhile to record some observations about why networks should exist and what seemed to be making a difference in the areas where they seemed to be operating effectively.

An effective local network contributes to the development of youth work in these ways:

- Promoting safe and ethical practice with young people.
- Providing an independent body to follow up local concerns or complaints about a youth worker or their organisation.
- Encouraging youth workers and their organisations to work cooperatively rather than competitively.
- Able to mobilise city/area-wide support for young people. For example, having youth workers in place after a large public event where numbers of intoxicated young people are likely to be out late at night, or in a crisis situation such as a suicide at a school.
- Promoting training and professional development.
- Disseminating information.
- Able to quickly gather views of young people on a particular issue. Youth Councils can help, but youth workers are often in touch with a wider cross-section of young people.
- Advocate for young people.

8.9 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL NETWORKS

Sometimes youth workers themselves are blamed for not supporting their local network. It seems more likely that some networks may lack support because of the way they are being run.

- Unless there is some support from the local council Lottery Grants or DIA to provide at least a part-time wage for a coordinator, a network is unlikely to get established.
- Networks generally seemed to be more effective if they exist as a separate body to their local councils, with their own management group made of key local youth workers and organisations (all of the management teams that we came across operated voluntarily).
- There seem to be several key sectors within youth work, these include:
 - Maori
 - Paid and volunteers groups
 - Church/Christian groups
 - Pacific (in some places)
 - Youth workers working with government agencies (Police youth worker, Conservation Corps, Schools and Alternative Education).

The strongest networks seem to have effectively engaged most or all of these sectors, and an effective network coordinator will be able to build bridges into each and involve key people who will in turn encourage others to get involved. This doesn't seem to be happening in many places, but where it does, youth work in the area generally seems to have a higher profile, and to be better resourced. Of course, within a larger network, there should also be spaces for these different sectors to develop their own forums in order to identify and address their own needs.

Where there is a perception that a network has been 'captured' by one group, others will stay away. As one youth worker (who operates in the voluntary sector) commented after one of the focus group sessions, 'I don't normally go along to these sort of meetings because they're all in other professions (health and social work) and I feel like 'the dumb youth worker'.

There is also another (wider) group made up of other professionals who include young people in their focus (eg social or health workers, special needs teachers etc.). Where this group dominates a network, it seems that youth workers are more likely to stay away. There seems to be some value in distinguishing between wider forums for people who work with a 'youth focus', and those for people who work out of a youth work paradigm.

We noted that less effective networks seemed to be stuck in 'committee mode', involving ongoing meetings that decide little and result in no clear action. To engage youth workers, the more effective networks seem to have generated a sense of 'community (whanau) rather than committee'.

The most effective networks are also supported by funders who encourage organisations and individual youth workers to be participating members as a means of establishing their credibility and commitment to safe and ethical practice.

8.10 A LAST WORD

This report has identified a number of challenges that must be addressed if youth work is to develop further in this country, many of which have been laid at the feet of the National Youth Workers Network, which commissioned this research project.

To make progress in achieving these outcomes the National Network needs to become better resourced and to position itself between the government and NGO sectors, trusted by both, and acting as a voice for the latter. Government agencies need the National Network as a means of gathering information and feedback, and as a means of getting information out to the sector. This report has suggested that information is not getting out to where it should at the moment, and the strength of the network's role will depend on its ability to engage with the key sectors within youth work.

Even though they will need government funding, networks at national and local levels should exist as independent voices, able to give feedback on policies and advocate for community organisations and for young people themselves.

Although New Zealand has lagged behind other countries in the development and resourcing of youth work, we bring some unique strengths to the table. The involvement of indigenous people in shaping and delivering services, and the level of networking that is available to us as a small and outwardly focused country, are examples of these. We have stories that are worth telling, and have the potential to be a world leader in this sector.

One of the great legacies of growing up in a smaller country like this is the belief (many of us grow up with) that we can change things. If we can spare the time to be concerned with the overall picture, and be respectful of our differences, we can move forward, and things will indeed change for the better.

PROFILE Annie Rogers-Marshall (Whakatane)



To give young people a voice is really important. I want to make sure that we have a community that will actually listen to young people, and help them to belong and connect with what is going on in the wider community.

Before I started in youth work I was in the police force for 12 years, specialising in community policing and then in education – going into schools and teaching young people about safety. After coming out of the police force I had the opportunity to work on the youth strategy that was developed in conjunction with the Whakatane community. I am presently the Youth Strategy Coordinator for Ngati Awa Social Health Services which is based in Whakatane. My role is to look at positive initiatives for young people, to work with youth through Whakaaro Rangatahi which is our youth council, and to work with youth workers from our Eastern Bay of Plenty Network.

Whakaaro Rangatahi is our youth council. We've got 34 members aged 13-24. It's made up of employed and unemployed, at-risk and not at-risk, Maori and European and Samoan. They come from all over the district and the group aims to be representative. We meet once a month at the council chambers. People want to know the thoughts of young people; what they're up to and what they think is working, or not working, and helping to evaluate community initiatives from their point of view. A lot of it is about developing young people as community leaders.

We recently ran a scavenger hunt, getting local young people to go around the town and find about resources and facilities that young people can use. We invited the media to come along to their report back. They found heaps of positive stuff like a beautiful skate-bowl, really good playgrounds, heaps of walkways, but the media only picked up on the 4 or 5 negative things that they found out. Things like why were our tennis courts padlocked and not accessible to young people during the day or over the weekends?

Local people wrote in a whole load of negative stuff about young people, for example 'if young people were spending less money on stupid haircuts and funny clothes then they'd have more money to spend on activities'.

So what happened from there was that the youth responded, because they felt that they were all being tarnished by the same brush and that they are not all at-risk youth. They wrote their letters to the editor and then invited the two people who'd written the critical letters to a meeting with them to talk about issues for young people. They never took up the challenge but they did respond by ringing me and saying 'we can't attend the meeting but I'd like to respond by writing a letter.' And they wrote a letter of apology that went into the paper. So giving young people a voice can be a really powerful thing, and there were a lot of positive things that came out of this situation.

Probably one of the biggest projects I've been involved with since then is setting up our cyber café in the old Whakatane Youth Centre in the middle of town. It's a youth

centre that has a café area with internet access. And up there also is Taiohi FM which is our youth radio station. So it's a recording studio and a radio station. It has no fulltime DJ, but operates 24 hours, we only go live to air during school holiday programmes and other special events.

Seeing young people smile is what keeps me in this work, young people enjoying themselves and having fun. Seeing them interact with each other, getting on with each other. That's what really drives me. I have a 2 year-old son and a 17 year-old son and so my motivation is to make sure that in our area there are really neat things happening for young people.

PROFILE Rachel O'Connor (Wellington)



At heart I'm a country girl from Te Puke in the Bay of Plenty, but I grew up as a teenager in Wellington. When I was 16 I got involved in a youth programme called Onstream. I did that for two years and for me that was the start of finding somewhere that was genuinely a place to outwork my faith. I did student leadership and continued right through and stuck around when I had the opportunity to become involved in youth work in 1998.

I do some work out of my local Baptist church, and head up a team of volunteers who do a project called YouthWorks, which is part of Youth For Christ Wellington. We work with 13-18 year old students. We've currently got 4 projects running based in Naenae, Lower Hutt, Petone, and Mount Cook around Wellington, working with anything from a dozen to 40 young people each, we also do camps, school programmes, mentoring and leadership development. And for every project now, we've got another ten in the dream pipe! We take a holistic approach, which means that we are seeking to build connections and wholeness in each area of life: the physical, spiritual, mental and social.

For me a key value is in the area of building relationships – although we run regular events and programmes, the key is to see an intertwining of our lives with those of the young people. The people who are most effective are the ones who don't see it as a 9 to 5 job role – when they connect relationally and invest emotionally because they care about that person. I think the youth workers who make the biggest difference are not the ones who run flashiest programmes or have all the information up their sleeves about services. I think that the people who really make an impact are the ones who genuinely care, look to connect to the young and see them as individuals as opposed to stereotyped needs.

People who are committed to seeing young people make positive changes, and are committed to the young people themselves, I see every day that they are making real and practical differences. Often you don't see it at the time, I get a lot of my feedback when I run into them a year or two down the track and then they are able to tell you stories about the impact of our work with them at that time in their life.

What keeps me going is the spiritual journey of knowing that I'm doing what God's calling or asking me to do at this particular time. And then it's the young people, who you fall in love with, and the connections you build with families, and you stay involved for that reason. At the beginning when you love the programmes you can't wait to go to camps yourself, and every youth club night is an adventure and you give it 150%. I think I grew tired of youth club nights and camps a little while ago. The programme has become a vehicle for the relationship and it's in the relationships that I think that you can foster change, and you can love, and you can serve within the context. I guess I've yet to see a programme without a focus on relationships that can do all of those things.

Recommendations



The figures in brackets refer back to the sections in the report in which these recommendations are discussed.

TO THE NATIONAL YOUTH WORKERS NETWORK

- Clarify with key stakeholder groups and endorse a definition of youth work (1.3, 8.3).
 - Work together with MYD to promote access to youth workers/youth development as a benefit for all young people, not just those who are in trouble (8.2).
 - Have a debate about the sorts of activities that sit inside or outside of youth work (4.2, 4.5, 8.4, 8.7)
- Lobby funding organisations and government agencies to improve the resourcing and predictability of funding for community organisations that are effectively delivering youth development outcomes (3.5, 3.8, 8.1).
- Begin educating the public about youth work, by celebrating and telling stories of good practice through local and national media (4.7, 8.2, 8.3).
 - Promote equally the recognition and development of professional youth work, and the work done by voluntary groups (8.4, 8.5).
 - Introduce a set of awards to recognise good practice in individuals and organisations (8.4).
- One area of your value to MYD and DIA is based on the ability of the NYWN to get information to and from all sectors within youth work. Strengthen links with local networks, and widen your membership to include alternative expressions of youth worker networks, especially among those sectors that are presently out of the loop (4.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9).
- Progressively introduce a policy requiring local networks to have (or adopt) a code of ethics as a condition of membership in the national network (4.5, 8.6).

- Encourage member networks to introduce short workshops in ethics and safe practice as a requirement of membership for individual youthworkers (8.6).
- Seek funding for capacity building to make workshops and resource people available to assist local networks (8.6, 8.8).
- Create a (paid) category of national network membership for training providers (8.6).
 - Negotiate resources with the ITO to coordinate youth work education provision (8.6).
 - Create a forum for providers (8.6).
 - Provide an endorsement for member courses and advise on quality improvement (8.6).
 - Get them teaching from the Canterbury Code of Ethics (and not ethics from other sectors) (4.5).
 - Lobby the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure that youth worker training is listed as a priority area for TEC funding (8.6).
 - Work with the ITO and youth work education providers to improve the portability between youth work qualifications and others in the social services, and to create pathways from them into degree and postgraduate programmes (3.4, 8.6).
 - Using overseas models as a starting point, work to integrate youth worker courses with education rather than social work faculties (8.2).
- Develop information and resources for employers of youth workers (3.5, 3.6, 7.2, 8.6).
 - Include youth worker and organisational membership information, recommended hourly and annual pay rates, information about code of ethics, safety issues, endorsed training options, complaints procedures and (possibly) mediation services that the NYWN can provide for member youth workers and their employers through local member networks.
 - Include a section in the NYWN website for employment advertisements.
- Develop a partnership with one or more universities and:
 - Work together to develop a research-based Masters programme in youth development (5.3, 8.6).
 - Build pathways from existing courses into degree programmes (5.3, 8.6).
 - Develop a relationship with the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, see if they will include this side of the Tasman in their focus and publish material from here (8.6).

TO REGIONAL YOUTH WORKER NETWORKS AND LOCAL BODIES

- Support the existence of your local youth worker network as an independent body. A temporary role for a council community liaison worker is to get youth workers together to develop a management group of respected youth workers from the different sectors, find resources for a coordinator and then get the group to appoint someone (7.1, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9).
- Youth worker networks that work the best develop a sense of ‘community rather than committee’. Food works (7.1, 8.9).
- Find ways to promote youth work by celebrating local stories and acknowledging the value that paid and voluntary youth workers add to your community (4.7, 8.2, 8.3).
- Be proactive in educating other sectors of the community about what youth workers do (8.4).
- Get some advice about developing partnerships with the corporate sector (8.4).

TO FUNDERS

- Include active involvement in local youth worker networks as one of the criteria you use to evaluate a commitment to safe and ethical practice by applicant youth workers and community organisations (8.3, 8.4, 8.5).
- Be aware of the indicators of good practice that youth workers themselves have identified (4.7, 8.3, 8.4).

TO EMPLOYERS

- Build in rewards for length of service and qualifications (especially for qualifications that are in youth work, or have relevance to it). We won’t get them until you require and reward them (3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 5.2, 8.6).
- Half of all youth workers come to you with no tertiary qualifications at all. Most of those who manage to continue training will do so because of your support, either with some (paid) time off for study, and/or help with fees (5.2, 5.3).
- Recognise that as the number of young people your youth worker is working face-to-face with grows, they will need more administrative support (and more money for kai) (4.4).

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

- Work with the NYWN and MYD to develop and formalize the suggested indicators of good practice and youth development outcomes in youth work. Distribute these through networks and to applicant organisations (4.7, 8.3).
- Work with MYD and local bodies to create options for part-time wages for local network coordinators (7.1, 8.8, 8.9).
- Seek an increase in funding for the Youth Worker Training Scheme and distribute it through youth worker networks (which are registered with NYWN) based on membership size/attendance (8.6, 8.7).
- Shift the responsibility for professional youth work training onto employers and youth workers themselves, focus the YWTS resources onto building networking across the sector, plus training for volunteers and those in the informal sector (5.3, 8.6, 8.8).

TO THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Fund research into the needs of Asian young people (especially foreign students), and work with community organisations to recruit more Asian youth workers (3.2, 4.1, 8.2).
- Work with the Ministry of Education to investigate current practice and develop a funding programme supporting the involvement of youth workers in schools (4.3, 8.2).
- Further research needs to take place into improving evaluation practices for the youth development outcomes identified in this section. Then assistance should be provided to build the capacity of youth and community organisations to develop their own evaluation and reporting practices (4.8, 8.4).
- See the relationship with NYWN as a key to rolling out information and policies more effectively into the community sector (7.2, 8.10).
- Promote the role of volunteers in youth organisations, by working with the NYWN to develop a pilot for a NZ version of Americorps¹ (a scheme where young people coming out of secondary school can give a year of voluntary service through a gap or internship programme with a community organisation, in return for a grant towards their tertiary study fees for the following year.) This would broaden the experience of those involved, encourage much-needed support for youth and community organisations, and provide a way for young people to give a year back to their communities before going on to further study. A small pilot programme could easily be set up with a few youth organisations.

¹ See <http://www.americorps.org/>

Appendix One

About the National Youth Workers Network

A1



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National Youth Workers Network

What the National Youth Workers Network does:

- ★ Undertaking a comprehensive national research project on the state of youth work in Aotearoa
- ★ Facilitates monthly conference calls to link regional networks nationally
- ★ Disseminates information around training, conferences and the youth development sector
- ★ Works with central government agencies to increase support and resources available to youth workers
- ★ Supports the capacity building of regional and local youth worker network
- ★ Connects youth workers to local and regional youth worker networks
- ★ Collate monthly E-News to keep youth workers informed
- ★ Maintains and develops National Youth Workers Network website
- ★ Regional visits to youth worker communities
- ★ Maintains a national database of regional youth worker network representatives
- ★ and lots, lots more.....



National Youth Workers Network

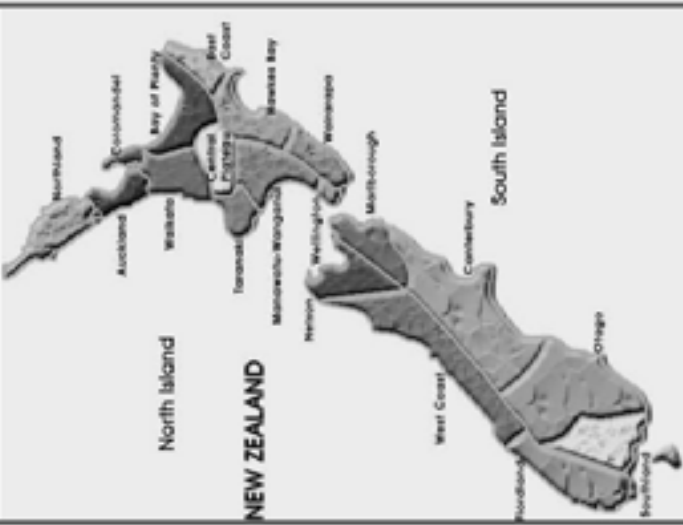
*Advancing the development of
youth work in Aotearoa*



www.youthworkers.net.nz

National Youth Workers Network	Purpose & Goals
	The National Youth Workers Network has been established to: ★ Ensure that young people in Aotearoa New Zealand have access to youth work that is carried out in a safe, skilled, ethical and appropriate manner through establishing core competencies, a national Code of Ethics and accessible training opportunities for youth workers. ★ Advance the development of youth work in Aotearoa New Zealand by building the capacity of regional and local youth worker networks. ★ Undertake a research project to get a comprehensive understanding of the state of Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand that will create a beach mark for future developments. ★ Establish Youth Work as a nationally recognised profession and an essential volunteer activity. ★ Facilitate advocacy, information, advice, events and support services with Youth Workers. ★ Develop partnerships with Government agencies, private enterprise and other NGOs for the benefit of Youth Work and the Youth sector in Aotearoa.

National Youth Workers Network	Values & Reference Documents
	As a collective of youth worker networks, the National Youth Workers Network values biculturalism, diversity, equity, transparency, innovation, volunteerism, participation, contribution, integrity and cooperation. The National Youth Workers Network recognises and values the Te Tiriti O Waitangi as the founding document for New Zealand/Aotearoa which provides a basis for the ongoing relationship between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti. As an network we also view the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and regional youth worker networks Code of Ethics as key reference documents to guide our decisions and activities. These documents can be accessed by contacting NYWN staff. 

National Youth Workers Network	Foundations
	The key strength of the National Youth Workers Network are strong, sustainable, effective and fun regional youth worker networks. These provide local youth workers with what they need and are the vital link to the national body. By May 2005 36 regional youth worker networks and collectives were affiliated to the National Youth Workers Network.  Map showing regional youth work network boundaries. - there is slight variation in how boundaries are defined from this map.

THE FOLLOWING NETWORKS WERE VISITED FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

The first 12 focus groups (March to May 2005):

- Canterbury Youth Workers Collective (pilot group)
- Wellington Regional Youth Workers Trust Training Hui
- Porirua Youth Workers Network
- Wellington Regional Youth Workers Collective
- Wairarapa Youth Workers Network
- Wellington Archdiocese Youth and Young Adults Co-ordinators (Catholic)

The Road Trip (over June) involved visits to the following networks:

- Nelson Tasman Bays Youth Workers Network
- Manawatu Youth Workers Network
- West Coast Youth Workers Collective
- Canterbury Youth Workers Collective
- Dunedin Youth Work Network
- Invercargill Youth Workers Network
- Central Otago Youth Workers Network
- Taranaki Youth Worker Network
- Combined Bay of Plenty Networks (Rotorua, Tauranga Moana, Whakatane or Eastern Bays)
- Tairāwhiti Youth Workers Collective (Gisborne)
- Waikato Youth Workers Network
- Central Auckland Youth Workers Network
- West Auckland Youth Workers Collective
- South Auckland Youth Workers Network
- Whangarei Youth Workers Network
- Mid North Youth Workers Network (Kaikohe)

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

An initial set of focus group questions was designed; these were piloted with a small group from the Canterbury Youth Workers Collective, and then run with 13 groups in another five locations (mainly around the greater Wellington area). These questions are listed below, instructions given with each question are included in italics.

- 1. Do you think youth workers are staying around longer? (Why?)**
(Record answers on chart)
- 2. Which group do you fall into?** *(Categories of contact hours – this answer was not recorded)*
- 3. How do you use your contact time?** *(Collate onto spreadsheet on chart – participants were asked to split their use of time between large group, small group, one-to-one and unstructured time.)*
- 4. Does this match with how you (mostly) spend your time?** *(This question followed information about how youth workers spend their non-contact time – only full-time youth workers were asked to comment.)*
- 5. What difference do you think youth workers make?**
- 6. What are some of the key values that you consciously bring into your work with young people? (And how do they influence the way you operate?)**
- 7. What stresses you out the most in your work?** *(Use the chart supplied, and give each person 3 ticks to put against those things that they find most stressful – all of the ticks could be put on one area, or they could be spread around.)*
- 8. Why hasn't formal training youth work taken off in New Zealand?**

As part of the planning for an extended trip around the rest of the country, we reviewed the information we had been getting from the questions above and revised some of them. The following questions were put to a further 43 focus groups in 16 locations around the country as part of a one-month trip in June 2005.

1. **Do you think youth workers are staying around longer? (Why?)**
(Record answers on chart)
2. **Which group do you fall into?** *(Categories of contact hours – this answer was not recorded)*
3. **How do you use your contact time?** *(Collate onto spreadsheet on chart – in this version, participants were asked to identify further details about themselves and their youth work context.)*
4. **GOOD PRACTICE: three things you would look for if you had to give feedback on another youth work project (regardless of its kaupapa).** *(Record answers onto chart as a brainstorm, and then give each person in your group 3 ticks to put against those ones that they feel are most important.)*
5. **How should youth workers report on youth development outcomes?** *(Give examples of 3 (measurable) outcomes for young people that youth workers should be asked to report on back to funders and stakeholders. Record answers onto chart.)*
6. **What hopes and expectation do you have for a national network of youth workers?** *(Groups were asked to discuss the issue and record key points onto the chart.)*
7. **What stresses you out the most in your work?** *(Use the chart supplied, and give each person 3 ticks to put against those things that they find most stressful – all of the ticks could be put on one area, or they could be spread around.)*
8. **What formal training have you done since becoming a youth worker?**
(Collate onto spreadsheet on chart.)

PROFILE PARTICIPANTS:

Vic Coster	Cromwell Youth Worker Trust (Central Otago)
Burhan Dayib	Whai Marama Youth Connex (Hamilton)
Sharon and Jimi Greene	Reefton Youth Centre (West Coast)
Brian Milford	Urban Hope Trust (Central Auckland)
Rachel O'Connor	Youth For Christ/Petone Baptist Church (Wellington)
Annie Rogers-Marshall	Ngati Awa Social Health Services (Whakatane)
Maree Shalders	Alternative Education (Nelson)
Leona Tiraa	Wesley Community Action (Porirua)
Neil Tolan	Hamilton City Council (Hamilton)
Paul Wihongi	Kia Piki Te Ora o Ngā Tai Tamariki (Kaikohe – Northland)
Marcel Wilkinson	Youth and Cultural Development/Te Ora Hou (volunteer) (Christchurch)

Appendix Two

A BACKGROUND TO YOUTH WORK IN AOTEAROA/NZ

A2

Local and International Developments in Youth work, a paper presented by David Hanna to National Youth Workers Hui in March 1995.

A HISTORICAL SUMMARY

From the 1920's to 1950's youth work in the Pakeha community was predominantly carried out by Christian-based structured organisations. A big emphasis was placed on outdoor camps and recreational programmes with organisations like the YMCA, YWCA, CYMM, Boys and Girls Brigades and Scouts and Guiding movements being key organisations. Youth work was not focused on 'at risk' young people so much as providing positive development experiences for large numbers of young people. The so-called 'at risk' or problem young people were more likely to be placed in an institution by the state, out of the public eye. The Maori youth population was predominantly rural-based with an increasing flow to urban centres during this time.

In the early 1960's, these large national organisations joined together to form the National Youth Council. This provided a natural umbrella organisation for the youth sector through which they could talk to the government of the day and better co-ordinate their activities. During the 1960's the growth of the youth focused mass culture, eg. Woodstock, Beatles, 'make love not war' era, lead to the need for more sophisticated styles of working with young people. The youth were more challenging of conventional values and testing the limits of adult authority. For the general public, many young people became a problem. A problem to be dealt with. The seeds of a more empowering and facilitative approach were experimented with during this era. The large youth organisations remained dominant.

By the 70's, community-based youth became established as a legitimate form of work within the broader social sector. Growing public concern with the youth problem became focused on Maori gangs and growing levels of unemployment.

During this era, Robert Muldoon brought back the concept of Detached Youth Workers from a trip to England to be introduced in New Zealand, now called the Community Project Workers Scheme. Linked to this growth of youth work came a call for training

youth workers. The result: the Diploma in Youth and Community Work. The then employment policies resulted in funding being available for community organisations, VOTP, STEPS programmes provided valuable funding for many youth workers. During this decade, strain was being placed on the structure of the National Youth Council, which by this stage had shifted from being a forum for large national organisations, to more of a political advocacy group for young people. The issues of Maori land alienation/racism and sexism were increasingly debated in youth work gatherings.

The 80's saw large scale changes in the economic and social policies of the country. In 1981 a committee of inquiry was held into gangs (Comber report). One of the actions to result from this report was that the government funding for the YMCA Diploma in Youth and Community Work was withdrawn and transferred to help establish the Auckland School of Social Work at the Auckland College of Education in 1982. Which, incidentally, was also to train youth workers. The general consensus in the youth work sector was that this action significantly undermined the professional training for youth workers that had been provided by the Youth and Community Work diploma course. Youth work became buried under a social work agenda. The Group Employment Liaison Scheme (GELS) also grew out of this report.

The 80's also saw significant changes in the National Youth Council and eventually its demise. Constitutional changes to the council enabled regional and local youth organisations to join. This had the instant effect of opening access to an increased number of Maori and Pacific Island youth who had not been well represented in the past. Issues such as the Treaty of Waitangi came on the agenda and eventually the Council was restructured on a Tauwiwi/Tangata Whenua basis.

In 1983, after widespread consultation, a report by the NZ Social Work Training Council on training for youth workers recommended that youth workers be enabled to determine their own training needs through the establishment of regional networks. The Government responded in 1985 with the introduction of the Youth Work Training Scheme within the Department of Internal Affairs. This was the first programme to be decentralised by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) where funds were transferred to regional youth work bodies. Debate on the strengths and weaknesses of this new policy could go on for some time. There were some positive outcomes and some abysmal outcomes. Personally I believe that this decentralised process actually sapped a lot of time and energy from the youth work sector and failed to develop a training agenda on a national basis.

Late in 1989 the National Youth Council fell over or self-destructed, no doubt there is a range of stories as to why this happened. I won't go into those. What is important to note is that this left a major gap in the youth work sector. There is no national non-government youth organisation that lobbies or promotes youth and youth work issues. There is a Federation of NZ Youth Organisations which represents the interests of larger and more structured youth organisations. I think there was some confusion with the establishment of the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Many people hoped the new ministry would carry on the work of the National Youth Council. Not so. . . .

That brings me to the 90's. With the newly established Ministry and the first Minister of Youth Affairs, Annette King, in its first two years the Ministry undertook two large reviews – Government funding of youth activities and a youth work training review. The issues arising from the second review were:

- The need for specific youth work training (distinct from community workers)

- A lack of structure for coordinating the development and monitoring of youth work training.
- A distinction between youth workers, and workers who work with young people (eg. probation officers, teachers, counsellors, social workers).
- The need for different types of training, from pre-entry training to distance learning and one-off seminars.

I wish to very briefly contrast the New Zealand development of youth work with the position of youth work in the UK and Australia. Essentially youth work in these countries is run on a more professional basis. This doesn't mean that all youth work is carried out by full-time paid staff, volunteers still form the backbone of much of the work.

In the UK there is a range of full-time training courses for youth workers. The principle employer of youth workers are the local authorities or councils. A quick flick through the range of conferences and training programmes highlights the profile and level of development of youth work in the UK. The impression I get from reading the material from the UK is that youth work fits within an educational framework as opposed to a welfare one.

In Australia, the non-government youth sector is very active. Youth work is clearly recognised as an occupation. Some 5 or 6 years ago, in order to raise the standard of training for youth workers, the federal government (as opposed to the state government) provided funds for all states to set up youth work training councils, which subsidised training in each state. This federal funding has now stopped and the provision of training is the responsibility of the Industry Training Advisory Board for the Community Services and Health Sector, of which youth work is a sub-group.

As you can see, the position of youth work in these two regions is significantly different to that in New Zealand's development. I don't want to imply that New Zealand has nothing to offer on youth work models. Most significantly, the development of indigenous approaches to youth work, and youth work in a bi-cultural context are areas where my hunch is that we lead both Australia and the UK.

Appendix Three

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CYWC	Canterbury Youth Worker Collective
DIA	Department of Internal Affairs
ITO	Industry Training Organisation — Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi is the ITO for the social services, which includes youth work.
MYD / MYA	Ministry of Youth Development / formerly, the Ministry of Youth Affairs.
NGO	Non-government organisation
NYWN	National Youth Workers Network
RTLb	Resource Teacher for Learning and Behaviour
YDSA	Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa
YWTS	Youth Work Training Scheme (DIA)

MAORI TERMS

Aahua	in this context; how a person ‘comes across’ (lit; appearance or form)
Hapu	a collection of whanau descended from a common ancestor
Kai	food, meal
Kaupapa	purpose, reason, topic
Mau Rakau	learning the use of traditional Maori weaponry — in particular the taiaha
Tangi	funeral
Te Reo	Maori language
Whakatauaaki	proverb
Whanau	extended family

REAL WORK

a report from the national research project on the state of
YOUTH WORK IN AOTEAROA



In 2003 the National Youth Workers Network with the support of the Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Youth Development and JR McKenzie Trust, commissioned a two year study on the state of the youth work sector in New Zealand.

This publication is the summary of that research project and includes information gathered from more than 1,000 dedicated volunteers and paid professionals working with young people across the country.

This document, supplementary reports and information about the National Youth Workers Network and affiliated networks around the country are available online at:

www.youthworkers.net.nz