

# **Project Evaluation**

## **Adventure Therapy: Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme**

**St John of God Waipuna Trust**

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## Author contributions

The evaluation component of this report was conducted and written by Sarah Mckay. The literature review was conducted and written by Kirsty Donaldson. Overall supervision of the project was provided by Ria Schroder.

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## Executive Summary

This is an independent qualitative evaluation of the Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme (PAYPFP) run by Waipuna Youth and Community Trust. It was undertaken to provide a process and early outcomes review of this initiative. PAYPFP was designed to meet the developmental requirements of youth in the Rolleston community, who had been identified as having challenging needs. This programme ran from 1st August 2008 to 10th December 2008, with eight young people in the Rolleston Community.

PAYPFP is a 16 week strengths based adventure therapy programme designed to:

- Develop peer leadership
- Help young people realise their physical, emotional, spiritual, social and intellectual potential
- Encourage young people to critique their own attitudes and behaviours and make necessary changes
- Encourage young people to develop a sense of positive contribution back into home, work, school and the community
- Communicate achievements to the wider community
- Consider their personal values/spirituality
- Reduce substance use
- Enable young people to develop an appreciation and sense of guardianship/kaitiakitanga for the natural world

Participants in this evaluation included young people who attended the PAYPFP, their parents/caregivers, relevant community stakeholders and PAYPFP facilitators. Semi structured focus groups were conducted with each of these groups to ascertain their perspectives on:

- What worked in PAYPFP
- What did not work in PAYPFP
- Future directions for PAYPFP

All data were analysed using thematic analysis. This involved researchers reading and rereading the transcripts of each focus group to allow consistent themes to emerge. These themes depicted the pertinent issues identified by participants and form the findings of this study.

Overall the findings of this study reveal a great deal of support for the Pumanawa Atawhai programme. In particular participants commented on:

- The strengths of PAYPFP
- The impact of PAYPFP
- The components/ activities of PAYPFP
- Areas for future development of PAYPFP

Facilitators also outline the approaches that underpin their practice in the last section of the report, titled 'from theory to practice'.

## **Strengths of PAYPFP**

All focus group participants identified many strengths of PAYPFP. All were very positive about PAYPFP and believed it was valuable. The main strengths were;

- the opportunities created
- the practical nature of the programme
- its cost effectiveness for programme participants
- the age appropriateness of activities
- the relationship based nature of the programme
- that the content of the programme was determined by the needs of the youth and was also able to address the needs of families

In addition to these strengths the most commonly recognised and admired strength of the programme was the facilitator's skill and ability to form effective relationships with the young people. Every focus group gave examples of how facilitators used experiences to create positive change with the young people, through their relationship with them.

Interestingly, facilitators also identified these relationships with young people as being a strength of the programme as they saw them as crucial to facilitating the idea that the power to change resides with the young people. In particular, facilitators identified the need to build a relationship based on trust so that they could maximise the opportunity this trust gave them to challenge the young people to change. They believed this process helped young people develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own journey and outcomes.

## **Impacts of PAYPFP**

One of major the impacts of PAYPFP was noted as changes directly made by the young people such as the development of personal and social skills, improved school work, higher school attendance rates and improved relationships with their family and other adults. It was also noted that the skills the young people developed expanded to influence other relationships in their lives, such as those within their families, school and community.

Parents/caregivers also acknowledged the impact PAYPFP had on their parenting skills, relationships within their family and family support networks. Ultimately they reported growing in confidence as a result of the changes they saw in their children, the support they received from facilitators, the skills they learned at the GAIN (parenting) programme and the informal support networks they developed with other parents/caregivers on the course.

## **Components/Activities of PAYPFP**

The participants were positive about each individual activity on PAYPFP. Underscoring this was the facilitator's ability to use the activities to enhance relationship building and create opportunities for learning through challenges that arose. In addition the young people identified the main components of the programme that stood out for them as planning their own rafting event, family

events, the GAIN programme and the Journey. In particular, they noted the challenge of getting along as a team, learning to lead and organise activities for the group, being involved in decision making and the sense of achievement and pride they experienced on completion, as being important aspects of these activities. The parents valued activities that included them in the programme particularly the GAIN programme and the family weekend. They gave many examples of how these experiences developed their parenting skills and strengthened their relationship with their young people.

### **Areas for future development of PAYPFP**

Given the positive evaluation of the PAYPFP all participants were keen to see the programme continue in the future and many offered suggestions for how they would like to see the programme develop further. These suggestions ranged from practical suggestions as to who the programme should be available to through to ideas about programme content and structure. Suggestions about the need to develop community resources to ensure the future survival of the programme were also strongly advocated by stakeholders and facilitators

### **Conclusions**

Overall the participants were very positive about PAYPFP, particularly about the opportunity it created for change through development of new life skills for the young person and their family. The main impacts included the direct changes made by the young people and significant changes for the parents in both their parenting skills and relationships with their young people. The participants were positive about the individual activities on PAYPFP, highlighting the opportunities they gave the young people and their families to develop new skills and relationships. All participants believed PAYPFP was valuable and should continue into the future.

# Introduction

## Purpose of the evaluation

This project was commissioned by St John of God Waipuna Trust. It is an evaluation of the Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme (PAYPFP), to inform ongoing development.

The aims of the evaluation were to:

- Identify the strengths of PAYPFP
- Identify what didn't work in PAYPFP
- Identify possible future directions for PAYPFP

An independent agency 'The Collaborative for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development' (The Collaborative) was commissioned to conduct the research.

A literature review was conducted to provide context for the evaluation and examine the essential components of adventure therapy.

In addition, focus groups with young people, caregivers, community stakeholders and the facilitators involved in PAYPFP, were conducted. These focus groups gave participants an opportunity to provide their views on:

1. What has worked
2. What has not worked
3. Future directions for PAYPFP

## Terminology

'PAYPFP' refers to the full title of the programme - Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme.

The term 'participant(s)' refers to the young people, caregivers and community stakeholders who took part in the focus groups.

The term 'programme participant(s)' refers to those who took part in the PAYPFP.

The PAYPFP facilitators including the programme coordinator are referred to as 'facilitators' throughout the report.

The term 'stakeholders' refers to people from the community who were involved with PAYPFP.

The term 'AT' refers to Adventure Therapy.

# Literature Review

## Introduction

The purpose of this review is to provide an overview of the basic philosophy and principles of adventure therapy (AT) and community development in order to establish the context within which the Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme was developed. This overview will include a brief history of the origins of adventure therapy and community development, definitions of adventure therapy and the underlying models that guide it. A brief summary of the effectiveness of adventure therapy will also be provided within the constraints of the limited research in this area.

The following databases were searched to provide the information for this overview: Ovid, Proquest, Index New Zealand, Google Scholar, PsycInfo, Medline and the Cochrane Library. Terms and words searched included: adolescent adventure therapy; definition of adventure therapy; adventure therapy beginnings/origin New Zealand; peer support; adolescent peer support; adventure therapy in New Zealand; wilderness therapy; early adventure therapy; therapeutic adventure therapy; bush therapy; at-risk youth; experiential learning. All the papers cited in this literature review have been published in peer reviewed journals, except two which have been published in conference proceedings and one which is an unpublished doctoral thesis. Given the dearth of New Zealand (NZ) research in this area, the majority of the studies discussed involve overseas programmes which are not always directly transferable or applicable to the New Zealand context.

## The origins of adventure therapy

Kurt Hahn is regarded as the founder of modern AT (Clark, Marmol, Cooley & Gathercoal, 2004; Hattie, Marsh, Neill & Richards, 1997; West & Crompton, 2001). In the late 1930s, it was found that when forced to abandon ship, older more experienced seamen had better survival rates than younger men who were actually in better physical condition. As a result in 1941 Hahn developed a month long course for the Blue Funnel Shipping Line to lessen the number of lives lost due to ships sinking in the Atlantic Ocean. Hahn went on to establish Outward Bound schools throughout the world and by 1995 there were 48 schools on five continents. There are now 42 member countries. Outward Bound was established in New Zealand in 1962.

According to Hattie et al. (1997), who conducted a meta-analysis of 96 studies examining the outcomes of AT programmes, Hahn claimed that the aim of Outward Bound was to “enthral and hold the young through active and willing Samaritan service, demanding care and skill, courage and endurance, discipline and initiative” (p.44). Hattie et al. (1997) state that the early focus in AT was related to “making men out of boys” as the aim was to physically and mentally challenge young men. However, in the 1970s there was a shift to impel “value forming experiences” and an awareness that the impact of AT programmes came from changes in the

participants' self-perceptions as they absorbed the experience into their concept of self, and so the enhancement of self-concept became the primary aim. Hattie and colleagues (1997) suggest that physical fitness and physical skills are important aspects of Outward Bound courses but are not the primary goals; rather physical activities are used as a medium for participants to develop their own strengths and resources.

### **What is adventure therapy?**

Adventure therapy for young people is widely used throughout the world. According to Friese, Hendee and Kinziger (1998), there are over 700 AT programmes in the United States alone, and this number does not include guiding, church or scouting programmes. However, there are many variations of adventure therapy and it may be that the name is the only thing that programmes have in common as a consistent and accepted definition of AT is lacking. Labels such as, challenge courses, adventure-based therapy, wilderness experience programmes, wilderness adventure therapy and land and bush therapy are used almost interchangeably but may denote very different things.

In New Zealand and Australia 'wilderness' is not used as a descriptor as it is considered to be a colonising term, implying people-free environments which ignores the presence of the indigenous people of our pre-colonised nations (Pryor, Carpenter & Townsend, 2005). Consequently, at a 2004 meeting of New Zealand and Australian practitioners the term 'bush adventure therapy' was adopted. The word bush has relevance for the South Pacific landscape; adventure was understood to include activities of the mind and spirit for all ages and therapy was understood to include general therapeutic outcomes and the specific intent of therapy, (Pryor et al. 2005). A description of different AT programmes is provided by Crisp (1996) who argues that researchers must clearly describe the type of programme they are referring to.

Alvarez and Stauffer (2001) state that AT is the intentional, facilitated use of adventure tools and techniques to guide personal change and work toward desired therapeutic goals. Weston and Tinsley (1999) define AT as a systematic experiential group intervention that occurs in a natural setting and employs therapeutic techniques and processes within the context of activities and experiences that contain elements of real or perceived risk (i.e., physical, social, and emotional) to facilitate improvements in the psychological and behavioural functioning of the participant.

In the New Zealand and Australian context "natural places are not just an alternative venue for therapy, rather, the heart of therapy itself" according to Carpenter and Pryor 2004. This is challenged by Davis-Berman and Berman (1994) who state that some practitioners believe that the natural setting is the most important therapeutic element, while others argue that it is the activities themselves and how they are experienced that are valuable. Pawson (2008, personal communication) suggests that natural world activities are used as a means to access the five domains of development, emotional, spiritual, physical, social (relationships) and intellectual.

### **'Boot camps' as adventure therapy?**

It is important to point out that adventure therapy is not related to the concept of 'boot camps.' Traditionally 'boot camps' were defined as "in-prison programs that resemble military basic training. They emphasize vigorous physical activity, drill and ceremony, manual labour, and other activities that ensure that participants have little, if any, free time. Strict rules govern all aspects of conduct and appearance. Correctional officers act as drill instructors, initially using intense verbal tactics designed to break down inmates' resistance and lead to constructive changes." (US Department of Justice, 2003, p. 2). Although modern day 'boot camps' are now often set outside of a prison setting they still maintain the basic philosophy of change through punishment and discipline.

Because many 'boot camps' have an outdoor or wilderness component to them they are often confused with AT. It is important to understand that the differences between military style camps and adventure therapy lies very much in the philosophies underlying the programmes and the process engaged in to encourage young people to change. While military type training programmes can best be described as focussing on establishing self-discipline through strict obedience to authority, AT aims to promote healthy development, self awareness and self-efficacy through a holistic focus on promoting the development of each participant.

Although 'boot camps' for 'teens' have captured the eye of the public and have served to provide entertaining 'reality TV' programmes their effectiveness in reducing youth offending and promoting prosocial behaviours among programme participants is less than promising. A recent review of such programmes by Lipsey and Cullen (2007) found that in many cases 'boot camp' style programmes produced worse outcomes than no intervention or other forms of intervention. Such 'boot camps' in New Zealand are reported to have resulted in a 94.5% re-offending rate (Walker, Walton & Brown, 1983).

More recently modifications to 'boot camp' style programmes have combined military style training with therapeutic programmes focussing on issues such as substance use and behaviour therapy. Unfortunately these 'second generation boot camps' have proved no more successful than their predecessors as the confrontational nature of the military style trainings is seen to work against the therapeutic environment required for behaviour change (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau & Cullen, 1990).

### **Some differences in adventure therapy programmes**

It is useful to have an awareness of some of the difference in AT programmes and a comprehensive summary of different programmes was provided by Crisp (1996). Primarily Crisp highlights the importance of distinguishing between programmes that provide therapeutic intervention for specific disorders and those that provide opportunities for personal growth through more generic programmes. In addition Crisp (1996) distinguishes 'adventure therapy' programmes from 'wilderness therapy' programmes in terms of the level of engagement with the natural environment and the role this has to play in the 'therapeutic experience' for participants. These distinctions are important to keep in mind when reviewing the

existent literature as these often unrecognised distinctions are likely to impact greatly on conclusions that can be drawn about comparisons between summative (outcomes) and process evaluations of programmes.

To highlight the great variability in the types of programmes that fall under the umbrella of AT, a brief summary of the 14 mental health programmes for adolescents using wilderness and adventure activities assessed by Crisp (1996) in New Zealand, the UK and the USA, the following profile of programme characteristics is presented. The length of time of the programmes varied from 2-3 days through to 15 months, with some requiring full-time and others part-time attendance. Numbers of clients ranged from 8 to 165 with typical group sizes comprising of 6-8 clients. The programme types included adventure therapy, wilderness therapy and therapeutic wilderness camping. While all programmes were primarily group focussed a few also had an individual therapy component. Family involvement varied from none to adventure family therapy. Cost per client of running the programme also varied greatly from US \$120 to US \$500 per day.

Other studies that have also analysed the characteristics of AT programmes have highlighted three main differences in AT programmes. These include the types of participants that are included/excluded in different programmes, the location and length of time of programmes and funding sources. These differences have implications for programme comparison and evaluation.

### **1) Selection of participants**

While the focus of most AT programmes is primarily at risk youth (West & Crompton, 2001) there is a wide diversity of programme participants. For example, some AT programmes are for adults only, some are specifically for young people with mental health problems or drug and alcohol issues and other AT programmes separate according to gender. According to Russell (2000) some wilderness programmes in North America are used as a “last-resort treatment option for seriously troubled adolescents” (p.1). Many programmes in the USA have participants who are ordered to attend by the court, some of whom go back to secure facilities after completing the programme. The custodial nature of this type of relationship has implications for the relationships that young people can develop with staff. It also has implications for the ability of a programme to support a young person after completing an AT programme. Support for young people when they have completed an AT programme has been identified as an important factor for young people (Eggleston 2000; Mossman 2005; Russell 2000; Russell 2005).

Pearce and Boyes (2003) conducted research in New Zealand considering the processes that programme managers used to select AT participants; specifically they considered Prochaska and DiClemente’s (1982) stages of change model. The authors report that a young person’s ‘readiness’ to participate and desire to make changes in their life was an important part of selection for AT programmes for at-risk youth. Six managers from four therapeutic programmes spanning the country were interviewed. All had clear procedures to determine entry to the programme and one specifically considered the stages of change model. All the managers considered that a young persons’ readiness was a very important consideration for entry.

This is consistent with Mossman (2005) and Russell (2005) who both suggest that a young person's readiness to make changes was an important element of the therapeutic change process. Mossman argues that consideration of young peoples' motivation to attend AT programmes has been overlooked; suggesting that the young people who enter such programmes on the recommendation (or direction) of adults such as, parents, teachers or counselors may not have the desire to make changes in their lives. When an individual self refers into a programme they usually have a degree of insight, however, for young people referred into AT programmes it is unlikely that self reflection/insight has taken place prior to commencement, which can make goal setting a more complex process. Mossman found that there seemed to be a continuum, ranging from youth who were very keen, to those who had been pressured (or required) to attend the programme and, as a result, were not highly motivated to make changes. Mossman reported higher levels of motivation amongst young people who had been referred by peers.

## **2) The length of time and location of PAYPPF**

Considerable variation in the length of programmes; from 2-3days to 18 months has been found among programmes (Crisp, 1996; West & Crompton, 1999). The 18 month programme reported by West and Crompton was a programme for young people under court supervision. Participants stayed on average 14 months and after the programme were either 'paroled or re-incarcerated'. In contrast the 15 month programme reported by Crisp (1996) was a full-time residential Therapeutic Wilderness Camping programme for adolescents with severe emotional disturbance and involved a combination of conventional individual and group therapy with adventure therapy and wilderness expedition based therapy.

Some programmes are entirely residential with participants staying at a base camp and journeying out from there. There may also be some solo time. Other programmes involve living at home and participating in a fulltime programme or attending weekly. Most AT programmes have some type of expedition element (Crisp, 1996).

## **3) Programme funding**

The way that programmes are funded is an issue in terms of accessibility to and longevity of programmes. This also has implications for management and the basic philosophy of some programmes. Some North American AT programmes are profit making ventures. This means they need a certain number of 'clients' participating annually to be financially viable. Friese et al. (1998) reported a high turnover of smaller AT programmes in North America stating that, only 20% of organisations offering AT programmes in 1989 were still in operation in 1993. As Friese et al. (1998) suggest this makes ongoing evaluation difficult. Funding also has implications for staff numbers and qualifications. It can be difficult for smaller organisations to provide ongoing training and support to ensure best practice.

## **Parameters of the use of adventure therapy in this review**

Given the variability of programmes mentioned above it is beyond the scope of this literature review to consider all the various permutations of AT. In this review therefore, the term adventure therapy is used as an umbrella term for the variations of adventure therapy, while acknowledging the diversity of programmes. At the most basic level AT is understood to have some elements that occur in the outdoors; to be an active participatory experience for participants; to include elements of risk/challenge, and to have a therapeutic focus. The importance of staff, the development of relationships and the experiential nature of AT are acknowledged as being very important to the outcomes for young people.

## **Existing research**

There is a lack of a clear accepted methodology when researching adventure therapy and many argue that research into the efficacy of adventure therapy is not robust enough (Barwick 2004; Crisp 1996; Hattie et al. 1997; Lan, Sveen & Davidson, 2004; McKenzie 2000; Mossman 2005; Pryor et al. 2005; Russell 2000; West & Crompton, 1999; Weston and Tinsley 1999). Although there are many published papers about AT the number of programmes covered, which address a variety of different issues (including substance use issues, mental health issues, weight loss etc.), have resulted in small pieces of information about many different aspects of AT. While these studies have been useful in raising the profile of AT the diversity of the programmes studied has made comparisons between different programmes difficult. In addition differences in methodology, research objectives, design and generally a lack of good quality evaluative research also make definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of these programmes difficult to draw. According to Hattie et al. (1997) the methodological difficulties of many of these studies are so great that some articles “read like programme advertisements rather than research” (p.45). These difficulties include the unique nature and huge variations in AT programmes, sample size, age of sample, what to actually measure, the absence of control groups and appropriate time periods to conduct pre and post evaluation measures on particular outcomes.

Of particular concern when examining studies to ascertain the effectiveness of programmes is the wide array of outcomes measured. While some researchers have used specific tools to measure outcomes such as leadership, self-concept, personality and academic achievement or have recorded rates of recidivism, others have relied on participants' narratives to specify outcomes. This has resulted in some authors arguing the need for quantitative studies that produce measurable outcomes, while others suggest that evaluating an AT programme using more qualitative approaches that prioritise the participants' viewpoint is more relevant. Furthermore, lack of agreement between researchers about definitions of seemingly similar outcomes has hampered efforts to make comparisons between studies. Much debate has also surrounded the optimum time frames for collecting pre and post data particularly on variables measuring psychological concepts such as self-concept and confidence (West and Crompton, 2001).

### **Effectiveness of adventure therapy**

Despite these methodological limitations and debates Hattie et al.'s (1997) meta-analysis examining "the effects of adventure programmes on a diverse array of outcomes such as self concept, locus of control and leadership" (p.43) has produced some insight into the efficacy of some AT programmes. In all 96 studies with over 12,000 participants were included. All of these examined AT programmes in Australia and America except for one New Zealand study. Hattie et al. (1997) reported that participants made improvements on a range of outcomes, stating that "AT programmes can obtain notable outcomes and have particularly strong, lasting effects" (p. 77). However, the authors caution that AT programmes are not all inherently good. This research is particularly valuable because of the total large number of participants.

Mossman (2005) in one of the only New Zealand studies to comprehensively examine treatment outcomes of an AT programme, used a mixed-method research design to evaluate whether an established New Zealand adolescent developmental counseling (ADC) programme was effective; to consider the factors that are associated with successful outcomes, and to explore the impact of the ADC programme from the perspective of the adolescent clients themselves. Eighty-nine young people from three ADC programmes during the period July 1999 to December 2000 participated in the quantitative section of the study. The age range was 12-18 years, with a mean age of 14.5 years. The majority were New Zealand European males. Fourteen of these young people participated in the qualitative arm of the study. Not all participants (in either arm of the study) completed the AT programme nor completed all waves of data collection. Data was gained through questionnaires, interviews and participant observation of all phases of the AT programme. Counselors, parents or caregivers and referral staff were also interviewed.

According to Mossman (2005) capturing the "perspectives of the clients themselves on their experiences of counseling and what in their view 'works' is a logical and important avenue of enquiry" (p. 240). This research is particularly significant because it is one of the first systematic attempts to specifically evaluate adolescent mental health treatment in New Zealand. Mossman (2005) reported "statistically and clinically significant improvements on multiple measures of mental health gathered from multiple informants" (p. 350). These gains were largely maintained when reassessed six months after completion of the programme.

Eggleston (1998) conducted a qualitative study in New Zealand in 1993. Eggleston was a participant-observer on a month long AT programme that had a strong Māori kaupapa. There were 12 participants on the programme. All participants were interviewed at the completion of the programme and 10 were able to be located and interviewed approximately 18 months later. According to Eggleston (2000) participants reported that the relationship-centered developments such as talking and respect were an important steppingstone for their future. Eggleston (1998) suggests that research to date has focused on testing clinical outcomes rather than attempting to learn from participants and discerning what was important to them. Eggleston (2000) argues that "few researchers have privileged the knowledge and experience of the young person above their own, when determining the benefits of

wilderness therapy” (p.2). A conclusion reiterated and partially resolved by Mossman (2005).

In her mixed method study as well as examining quantitatively the outcomes for young people attending the ADC programme in New Zealand, Mossman (2005) also qualitatively examined ‘what works’ from the perspective of the youth participants. In addition to acknowledging the role of their counselors, their relationships with them and other aspects of the ADC programme, most importantly these participants highlighted the role that they themselves had to play in the positive changes that they made. This is a variable that had previously not been discussed in the research literature.

Russell (2000) conducted a qualitative study with four case studies from four different AT programmes in America to examine the process by which wilderness therapy promotes change in problem behaviors of adolescents. Interviews and focus groups were held with key staff prior to commencement of the AT programmes, and at least seven days were spent observing the wilderness therapy process in context and interviewing clients, and staff responsible for the participants' primary care. Parents were also interviewed at this time. Daily notes were taken during seven-day participant observation periods examining the interaction between client case studies and staff. Focus groups were also held at the conclusion of the AT programme exploring the process and outcomes from the staff's perspective. Participants were interviewed immediately at the completion of the AT programmes, and then four months later participants and parents were interviewed to discuss their perceptions of outcomes. Russell (2000) found that the four participants “each had a unique "set" of outcomes from treatment. These unique outcomes were primarily based on presenting issues and their relationship with their families.

According to Russell (2000) “little is known about the process by which wilderness therapy promotes change in problem behaviours in adolescents” (p.171). Russell argues that the challenge is to develop evaluation measures that capture the unique experience for each participant and also assesses outcomes that appear to be common. Carpenter and Pryor (2004) also argue that evaluation methods and tools must take culture and context into account or they risk “ignoring the heart of practice”. Hattie et al. (1997) suggest that most studies have been outcomes focused (summative) and that there is a need for formative and process research.

Russell (2002) also conducted a quantitative study considering the long term outcomes of young people who had completed one of seven AT programmes in America. The average length of these programmes was 45 days. A total of 858 young people attending one of the seven AT programmes agreed to participate. The participants ages ranged from 11 to 19, but most were aged 17 and 18 years and 70% were male. The young people and their parents or guardians completed questionnaires at completion of the programme and at three, six and 12 months post completion. Not all participants completed all the questionnaires despite efforts to contact them. Russell (2002) reported significant improvements at completion of the programmes, however, he suggests that it is important to follow participants at a later date as they may have ‘post-group euphoria’ which could affect their responses immediately after completing a programme. Russell reported that improvements in

behaviour and relationships were maintained at three and six months. A random group of participants and parents were sampled at 12 months and Russell reported that improvements had been largely maintained.

## **What works?**

Davis-Berman and Berman (1994) suggest that wilderness activities can have a positive effect on at-risk youth, but caution that little is known about what actually works and why, for whom it works, under what conditions it works, and for how long it works. However in an attempt to understand what works, a number of variables have been suggested as important components of AT.

McKenzie (2000) in a review of the existing literature examined how AT programme outcomes are achieved and identified six important components of successful AT programmes. These included i) the physical environment and in particular an unfamiliar physical environment that contrasts with the participants' 'normal' environments, ii) activities that are challenging to the individual yet presented in a supportive environment, iii) processing defined as "the sorting and ordering of information that enables participants to internalize meaning from an adventure education experience" (p.23), iv) the group including group size, reciprocity, mutual dependence, common objectives, and personal relationships, v) instructors including biographical characteristics, personality and interpersonal skills and vi) the participants including age, gender and expectations.

An overview of three of the most commonly examined of these variables is presented below.

### **Staff/Instructors**

There is not a consensus on the type of qualification required by staff working in this field. Davis-Berman and Berman (1994) found that some programs require their staff to possess little more than prior 'wilderness experience' and "good people skills", while others employ only college graduates. According to Davis-Berman and Berman relatively few staff were found to have any formal training in mental health counselling and those that did were likely to supervise other staff.

However, over half the participants (of 76) at a conference of AT practitioners from the South Pacific region in 2002 had some type of training in therapeutic techniques or held clinical qualifications. The term therapy is not commonly used amongst these practitioners, rather, they used words such as, support, interventions, improving, focussing, assisting and strengthening to describe their work (Carpentor and Pryor 2004). The authors quote Crisp (1996) who suggests that this is because the authority of the therapist is not automatically granted in the South Pacific region compared to North America where individuals are used to attending therapy and paying for it. It could also be that the word therapy is not commonly used in order not to stigmatise young people attending AT programmes.

Carpentor and Pryor (2004) reported diverse education and training pathways for staff working in the field of AT in the South Pacific. Over 40 different qualifications were listed by practitioners. Carpentor and Pryor argue that there are several

implications to be considered from these diverse pathways: it may result in a rich diversity in staff teams and practice; it may reflect the mobility in the employment market, or the diversity may be related to the short term funding of social services however, it could also indicate a lack of training options and lead to inconsistency in practice.

McKenzie (2000) reviewed existing literature and found several studies that had considered the characteristics of 'effective' staff. Characteristics including sociodemographic details, interpersonal interactions and personality had been studied, however, according to McKenzie conclusions could not be drawn from this information. Crisp (1996) reviewed AT programmes in the mental health setting and reminds practitioners of the importance of ethical issues and the need for staff to practice within the limits of their training and experience. Pryor et al. (2005) also highlight this, suggesting that there is potential to cause harm to participants if staff operate outside the limits of their training and experience. According to Zink and Leberman (2001) the discourse of risk suggests that everyone interprets real risks in a similar way. However, the authors suggest that different groups in society perceive risks differently and the manipulation of risk can be dysfunctional when the risk is too great, as this can cause high levels of stress, which in turn, may impact negatively on individuals and groups. Therefore, it is important for staff to be able to, and aware of, the need to consider the concept of risk.

### **The physical environment**

According to McKenzie (2000) several researchers argued that an unfamiliar physical environment is important because it causes disequilibrium which when mastered leaves the young person with an enhanced self concept. Hill (2007) suggests that the wilderness environment provides participants with egalitarian consequences for behaviours, resulting in natural consequences. That is, the environment provides immediate feedback if choices are not well informed or thought out.

Adams and Sveen (2000) present a model of 'bush counseling' that they use in Australia and suggest that the journey while a physical reality is also a metaphor for change. They argue that journeying through the outdoors allows a small group to develop meaningful relationships. West and Crompton (2001) also conducted a review of existing empirical literature. Papers studied fell into two categories; those that considered recidivism rates and those that measured the psychological benefits of participation. Despite the noted methodological weaknesses of many of these studies West and Crompton (2001) suggest that the literature provides 'qualified' support for claims that AT programmes can help alleviate the negative behaviours of at-risk youth. The authors suggest that the outdoor setting is a totally unfamiliar environment which provides a sense of freedom that cannot be replicated in the clinical setting.

### **Processing/Reflection and feedback**

West and Crompton (2001) suggest that self-reflection and journal writing are important processes enabling young people to understand the relevance of their experiences. According to West and Crompton (2001) self-reflection, journal writing and group processing helps young people to process their experience so that the

gains can be transferred to the home environment. Cassidy (2001) argues that the value of reflection is not what staff determine is relevant but rather what the experience meant for each individual.

Mossman (2005) states that the extended duration of the journey provided sufficient time to allow for thinking and periods of quiet where the young people could process the events that occurred for them. According to Mossman AT programmes provide concrete opportunities for experiential learning, where learning becomes an active process where clients learn by doing and receiving immediate feedback rather than just talking or listening.

Hattie et al. (1997) state that AT programmes increase the amount and quality of feedback young people get, due to things such as, the small group size, the setting and accomplishment of goals, group processes and also the immediate feedback provided by the outdoor environment. These authors argue that feedback is “the most powerful single moderator that improves affective *and* achievement outcomes” (p. 75). Adams and Sveen (2000) also argue that the giving and receiving of feedback is useful tool for young people.

## **Conclusions**

Adventure therapy used as an umbrella term in this review to depict a wide range of wilderness and adventure programmes that work with at-risk youth have a long history in many countries around the world, including New Zealand. Despite differences in methodology and research design making it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the benefits of specific AT programmes there is general support for the use of AT to assist in helping at-risk youth. While the eclectic nature of AT programmes has resulted in great difficulties in terms of research conclusions, it is likely that in reality the availability of a diverse range of programmes has served to cater to the needs of a wide variety of individuals.

Although the vital components of successful AT programmes have not yet been fully elucidated a number of common elements are seen to provide the basis of successful AT programmes. Part of this evaluation was to discover if these components have been incorporated into the design of the Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme run by the Waipuna Trust in Christchurch which is now described in detail.

## **Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme (PAYFPF)**

### **Adventure therapy at Waipuna Trust**

The following is a definition of Adventure Therapy provided by Waipuna Trust.

Adventure takes us to new places within ourselves and into encounters and experiences with many diverse mediums on the journey. Therapy in its many mediums of practice seeks to bring to light the life story of its participants. This opens up new parameters of understanding and allows our spirituality,

connectedness and cultural identities to breathe upon our life story, make new meaning of our past, experience growth in the present and allow hope for the future. There are several factors that are common to all definitions:

- the intervention occurs in a natural setting
- a group format is used with the active involvement of the participants,
- elements of perceived risk are introduced
- a therapeutic focus is maintained; the use of self reflection, journal writing and group processes are common
- technical skills are integral to AT programmes but are secondary to a focus on the central goals of supporting personal growth, therapy, education

### **Background to PAYFPF in Rolleston**

In August 2006 pastoral care staff from Lincoln High School, Selwyn District Council representatives, Waipuna Trust staff and representatives from other Rolleston community interest groups met to discuss the issues of the growing number of challenging young people living in the Rolleston town.

Over the following 6 months a number of meetings were held to identify some of the underlying issues and to look at how the young people's needs could be met.

Waipuna Trust had experience with challenging young people and had links with the Rolleston community through the young people they had been working with from Lincoln High School. Paddy Pawson (Waipuna) and Anne Jarman (SDC) continued to meet and formulated a development plan to meet those needs and to seek funding for a project to deliver a programme that broadly:

- Met the developmental needs of adolescents
- Addresses the issue of crime prevention among young people from Rolleston district
- Develops a community development approach to the programme so as the community has the potential to own the programme

In April/May 2007 the Selwyn District Council with Waipuna Trust as a partner applied to the CPU (crime prevention unit) of the MOJ (Ministry of Justice) to provide funding for the above project this was accepted with the first cycle of the programme started in July 2007. Programme participants were recruited through suggestions from people from Lincoln high school, parents and young people in the community. Possible programme participants and their parents were then approached and invited to take part in the programme. Subsequently, programme participants have also been recruited through suggestions from young people who have already completed the course.

The programme has evolved over 18mths as it has strived to meet the needs of the young people and their families. We see this process continuing as we continue a reflective practise.

### **Best practice**

PAYFPF is underpinned by the six principles of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) which are listed below:

1) Youth development is shaped by the 'big picture'

By the 'big picture' we mean: the values and belief systems; the social, cultural, economic contexts and trends; the Treaty of Waitangi and international obligations such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Youth development is about young people being connected

Healthy development depends on young people having positive connections with others in society. This includes their family and whānau, their community, their school, training institution or workplace and their peers.

3. Youth development is based on consistent strengths-based approaches

There are risk factors that can affect the healthy development of young people and there are also factors that are protective. 'Strengths-based' policies and programmes will build on young people's capacity to resist risk factors and enhance the protective factors in their lives.

4. Youth development happens through quality relationships

It is important that everyone is supported and equipped to have successful, quality relationships with young people.

5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate

Young people need to be given opportunities to have greater control over what happens to them, through seeking their advice, participation and engagement.

6. Youth development needs good information

Effective research, evaluation, and information gathering and sharing is crucial.

**The following six steps indicate how PAYPFP incorporates each of the six principles of the YDSA.**

1) PAYPFP is guided by the 'big picture' and takes account of the contexts and treaties mentioned.

2) The written philosophy of AT at Waipuna Trust explicitly states the importance of being connected; "successful interventions with young people are strongly connected to the systems around them – family, school, peer etc". Family members and whanau are included in PAYPFP and their input and needs are valued and taken into account. They are kept informed and can attend a supporters' day for parents, caregivers and siblings. A parenting programme is offered. The programme is responsive to the needs of the family and whanau resulting in changes to the programme as some families have expressed a wish to participate in 'The Journey'.

3) PAYPFP is strengths based rather than deficit focused. Young people are honoured and respected and not seen through the lens of a particular condition. They are offered unconditional support and the programme aims to increase the resilience of participants.

4) The written philosophy of AT at Waipuna trust explicitly states the importance of quality relationships: "the relationship between facilitators and young people is the starting point of any development/therapeutic change". Relationships underpin the

experiential learning and progression of skills which enables participants to master skills that require high challenge and high support.

5) Young people participating in PAYPFP set their own goals which have relevance for them.

6) Waipuna Trust evaluates its programmes and PAYPFP has undergone both internal and external process and summative reviews.

## Pumanawa Atawahi Young People and their Families Practice Framework

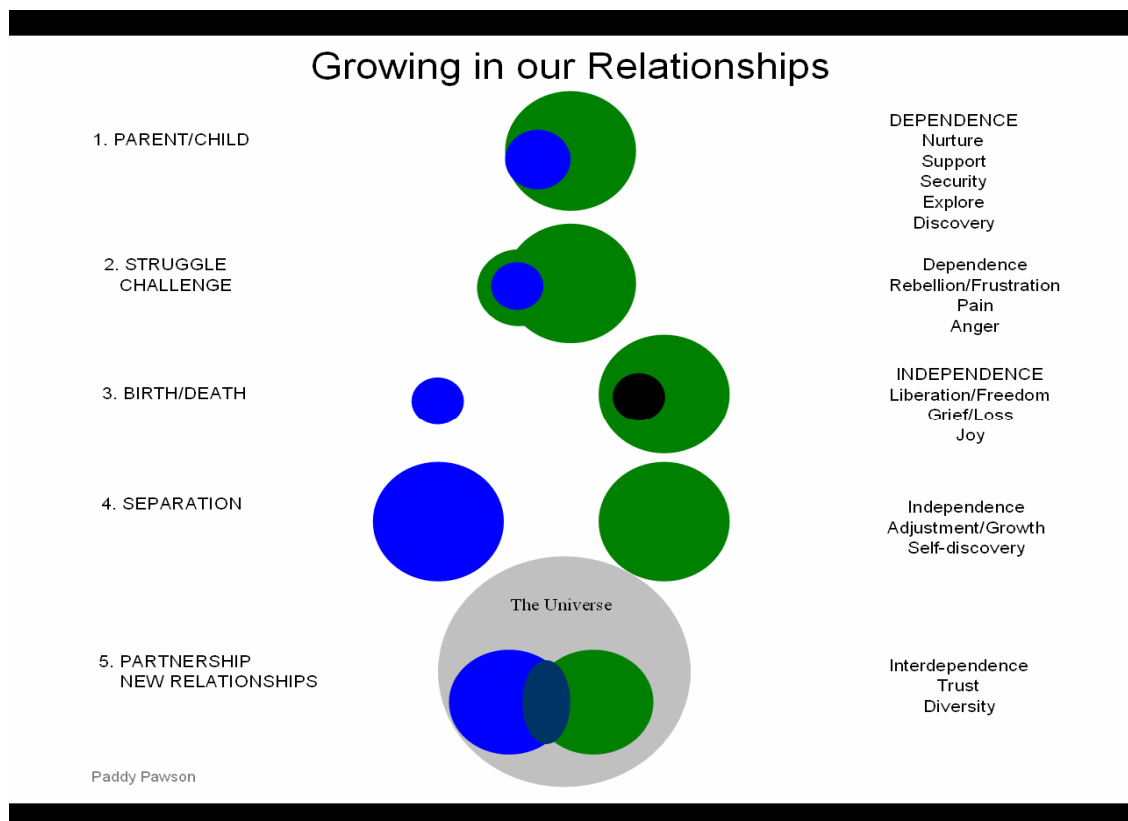
### Practice Framework

These are the models that inform practice in the Pumanawa Atawahi programme.

### Growing in Relationship - Moving from Dependence to Independence

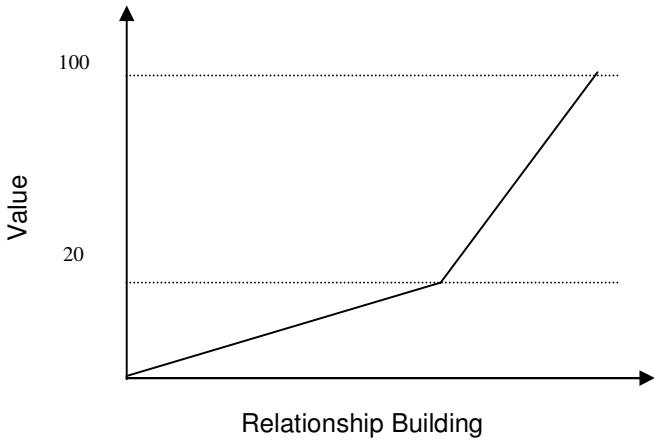
All adolescents have a biological mandate to move from dependence to independence, it is important we understand this as a natural process and the model below gives understanding to what we all can expect as we journey through the stages.

The following are abbreviated forms of the other models which inform the programme. Some of these are also used with participants.

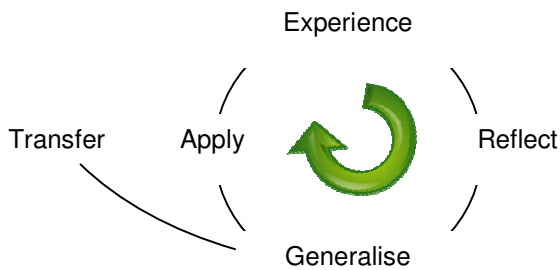


<p><b>Domains of Development (Durie)</b></p> <p>Emotional Spiritual Physical Social Intellectual</p>	<p>Human development occurs in all five of these domains.</p> <p>Developmental programmes should address the growth needs of participants in all five of them.</p>
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<p><b>Models of Relationship (Martin)</b></p> <p><u>Dominant/Superior</u></p> <p><b>Power</b>            Better than (moral) Winners            Smarter than (intellectual) Aggression        Stronger than (physical)                           Saner than (psychological)                           More entitled (role)</p> <p><u>Submissive/inferior</u></p> <p><b>Weakness</b>        Less than (moral) Losers             Stupidier than (intellectual) Humiliation        Weaker than (physical)                           Madder than (psychological)                           Less entitled (role)</p>	<p><b>Authority</b> The ability to influence</p> <p>Its not what we do but how we do it that makes the difference.</p> <p>Using power will result in the other party experiencing weakness, this tends to cycle with a lose/lose for all.</p> <p>However using authority gives the ability to form a meaningful relationship that honours and respects all parties.</p>
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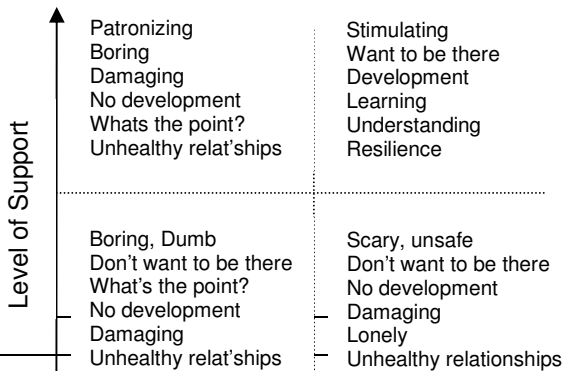
<p><b>Value/Relationship model (Pawson)</b></p> 	<p>Building relationships takes time. The first 80% of the relationship building yields 20% of the value. The next 20% of the relationship building, often sees a rapid increase in the amount of value from the intervention.</p>
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### Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb)



We learn through experiences. For learning or development to occur, we need to first reflect on the experience (the facts and our feelings), then generalise our learning (findings), then apply our learning (future) to either similar situations or transfer it to new and different situations. Skilled facilitation assists people to learn from their experiences.

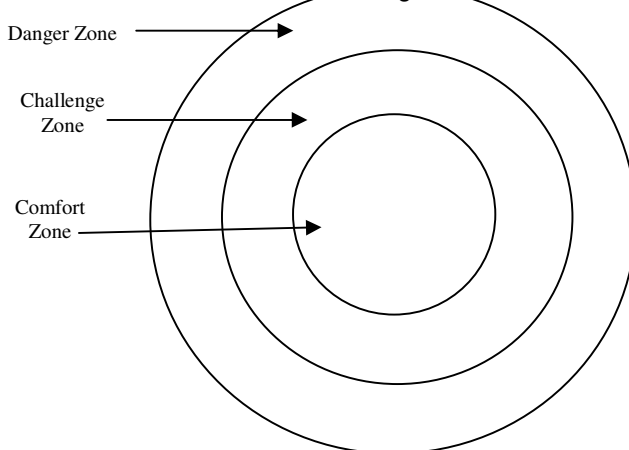
### Challenge/Support Matrix (Pawson)



Development occurs when high levels of challenge are matched by high levels of support.

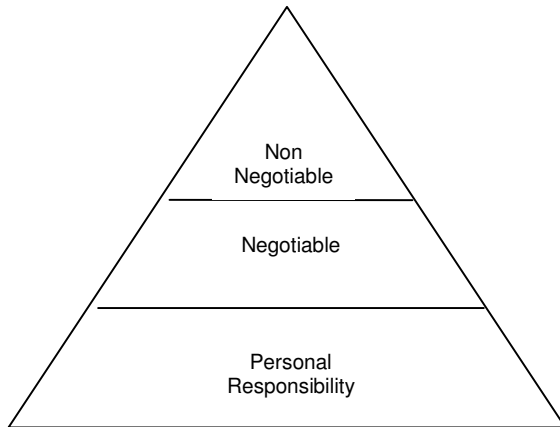
Where there is a mis-match, there is dissatisfaction and a lack of development.

### Comfort Zone



We develop by stepping into the challenge zone. By doing this regularly, our comfort zone increases in size. These zones exist within all of the domains of development (see Drurie above).

### Pyramid of Responsibility (Pawson)



Young people are expected to take considerable responsibility for their actions.

There are small number of non-negotiables which keep everyone safe; other decisions are open to appropriate negotiation.

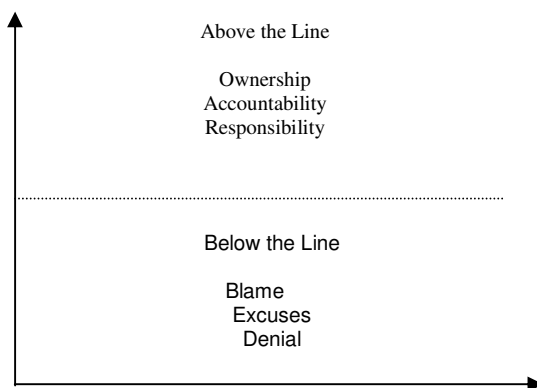
### Stages of Group Development (Tuckman & Jensen)

Forming  
↓  
Norming  
↓  
Storming  
↓  
Performing  
↓  
Ajourning

All groups go through stages of development. It is not possible to skip stages.

Groups can re-visit stages as membership changes or new issues arise.

### Above & Below the Line



Behaviour is either above or below the line. Above the line behaviour will lead to respectful relationships and increased opportunities.

<p><b>Situational Leadership</b></p> <p>The graph illustrates the Situational Leadership model. The vertical axis is labeled 'Supportive Behaviour' and the horizontal axis is labeled 'Directive Behaviour'. A bell-shaped curve represents the leadership style, which is divided into four quadrants by a vertical dashed line and a horizontal dashed line. The quadrants are: Supporting (top-left), Coaching (top-right), Directing (bottom-left), and Delegating (bottom-right).</p>	<p>Leadership (or responsibility) is most successfully transferred in stages. Failure occurs when there are dramatic swings between directing and delegating (and visa, versa).</p> <p>Young people need coaching and supporting as they move towards independence.</p>
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<p><b>Therapeutic Models</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths Based</li> <li>Solution Focused Counselling</li> <li>Narrative Therapy</li> <li>Motivational Interviewing</li> </ul>	<p>Adventure therapy facilitators will use a range of skills and techniques/tools in their communication with clients.</p> <p>These tools can come from a range of therapeutic models. Those listed here are the primary ones used in Waipuna programmes.</p>
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In addition to being underpinned by the six principles of the YDSA and being informed by the models outlined above the Pumanawa Atawhai Programme is also focussed on community development as it aims not just to help the needs of the individual but also to grow the community within which that individual functions. The following provides a brief overview of community development and how it is incorporated into the Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme.

**Community Development**

The Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) underpins the concept of community development (CD) which is the process whereby a community identifies its aspirations and goals and works collectively to achieve them. It is sometimes referred to as community organisation which Minkler and Wallerstein (1997) define as the process by which communities are helped to identify common problems or goals and develop strategies to achieve those goals. Implicit is the understanding that the community is empowered to act on its own behalf.

In New Zealand CD acknowledges the treaty of Waitangi. According to Himona (1999) community development is a kaupapa or philosophy that puts communities first, and that fosters the individual within his or her community. It is a kaupapa that says that communities are best placed to identify their own problems, and formulate their own solutions and make their own opportunities. Local responsiveness to local issues are regarded as pragmatic and effective because solutions are owned by those affected.

Most territorial land authorities have community development statements on their websites but it is not always clear how this relates to actual examples of community development. It may be as Raeburn (1997) argues not all CD is empowering. The author argues that “the issue boils down to who is setting the agenda and who is controlling whatever is done” (p. 4). For Raeburn the following eight aspects are important for true CD: it is people centered; positive, strengths based; is based in expressed needs; uses a planning model approach; is inclusive; development is a gradual process; takes account of cultural and contextual dimensions and is well evaluated.

The Christchurch City Council (CCC) has a Youth Policy which was adopted in 1998 following the Report of the Youth Strategy Working Party to the Christchurch City in Council 1998. The 2008 Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) funding round did approve funding of \$40,000 for the Selwyn District Council - Destination Youth Rolleston. The project aims to ‘connect the young people of Rolleston, many of whom are immigrants with few local connections, through the provision of dedicated youth staff who will work with Rolleston Primary School at lunchtimes, attend local networking meetings and develop a programme for a Friday night Youth Club’.

Youthline also has a Community Development Model which explicitly lists the seven aspects that Youthline considers important for community development:

- Promote active participation of people in the community
- Engage the community to solve community issues and problems
- Assist the community to understand society’s impact on young people
- Actively working to increase leadership capabilities of community members
- Address and take into account the needs of young people in our community
- Strengthen links with other community agencies
- Use of evidence-based, up-to-date research

Given that many of the young people attending the Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme live in the Selwyn area it is important to enable this community to support its young people. Leaders of the Pumanawa Atawhai programme advocate moving from a clinical focus on an individual, through a communal approach ultimately to a community development approach, which would involve wide consultation and collaboration. The more organisations that are involved in supporting young people the more likely it is that positive outcomes will be achieved. As young people complete the programme and move back into the community some will become peer supports for young people in the community and for the next group attending.

## Methodology

This project was designed to provide both a process and short-term outcome evaluation of PAYPFP. Given the philosophy of the programme and the relatively small number of participants it was decided that a qualitative evaluation would be most appropriate.

Qualitative methods are particularly useful in helping to understand issues from an individual perspective by encouraging participants to openly discuss relevant issues with the researchers. To this end qualitative research employs open-ended interviewing techniques to allow data to be inductively generated largely free of the predetermined ideas of the researchers. This was deemed especially important in the current project in order to ensure that the voices of the youth participants were elicited in a way that allowed them to speak openly and ensured their ideas were not limited by preconceived adult notions. Qualitative methods are also useful as they allow the researcher to focus on participants' body language and gestures and context of the interview situation as well as the spoken word when analysing and interpreting the research data. This is particularly useful when interviewing young people who may not be overly articulate but who are very adequately able to express themselves through their unspoken interactions and gestures.

Patton (1990) describes the usefulness of focus groups in stimulating conversations about issues in a social context. Focus group methodology uses open ended questions that encourage participants to define what is most important in the evaluation of the programme for them and allows new themes to be generated and explored as the focus groups progress. As such, focus groups were viewed as an ideal setting in which to obtain a number of individual views and opinions.

For this reason a qualitative focus group method was employed to elicit the perspectives of four of the key groups associated with the project. These groups included:

- Young people who participated in PAYPFP
- Parents/caregivers of young people who participated in PAYPFP
- Stakeholders - key informants from the community who were involved in PAYPFP
- Facilitators of PAYPFP

### Recruitment

All participants were informed about this evaluation project at the beginning of the Pumanawa Atawhai programme and were then formally invited to participate in the focus groups by the facilitators at the beginning of November 2008. This invitation was reiterated on the family weekend and dates were given for the focus groups at this time. At this point a thorough verbal description of the project was given and

information sheets were handed out to potential participants. The consent forms were distributed to participants and filled in at the focus groups.

### **Focus Group Participants**

Six young people aged 14 to 16 from the recently completed programme took part in a focus group that was 30 minutes in duration. These participants were all male and represented 80% of the total youth participants in the PAYPFP. Consent to participate in the focus group was gained from both the young person and their parent/guardian. All the young people were invited and of those who did not take part, one was due to family circumstances and the other did not turn up.

It is important to note, that while in general the youth participants verbalised a lot less than the adult participants they were still able to strongly convey their ideas about this programme through their words and their convincing gestures and the intonation with which they spoke. Their conviction was particularly apparent in their discussion on what they liked about PAYPFP and the skills they had developed.

Five caregivers were part of a focus group. These caregivers represented four of the young people who took part in PAYPFP. The parents/caregivers focus group ran for 1 hour and 15 minutes. All the parents were asked, one did not come due to work and others had family commitments.

The stakeholder focus group had four participants from different parts of the community. These participants represented education, community and district council stakeholders. This focus group was 1 hour in duration. Of the stakeholders asked, only one could not make it due to work commitments.

As this evaluation was a process as well as an outcome evaluation and as the facilitator's role is integral to the functioning of PAYPFP, it was decided that it was important to also gain their perspectives of how the programme had run. Two facilitators and the programme coordinator representing all the staff involved were interviewed in the facilitator's focus group. This interview was 1 hour 20 minutes in duration.

### **Procedure**

Present at each of the focus groups was one of the researchers (SM) and one notetaker. Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim, but for the purposes of thoroughness and accuracy a note-take was also present at each interview to record the order of participants' conversation and important ideas discussed. These notes were then used by both the researchers and the transcriber to ensure accuracy of the conversations recorded.

Each of the focus groups followed a similar semi-structured interview format that included questions on the participant's perceptions of:

- How valuable PAYPFP was
- What could be improved
- The impact of PAYPFP

- The different components of the programme
- The effectiveness of outdoor activities
- Future directions for PAYPPF

These questions were framed as open-ended questions in order to encourage focus group participants to share as many of their own ideas as possible without being exposed to any preconceived ideas of the researchers.

## **Analysis**

All data were analysed by SM and RS using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis is a qualitative method of analysis which requires in-depth examination of the data to allow common themes to emerge. Initial coding revealed a number of minor categories that were summarised into preliminary themes. Further analysis resulted in these preliminary themes being condensed into the major themes discussed in this report.

## **Ethical issues**

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Upper South A Ethics Committee.

The Collaborative is committed to ethical research and evaluation practice and the researchers undertook to ensure at all times that:

- All participation was voluntary
- Informed consent was sought and gained from each participant
- The right to privacy and confidentiality was respected for each participant
- The dignity and worth of every individual and the integrity of families/ whānau and the diversity of cultures was respected

Participants were provided with information and consent forms to complete prior to each focus group. As the focus groups involved open-ended questions the researcher made it clear that participants did not have to take part in discussions if they did not wish to, at no disadvantage to themselves. The researcher stressed confidentiality, but also reminded participants that confidentiality could not be guaranteed within a group situation.

All names and identifying details of participants have been changed to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

## Findings

This section provides an overview of the main findings of this evaluation. Five main themes emerged as the focus group participants discussed the strengths of PAYPFP, what didn't work in PAYPFP and future directions for PAYPFP. These themes are:

- **The Strengths of the Pumanawa Atawhai Youth Leadership Programme**
- **The Outcomes of Pumanawa Atawhai Youth Leadership Programme**
- **The fundamental components of the Pumanawa Atawhai Youth Leadership Programme**
- **Areas for Future Development of the Pumanawa Atawhai Youth Leadership Programme**
- **Moving theory into practice**

A full description of each theme is now provided.

## **THE STRENGTHS OF PAYPFP**

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The participants identified many strengths within the Pumanawa Atawhai Young People and their families Programme. These included the cost effectiveness and practical nature of the programme as well as the many unique opportunities it provided. In addition participants also saw the developmental focus and the context driven and responsive nature of the programme as a significant strength. The involvement of family and community in the programme was also highlighted as a major strength. However, the greatest strength the programme participants identified was the relationships, styles of interaction and commitment the facilitators developed with the young people and their families above and beyond the brief of the programme.

### **Cost effective, practical and unique opportunities**

On a practical level there were a number of strengths of the programme that were identified. These included the programme being cost effective for programme participants, practical and age appropriate.

Parents in particular saw the cost effectiveness of the programme as a definite strength, especially in comparison to other programmes which they perceived as being cost prohibitive.

... the fact that we didn't have to pay anything, it didn't have to come out of our pocket, I suppose. It is a huge difference because there is no way I could have put (him) through something like that. (Parent)

A number of parents also identified the practical nature of PAYPFP as a significant strength. One commented on the lack of practical support for young people generally, and how that makes a programme such as this, so useful.

...it's one of the few programmes I can think of, of enormous value to young people and there just doesn't seem to be enough of them, of this real practical, concrete sort where they get that peer assistance...(Parent)

Parents also noted that PAYPFP was particularly valuable because it was developed for young people of the same age, compared to other initiatives such as holiday programs, which catered for a range of ages.

...with the holiday programs you get the littlest as well, you know you get the six and seven year olds and you get the older kids and they are combined in together... that's alright, but at least with this (programme) they are all on the same level, they are the same, you know they have all got the same interests, the same age...it's that common dominator...(Parent)

Highlighted by both parents and young people were the unique opportunities this programme provided for the youth to experience new things.

One young person for example, commented on how he got to do things he would never normally have experienced.

The opportunities that we do in it...the things that we got to do, like you wouldn't do,.....someone that gave us the opportunity and took us out.  
(Young Person)

In addition to recognising the new opportunities their children were provided, parents also talked about PAYFPF giving young people the opportunity to be challenged and to take risks within a supportive and safe environment.

... the living on the edge, the danger, it's there but it's done safely...  
they can take those challenges and they can take the risks and it's okay  
and you can push yourself as far as you want to, as you are able to...  
and there are risks and you might get hurt or you might fail or whatever,  
(but) it's we are here, we're your safety net and it's okay because we'll  
catch you if you fall... it's the risk taking, that's what they love...(Parent)

## **Developmentally focused**

Participants, particularly the stakeholders were impressed with the way that the programme was designed not just as a recreational programme but as a programme that helped young people to develop psychologically and socially, while still being 'fun'. In addition, participants were impressed at the number of practical skills the young people learned as a part of PAYFPF.

The primary focus of the programme on creating opportunities to learn new skills through developing relationships was also viewed by focus group participants as a major strength of the programme. This was seen to occur through role modelling, group work, peer learning and by developing support networks.

The strengths based nature of the programme that recognised that the young people had important strengths that could be built on, rather than just having deficits that needed to be eliminated, was also highlighted as a strength. Underpinning this was the recognition that the facilitators were not just there to 'tell the young people what to do' but to challenge them to develop their own skills and capacity.

## **Not just recreational**

Parents and stakeholders commented on previous experiences of other programmes that they believed were primarily designed 'to keep young people busy'. PAYFPF was seen as different, however, because it also provided an opportunity for learning.

...I think it does give the kids a chance to do things, to show their level and puts them on the edge...through the activities and stuff like that and I think...it's way out front of a lot of youth programmes that are just basically recreational...they are basically just entertaining kids rather

than giving them the skills and the process is really clear, the kids are learning through the process... (Stakeholder)

### **Fun and engaging**

Participants from every focus group identified having fun as an important strength of PAYFPF. This was particularly highlighted by the young people.

...getting more confidence and it's all fun, it's real good, it's all jacked up...(Young Person)

It's cool; we did like heaps of real mean stuff. (Young Person)

A number of parents said they believed the 'fun' aspect of the course was one of the main reasons the young people kept going. This was important as they recognised that the young people needed to 'want to do the course' for it to be successful.

Another strength of the 'fun' aspect of the programme was that it was not just limited to the young people as it was noted by the stakeholders that the facilitators sense of 'fun' also influenced the outcome of the programme.

And they (the facilitators) enjoy the activities with the kids...too, the kids can pick that up... (Stakeholder)

Some participants believed that the 'fun' experiences the young people had were also significant as they engaged the young people, creating opportunities for genuine involvement. They said this was important as they noted that this particular group could have been difficult to engage. They also commented that the enthusiasm and 'buy in' the facilitators had generated from the young people had a significant impact on its success.

"They can engage a lot of students who, I think, might have been quite difficult for a lot other people to...engage." (Stakeholder)

### **Strengths based / Youth empowerment**

Participants also saw that a major strength of the programme was the way that learning occurred within a strengths based context.

...there are already lots of programmes for young people but this one stands out because it's got a lot of (the) therapeutic, developmental and it's a strengths based programme and it's from a holistic base and respectful of the community... (Stakeholder)

The young people also noted this approach. They said the facilitators recognised that they had their own strengths they could contribute to the group, and used this to challenge them to develop skills such as leadership, rather than 'just telling them what to do'.

.....when other people tell us like what to do...(with them) we are given our own choices. (Young Person)

Participants said the facilitators had been successful in this approach as they had given the young people clear processes to follow; these allowed them to both support and challenge the young people at the same time. One participant gave an example of the rafting activity the young people had planned themselves, linking this to a sense of achievement and the development of responsibility and self confidence.

...it takes a while, the shakedown period when they are first in the group, you know, about how the leaders are not going to be telling them what they should be doing... (there are) really clear processes. So building a raft like they did...that's all got to be them pushing that thing... it's not all going to come along on the back of a trailer... they've got to build it, they have got to work out what they've got to do...(its) their responsibility... (Stakeholder)

The young people gave examples of the facilitators using this approach to challenge them to take responsibility for their own actions and learn that their choices influenced the outcome of events. The young people said they learned that the type of experiences they had, were up to them and that the choices that they made influenced the outcome of the activity.

Yeah, on the journey...(they said)...stop complaining, it's up to you. It is up to us. (Young Person)

This learning was also extended to activities and behaviours beyond the programme.

...you know like make the right choices I guess, don't do stupid things. Getting the most out of the opportunities that you are given. (Young Person)

### **Promoting leadership and achievement**

Keeping with a strengths based and youth focussed, developmental model of working, participants also noted how the programme's focus on encouraging leadership was highly valued.

Well, I think they've been given a chance to show leadership and that's a critical part of that whole Waipuna model, is that they are actually building up some of the kids to be leaders to the others,... the whole process...allows them to own their own behaviour and take initiative... (Stakeholder)

As was the sense of responsibility and ownership they perceived the young people gained.

Yeah it is, I think...at the end they wouldn't say that (the facilitators) did it, it was, we did it. (Stakeholder)

### **Role modelling**

All of the participants identified the influence of role modelling by the facilitators as a major strength of PAYPFP. The importance of positive ways of relating, modelled by the facilitators, was identified as central to this.

Parents talked about the value of having other adults 'who weren't just parents' for the young people to talk to, particularly if the young person was having problems at home. A number of the parents commented on the value of the young people having positive relationships with older males 'who they could look up to', be challenged by and learn from. They said,

"I think the thing I liked about it which I would recommend to other parents too was...as a single mum with a teenage boy, you are crying out for some sort of male activity and he got that in bucket loads but he also got the interpersonal skills and the personal development...so it was the discussion (as well) and it wasn't just sort of 'blokes'... going out camping. It was...the whole aspect...everything these guys did related back to leadership and responsibility and to...challenges for yourself and pushing yourself. So it was really...a holistic programme that...covered all those bits..." (Parent)

Individually and collectively, as a group, as role models the boys see how they interact and help each other out. (Parent)

### **Opportunities for peer learning and support**

Young people said the friendships they made were a significant part of PAYPFP for them and the peer relationships they built with each other were identified as valuable. Participants gave examples of young people learning off each other through the activities and group work they engaged in. For instance one parent commented on the effect group activities had on relationships the young people had with each other, such as giving them more insight into, and appreciation for people who are different from them.

The young people also identified group work and opportunities for peer learning as a valuable part of PAYPFP, particularly for learning to 'get along with others'. They acknowledged there were some issues such as arguments in the group that made it hard to participate at times, such as not agreeing on the same things and wanting to 'do their own thing'. But overall they said that they found working in a group was 'awesome and fun'.

Like learning to get along and working with your peers, like the whole group and stuff, yeah, it's phat. (Young Person)

A number of parents also commented on the value of the support networks they had developed with other families and identified instances when they had supported and 'learnt off each other'. They said this was a part of PAYPFP they would have liked to develop further.

### **Context driven and responsive**

Another major strength of PAYPFP that was noted was the way in which the programme was initially developed to meet the specific needs of the young people, their families and the Rolleston area and the responsive way in which it continued to evolve to meet these needs.

The stakeholders in particular, many of whom had been involved from the start of the programme development, commented on how impressed they were with the way the facilitators approached the development of PAYPFP with care, and the needs of the young people as the priority. One participant said “they had worked hard to get it right”. They commented on the team’s professionalism, emphasis on good relationships and the trust they were able to build with everyone, such as the accountability structures that they integrated into PAYPFP.

...we have really got to put in a plug for Paddy and Waipuna...(they) talked about it and set something up and got in there and did the work and Paddy and his way of doing it carefully with the young people in mind and not just jumping into it but trying to work it to get it right, I think it is just amazing... (Stakeholder)

Participants were also impressed at the way the facilitators had developed the programme to meet ‘needs’ as they developed, such as family work.

...it’s been interesting to watch that change over the last year and a half of the programme, from being very much young person focused solely, really, (to) understanding they live within the context of family and community...changing to meet the needs...suddenly having to try and change and become more family oriented I think has been a big move and quite risky in some ways for Paddy and the team but I’ve liked how he has just gone with that and really tried to meet as many of those needs as they possibly can within the structures they have. (Stakeholder)

PAYPFP’s response to community needs and concerns throughout the programme was also admired. One participant commented on changes to the mix of the group as the programme progressed. This resulted in a shift from only having young people with a great number of difficulties on the programme to a mix of young people with less behavioural problems, creating more potential for positive peer influence and less negative association with the group in the community, as no longer only catering for the ‘bad kids’.

...so they’ve been a bit more conscious of having a balanced group, that is they’re not all at one end of the spectrum because otherwise with male role models within the group...the momentum (tended to get) out of hand...and then that’s when the law enforcement officers started to blame the group for the behaviour... (Stakeholder)

## **External support**

The young people commented on the significant impact of being able to talk to the facilitators outside of the planned parts of PAYPFP. They said the facilitators were always willing to help and that they felt supported over the whole period.

Like, if we are in trouble out of school...they like ring you up and talk to you about it and stuff. (Young Person)

This was also seen to help reinforce the learning that took place in the formal parts of the programme by participants. The external support the parents received from the facilitators was also a significant theme and was a major contributor to the success of the programme for them.

## **Family involvement and support**

The focus of PAYPFP beyond just working with the individual young person was also seen as a key strength. Not only were families included in the formal parts of the programme such as attending the GAIN programme and a family weekend, facilitators also provided ongoing individual and group support which was highly valued by focus group participants.

Parents believed that involving the family in PAYPFP greatly enhanced the programme. They acknowledged the unconditional support, encouragement, honesty, and positive role modelling they received from the facilitators.

I've learnt from watching the facilitators. The support I have received from them has been fantastic. (Parent)

The facilitators look at the good things and the bad things that are happening in your family, and support you through all of it. When things are tough, I would get texts from the facilitators to say you are doing a really good job. (Parent)

...(they are) honest, absolutely honest, and for...my situation they haven't abandoned us I suppose when the chips are down, they're actually even there more...so when things got tough they didn't bail and that is just huge, they were just a rock really...I've got two support networks, my partner and them, and it was really huge. (Parent)

Parents also commented on how much they appreciated being made to feel welcome and part of PAYPFP from its inception.

These guys are so non-judgmental and they have become like a support network really and good friends of the kids....(Parent)

... as soon as we started the course we were made welcome, and helped to feel at ease...it was very positive. (Parent)

The young people made a number of positive remarks about the involvement of families on the programme, particularly in relation to feeling that they had learnt new ways to relate to their parents. One young person said he now realised that his parents 'weren't just old people' but had their own life experiences that he could identify with.

The stakeholders also saw the family support work the facilitators did as a significant strength of PAYPFP. This was seen as particularly important because of the need for change to occur in a family rather than an individual only context.

I think the Waipuna model also really enhances the fact that...the whole family is a system, it's not just the young person that is going to make the change, you have to work with everybody to bring about that change, so in that sense that model increases the responsibility of parents participating in the process as well. (Stakeholder)

This framework was not only seen as providing motivation for young people to engage but also for their parents as well.

...and the response to those needs that have been presented to them by these young people, that actually their family is just as much in need of help here as the young person and actually a lot of the issues these young people face come because of the issues at home... (Stakeholder)

They also said that working with families strengthened the positive skills the young people developed on PAYPFP, as these new skills were also being reinforced at home.

And I think it's reinforced too...the young people all have this amazing experience and learn all these tools and things; how to deal with conflict and all these sorts of things outside and then if they go home and it's the same that it ever was and they don't know how to understand what we've just learnt, how do I apply that when no one else is doing it...so I think having the GAIN programme as part of that has helped to alleviate some of that in terms of parents now learn similar sort of tools to help... (Stakeholder)

Stakeholders also noted that the involvement of family in the programme created opportunities for parents to develop their parenting skills as they were able to talk with the facilitators as issues arose, and develop different ways to support their young person. They saw the availability of facilitators, particularly for parents to talk to as the most significant strength of the 'family work' component of PAYPFP.

Finally, the way in which facilitators interacted with parents was also seen as an important strength by stakeholders. They commented on the respectful way in which facilitators worked with parents, saying they developed a peer support role with them rather than taking an 'expert' position.

And there's no big labelling that goes on or anything like that, it's actually, you know, normal that we are going through these sorts of stages and we're all in it together and nobody is an expert particularly. (Stakeholder)

## **Facilitators**

As outlined above focus group participants identified many strengths of PAYPFP, however, the facilitator's ability to form relationships with programme participants and use these relationships to facilitate positive change was recognised as one of the greatest strengths of the PAYPFP programme and was noted time and time again. While this has already been discussed, this section will now expand on this theme by identifying the components of this relationship that made it successful.

The programme facilitators were seen as being a major strength of the programme because of;

- their professionalism
- the relationships they formed with everyone involved
- the way they related to each other
- the way they interacted with people to provide support and opportunities for learning
- their unconditional commitment to all programme participants
- their commitment to the ongoing development of the programme.

## **Skilled professionals**

In terms of professional skills and character PAYPFP facilitators were commended for their high level of training,

And the facilitators are well trained and have got those skills that are needed...I think that's the key...there's lots of different keys to it but that's rather an important bit. (Stakeholder)

and their young enthusiastic spirit.

Young and enthusiastic, they've got the energy and they can communicate... it would be very hard to find a group that was as skilled as some of those guys. (Stakeholder)

## **Relationships**

For the young people one of the most important aspects of the programme was the type of relationship they developed with the facilitators. Rather than experiencing imbalanced power relationships with adults like they had in the past the young people in the programme described how the facilitators had earned their trust by being "honest", "trustworthy", "dependable" and because they never, "gave up" on them.

The young people said that the facilitators communicated well and were understanding and they appreciated the relaxed way in which they interacted with them. For example they said the facilitators were 'chilled out' and 'they never went nuts or anything' if things went wrong. They also said they liked the fact that the facilitators would talk to them and that they were 'down to earth' and not controlling, in the way they related to them. The positive impact of these relationships was evident when the young people talked about the importance of their relationship with the facilitator. The young people said that the facilitators were "just like one of us" and that they weren't 'like a tutor or parent, who tells them what to do' but more "like a mate".

When asked if they felt like they could talk to the facilitators if they needed to, they all said they could. A significant comment was that facilitators were positive and not negative even when there were problems. Underpinning this was the belief that the facilitators were "real, good people" and "on the same level" as them.

They understand your language. (Young Person)

They were understanding and stuff, like know where you are coming from. (Young Person)

... they just talked to you on like the same level as you. (Young Person)

Stakeholders and parents also recognised that the relationship young people built and the mentoring they received from the facilitators was very important. They noted that the strength of this relationship was in the open and honest way in which the facilitators interacted with the young people.

...I think for a lot of them it was the relationship between them and (the facilitators)...they're (the facilitators) showing themselves as guys...they are very open and honest and they (the young people) can talk more about what's worrying them... (Stakeholder)

They also commented on the power balance in the relationship between facilitators and young people and the level of acceptance that facilitators had for all.

these guys are so non-judgmental and they have become like a support network really and good friends of the kids and stuff. (Parent)

The facilitators are like big brothers to the boys, the boys idolise those two. We idolise (them) ...(Parent)

Facilitators were also highly respected by focus group participants not only because of the type of relationships they formed with young people and their families but also how they used these relationships to facilitate change.

The young people commented on how the facilitator's lack of force and constant support helped them to achieve.

They wouldn't force us but they'd like make you confident about it.  
(Young Person)

Yeah, they like if you are too scared like to climb up the rock climbing or something they would like, they wouldn't force you to do it, they would support you. (Young Person)

They'd like want you to do it and like give you like choices about... doing it and stuff but then if you don't want to do it then that's it you don't have to do it. (Young Person)

Cos it's like stepping out of your comfort zone but then like if it's too far out of your comfort zone then they'll like won't force you into... (Young Person)

Similarly the young people liked how facilitators supported change by the way in which they dealt with any problems that arose. They said they liked it that the facilitators didn't get angry but talked to them if there was a problem and they would stop an activity to deal with problems as they came up. They also said they liked the way that the facilitators challenged them to make good choices and think about what they were doing. One participant summarised this as the "straight up" way that the facilitators dealt with issues.

They were like relaxed. (Young Person)

They didn't really get angry but they would just talk to you. (Young Person)

They would ask us to like make good choices... (Young Person)

...(to) think about what we were doing wrong and about the consequences of our actions. (Young Person)

Stakeholders commented on the mutual respect which recognised that everyone had something to offer, that was built between the facilitators and the young people and their families. For instance one stakeholder said during the high ropes course he noticed that while the facilitators managed the practical part of the activity, at other times the parents and the young people would be in charge, creating opportunities for the development of their leadership skills and relationships as well.

Yeah absolutely, it was mutual respect and sometimes...it's (the facilitators) getting everybody on the high ropes which is putting everybody, you know, most of us, on edge but at other times other people were in charge and sometimes the kids were in charge...so you know, it's a really good model, I mean I think it is quite a costly model, but I think in terms of the amount of movement each kid makes it's going to be way different from other schools. (Stakeholder)

Interactions based on role modelling respectful relationships were also noted by the parents.

...probably by listening and gently guiding them along...like for me the conflict resolution thing is a good example of that...showing a way through a situation by experience and on the skills they have got...  
(Parent)

Participants also commented on the relationships the facilitators had with each other, and the impact of this in modelling positive relationships. The young people said that they liked the way the facilitators interacted like they were “brothers” or “good mates”.

“Yeah, they’d like talk to each other and then they’re like real good mates....” (Young Person)

### **Ongoing involvement**

Another important strength that facilitators brought to the programme was the level of commitment they had to young people and their families. This commitment was often evidenced by the amount of involvement the facilitators were prepared to have in many aspects of the young person’s and their families lives.

This was indicated in the facilitators’ willingness to be available for the young people as issues came up.

...they’ve become the counsellors for those guys...and they’ve come in at another time during the week just to sometimes sit one to one with these guys...they’ve (the young people) been very lucky...to have that opportunity, but specifically, I just think people have felt more supported... the kids have known that there’s somebody that is going to be here sometimes that...understands what they are going through...  
(Stakeholder)

The genuineness of interactions and how much facilitators showed they cared for the young people was also noted.

There’s lots you could say, I think just their generosity and time and effort and that they were genuinely concerned about the young people that they were working with and did everything within their means to support them as much as possible...and all sorts of things that were really outside of what they had to be doing but because of that relationship they were willing to go there... (Stakeholder)

### **Summary**

Focus group participants noted many strengths of PAYPPF. These strengths ranged from the programme design and philosophy through to the personal involvement. In particular programme facilitators and the relationships they formed with young people and their families were noted by all participants as a major component that led to the success of this programme.

## THE IMPACT OF PAYPFP

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All participants agreed that there had been a number of positive changes as a result of young people and their families participating in PAYPFP. The main changes noted for parents were increased confidence in their parenting skills and better relationships and interactions with their children. The main impacts of PAYPFP on the young people were identified as the development of personal and social skills, better school work, higher levels of school attendance and improved relationships with their family and other adults.

By far parents talked most about the positive changes for the young people that resulted from involvement in PAYPFP. For some the change was dramatic, such as one parent who acknowledged the return of a lost son.

My son was out of control, I lost him, since the program I've got him back. He's a totally different kid. (Parent)

This section provides an overview of the benefits this programme has had for the young people before examining the benefits for parents and the community.

### Personal growth in the young people

A significant impact of PAYPFP identified by all participants was the young people's increased personal growth, such as more ownership, self-belief and responsibility. They also commented on changes in the young people's values and perceptions of the future.

One Parent said:

There has been lots of personal growth for my son, and within our family. (Parent)

### Increased personal ownership, responsibility and confidence

All groups noted an increase in the young people's sense of personal responsibility and ownership for the outcome of their actions and the effect this had in other areas of their life.

...Well, he wants to go and earn some money so Mum and Dad don't have to pay for it...he wants to start being independent, that sort of value, because he has become independent out there and so forth, so he wants to carry that on and finding a job or earning some money would take some responsibility off us...and give him cell phone money and even towards the house bills, he said I will pay half. (Parent)

An increase in personal responsibility was also noted by the facilitators.

...they learn a lot more awareness of the, maybe ownership is the word, of the part they've got to play in what's happening...I think I've seen more openness as well in the relationships often....(Facilitator)

...but I'm interested in one young guy... and I've seen him take a lot more ownership and really start to take more responsibility for what he is doing...it goes up and down...and he'll be like right there taking responsibility and then he'll go back to what he's always done but then he will pull himself out...and I think that's a really good tool for him, a bit of self-belief. (Facilitator)

This increased sense of personal responsibility was linked to an increase in self belief and confidence in the young people by a number of participants from each focus group. The young people gave examples of this, such as improved self confidence from learning the outcome of activities 'was up to them' and taking on leadership roles in the group.

Focus group participants also believed the young people had gained confidence from the sense of achievement they had gained from completing the activities on the programme. One young person talked about this as the confidence they had developed from 'stepping up' and doing when they had challenging activities on the programme. A number of the young people spoke with pride when talking about outdoor activities they had completed, such as rock climbing and 'walking the whole way' on the journey.

The impact of the sense of achievement that the young people gained through completing the course was also commented on by the stakeholders. One stakeholder talked about the pride they saw in the young people at the end of PAYFPF that they had achieved something and done well.

...I think of their graduation services and that it's awesome to see just the pride of the young person that they've achieved something and done well...(Stakeholder)

### **Changes in values**

Another impact identified by some of the participants, particularly the parents and the facilitators was a change in values in the young people. For instance one parent commented on the difference in their child's view of how to relate to other people and ideas about life.

Isn't it funny how...it changes somewhere and you don't know where that light goes on and it's click it's on...there's more ways to have fun than 'I want to be a big tough guy' and you know, it just changes, they see other ways to enjoy life and enjoy being with people...(Parent)

Parents and facilitators noted an increase in more understanding and respect for others in a number of the young people.

One boy didn't like one of the other boys - he thought he was a particular way, but when he got to know the boy, he found out the boy was different than he thought. It was a great lesson for him, and the good thing was that he was big enough to go and talk to the boy, and let him know how he initially felt, and then how he had changed

because he got to know the boy better. His confidence has grown so much. (Parent)

Young people also gave examples of how learning to work with others on the programme taught them to 'get along with' and value people who were different from them.

### **Changes in focus on the future**

Participants, particularly the parents and some of the young people also commented on changes in the young people's attitudes towards the future.

...He's after a job now, he wants to get...money and start, you know, responsibilities. He's seen the value of different items...he has seen what value is.... (Parent)

... (getting) more out of life, like you see in a different perspective. (Young person)

### **Development of new skills for the young people**

The development of new skills by the young people was one of the most significant impacts of PAYPPF identified by participants. Parents particularly commented on the social and relational skills the young people developed through participation in PAYPPF and the impact this had on their family relationships.

Overall the skills the young people developed and improved were identified as:

- social skills
- more willingness to engage with challenges
- teamwork
- conflict resolution
- leadership
- communication skills
- problem solving
- decision making skills
- taking more initiative

### **Social skills**

Participants from every focus group gave examples of the development of improved social skills in the young people with each other, their families and people from the wider community. The young people commented on this particularly when they talked about learning to do things as a group. Parents also gave examples of how they had observed this change in the young people. For instance one parent gave an example of their young person now being able to introduce themselves to adults at a social gathering who they did not know and making conversation.

### **Increased willingness to engage with challenges**

Participants also noted an increase in the willingness of the young people to engage with challenges. This skill was particularly highlighted by the young people

themselves, with one young person describing it as learning to “step outside their comfort zone”. They also said PAYFPF helped them to think about getting the most out of any opportunities they had.

Yeah, taking up the challenge, like instead of just like sitting back and being all cool and like actually getting out there. (Young person)

### **Teamwork**

Learning to work with others was another skill highlighted by the participants, particularly the young people. Participants commented on the effect team work had on the development of new ways of relating for the young people, such as learning to accept other people’s differences.

The team work that they built up by being in the outdoors and having challenges to overcome. And they learnt to accept others weaknesses. Here you are as strong as the weakest person’s weakness...which is so different from the attitude they get at school. This attitude has really affected their school and home life too... (Parent)

### **Improved conflict resolution skills**

Improved conflict resolution skills in the young people, was another positive impact identified by some participants. The young people gave examples such as learning to make decisions when people in the group wanted to do different things. One parent gave an example of the facilitator’s use of ‘getting closure’ after conflict in helping develop these skills.

My boy has been really affected by learning about communicating effectively and conflict resolution – it’s been a great thing. (the facilitators were) always looking for closure in a situation, and looking at how to resolve the conflict between people. (Parent)

### **Leadership skills**

The development of leadership skills by the young people was also identified as an important outcome of PAYFPF; both through the confidence the young people gained (from planning their own activities), and as a result of taking on peer leadership roles in the group.

Young people gave examples such as times when one of them had to ‘step up’ and lead the rest of the group, which they said ‘set a good example’. They said this was something they’d all experienced, and they valued the opportunity it gave them to develop leadership skills.

### **Better communication skills**

Every focus group noted improvements in relationships and maturity in the way the young people communicated with others. For the parents and stakeholders this was predominantly highlighted in relation to improved interactions with adults. A number of parents gave examples of better communication now taking place between them and their young people. While the young people and facilitators noted improved communication skills between the young people themselves.

The relationship the boys have with adults has changed. They are more confident with adults. I have had comments from others in the community that have been very impressed with the way the boys communicate and their confidence. This course has bridged the gap between parents and teenagers. (Parent)

Yeah, like better communication and stuff, like all the kind of coping, like talking to each other and not losing our cool and stuff. (Young person)

### **Better problem solving and decision making skills**

Other skills that were noted by participants included better problem solving and decision making skills. One stakeholder said they had noticed that one student had started to realise that when something went wrong he now had some skills to cope and that had changed it from a helpless situation, to one over which he had some control.

The young people and parents also commented on the opportunities PAYPFP provided for programme participants to develop better decision making skills. The young people gave examples as learning to 'know the difference between taking good and bad risks' and knowing 'how to make the right choices'. Another young person recited the 'challenge by choice' motto of the course, and had been positively affected by this motto, relating it to their personal growth.

### **Taking more initiative**

Some participants gave examples of an increase in initiative by the young people linking this to the focus on personal responsibility and leadership (such as the young people planning their own activities) on the programme. One parent believed that the way in which PAYPFP allows the young person to own their behaviour and take initiative is an integral part of this. Some parents also gave examples of their young people now taking more initiative at home.

He was good today, I gave him a list of jobs I'd like...there was one job I didn't give him but he did it...(Parent)

Overall, the young people believed the biggest impact PAYPFP would have on them long term was the skills they had developed or improved. Particularly;

- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- More self confidence
- Decision making skills

### **Practical outcomes for the young person**

Participants commented on the stabilising influence PAYPFP had on the young people, particularly through the personal relationships they had developed with facilitators. The young people identified PAYPFP, and these relationships as being a dependable and reliable influence on their lives. The impacts of this were noted as:

- Increased stability
- Improved school work
- A reduction in truancy
- A reduction in anti social behaviour

### **Increased stability**

A number of participants particularly the parents and stakeholders gave examples of young people becoming more stable and reliable over the course of PAYPPF.

It's been a...turnaround and I think, you know, there's been other things that we have implemented as well but this programme has been a major part of that, I think because my son's life has been quite disrupted, I mean he has had nine different schools in two years all over the South Island, and here it's been solid and that's been huge, it's something dependable and reliable... (Parent)

My son used to take off every night...but now he wants to be at home - being out with Jeremy and Paddy has changed him. (Parent)

### **Improved school work**

Improved school work for some of the young people was noted by a number of the parents and stakeholders.

...now, today he got his first award ever in an assembly for top marks in maths and it was like he was beaming and it was like he's passed all his exams at school, he is actually putting in the effort at school, it's not like 'oh, I'm dumb, I can't do this', he has learnt through this...(Parent)

### **A reduction in truancy**

Some stakeholders and parents also commented on the positive effect of the programme on school attendance.

My kid was quite a regular truant at school...it wasn't until we got the printout...I didn't know he was bunking school...now he would never dream of bunking school at all. (Parent)

### **A reduction in anti social behaviour**

A number of participants, while acknowledging that there were still challenging behaviours at times for some of the young people, noted a decrease in anti social behaviour and some participants noted quite dramatic changes. For instance one parent said their young person was not committing crimes anymore.

...(he's) not committing any crimes, not taking off, he is not doing anything wrong anymore...he shows respect at home, he helps me out and... he is just a completely different person, because I had lost him. (Parent)

## **Impact on the family – “they let us into their world”**

The parents acknowledged the impact PAYPFP had on their parenting skills, relationships within their family, and family support networks. A very significant impact was in their relationships with their young people, and the effect this had on the wider family. They said that they grew in confidence from:

- Seeing the changes in their young people
- Support they received from the facilitators
- The GAIN (parenting) programme
- Support networks they developed with other parents

They valued the opportunities they had for peer support and learning through interaction with others during family events such as the family weekend. Other impacts identified included ‘learning to listen’ and better communication skills, more connection between the young person and their family, an increased sense of support for families, better conflict resolution skills and the impact on other children in the family.

### **Learning to listen and better communication skills**

Several parents said they had developed more effective ways of communicating. Listening was seen by many parents as an important skill to enhance. This was seen both in terms of learning to listen better and also recognising that they were not listening as well as they could have been.

I was switching off to my son. The course brought this to my attention. I have learnt to stop and listen and look him in the eye so he feels heard. (Parent)

Listening was shown to impact on many areas of home life.

The listening thing really stood out for me – I realised there is some restructuring to be done in our home, around meals, the TV, etc, but its worth it. We are all making efforts to try and listen effectively to each other. (Parent)

### **More connection between the young people and their family**

More cohesive family relationships was noted by several parents. Parents even welcomed their children challenging some of their own decisions in the same supportive manner they had learned at PAYPFP.

It has had a fantastic effect on my family. My son uses what he has learnt, for example he reminds me ‘challenge by choice, mum’. (Parent)

Most importantly they had found a place to be together.

They have let us into their world. (Parent)

### **Increased support**

The parents commented on the support networks they had established both with facilitators and other families, and how significant and valuable these now are.

The support keeps going. I have my family, and since this course I now have an extended family. (Parent)

### **Influence on other children in the family**

Some parents further noted the positive effect of PAYPPF on their extended family environment such as the impact on other children in the family.

...she (my daughter) has sort of been dragged into this I suppose. She absolutely loves it, the GAIN programme...she's not a teen yet, she learnt a lot of stuff about it and she was involved in it as well...it was kind of good for her and I wish they had one for girls. (Parent)

They noted the way the young people on the programme interacted with their siblings and other children on the family weekend as being very positive and commented on the sense of joy and achievement the young people obtained from choosing to care for the visiting children.

### **Better conflict resolution skills**

An increase in effective conflict resolution skills within the family was also noted by a number of the parents. Some of them gave quite powerful examples of the positive effect this had on their family.

It's changed the way we approach conflict in our family – we now look at closure and hearing each other... (Parent)

### **Summary**

Overall participants believed the young people would take the life skills they had developed, the sense of achievement they had experienced and an increased sense ownership of their lives, with them into the future. The participants also noted the skills the young people developed expanded to influence other relationships in their lives such as those within their families, school and community.

# THE PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

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The programme was made up of:

**Initial Interviews:** with the young people and their families.

**The Holiday Programme:** 5 consecutive days of activities during the second week of the school holidays at the start of the course.

**The Family Supporters Day:** a day to introduce the parents and young people on the 6th day of the holiday programme

**After School Programme:** an activity based programme from 3.30pm until 6.00pm 1 day a week after school for 7 weeks, that started after the holiday programme.

**GAIN:** a parenting programme that involved both the young people and their parents every Tuesday night for 2.25 hours for 4 weeks. This started on the third week of the after school programme.

**The Journey:** on the completion of the after school programme the young people and the facilitators went on a journey in the Southern Alps for 6 consecutive days.

**The Family Weekend:** on the weekend following the journey the families, the young people and the facilitators stayed in a lodge in the Craigieburn forest doing therapeutic sessions and activities.

**The Graduation:** a graduation was held to celebrate successes at the end of the programme.

The participants were positive about all of the activities on the programme. The activities that stood out for the young people were, the holiday programme, planning their own rafting event on the after school programme, the family events, the GAIN programme and the journey. During activities they noted;

- The challenge of getting along as a team
- Learning to lead and organise activities for the group
- Being involved in decision making
- The sense of achievement and pride they experienced on completion

The families found the activities that involved them valuable; especially in the opportunities they gave to develop parenting skills learnt on the GAIN programme, and strengthen their relationship with their young person and other families from PAYPPF.

## **Holiday Programme**

The holiday programme was successful for participants involved as it provided initial rapport building, constructive activities over the school holiday period, and it was age appropriate.

### **Initial rapport building**

The facilitators said the holiday programme was valuable as it was for 5 consecutive days at the start of PAYFPF, providing an opportunity for continuity and relationship building with participants.

...the holiday programme five days in a row was really cool because of that continuity. (Facilitator)

...a lot of time goes by between a day programme, a lot of stuff can happen which can be good because you can work with that but just having the continuity each day, that theme sort of carried through, you can really work with them quite successfully...(Facilitator)

### **Constructive and engaging activities over the school holiday period**

The parents appreciated the holiday programme, saying that there was little for young people in Rolleston to do over this time. The young people's comments on the holiday programme also centred on having something to do, instead of 'being bored.'

...The holiday program was good...in the holidays it could have been like real boring and we got like five days of just complete action... (Young person)

...usually you spend your holidays just doing nothing. (Young person)

## **Gain**

All the groups believed the GAIN programme was successful. The parents found it particularly valuable, especially being able to attend with their child and interact with other families. They said they really enjoyed GAIN, and it had given them opportunities to develop their parenting skills relationships with their young person. Most of the young people said they liked the GAIN programme and one participant said it was fun. Another participant said they didn't like it because of the amount of writing and "because you got embarrassed" talking.

### **Peer learning – opportunities to learn from each other**

An important theme for participants in the GAIN programme was the opportunities it provided for families and young people to learn off each other and gain more insight into their relationships, both through interacting with each other and interactions with other families on the course. For instance, some young people made comments about gaining more insight into their relationships with their parents during GAIN. One parent commented on the value of the young people making connections with other parents as well, in gaining a better understanding of their own parent's

perspective. A positive comment from one young person was that they liked being able to talk to adults who weren't their parents, as this helped them to understand their own parents better.

Parents also appreciated being able to interact with the other young people on GAIN, saying it gave them more insight into their relationship with their own child.

One parent commented,

...the one thing I felt that was really good in the GAIN programme was...doing activities, we weren't doing it with our own teenage boy, doing it with somebody else's and that was really good because sometimes you come to these things and actually don't want to work with your own kid...because they don't open up to you, they'll open up to somebody else, so it's kind of nice, they are there, you can watch, you can see, you can kind of earwig...and it is always interesting to hear what they have to actually say. (Parent)

They also gave examples of how these new interactions fostered more understanding between the parents and their children.

I had a young person say 'man I thought you were just an adult, but what you went through was mind blowing. (Parent)

GAIN was about learning to reconnect with my son on a different level. And often its stuff you already know about, but it's good to be reminded about how to communicate... with your teen. (Parent)

### **It engaged the young people and their families**

The participants particularly the facilitators and the stake holders commented on the success GAIN had in engaging the young people and their parents.

This was reflected in one stakeholder saying he had been impressed by the commitment to GAIN by both young people and their families. Parents also gave examples of the commitment GAIN had generated.

My son was happy to tell people that he was doing a GAIN program, he would get excited about it and remind me 'we've got GAIN tonight'. (Parent)

Another parent identified the 'relaxed environment' that GAIN encouraged such as having young people on it who already knew each other, as also contributing to its ability to engage programme participants.

GAIN was very good. It helped that the teens did it in groups of other teens that they knew, it helped them open up more, and was a good environment for them – relaxed... (Parent)

### **Opportunities for relationship building**

The facilitators valued the chance GAIN offered to build relationships with parents and young people, and the extra opportunities it provided to extend those relationships.

The stakeholders involved in the GAIN programme said they saw good connections built between parents and young people. They said it created common ground for parents and young people at the start of the course, that could be built on. They also said that it was good that this was followed up with other programme activities involving the families, in helping consolidate what they had learnt.

### **After School Programme**

The facilitators commented on the success, and high participation rate by young people in the after school programme and said it met a need for young people to be engaged after school.

The stakeholders and facilitators acknowledged that the after school programme was limited by time and the distance it takes to drive to activities outside of Rolleston. But they also said this was a strength because it emphasised to the young people that they needed to, and could, develop and find activities within their own area.

All participants commented on the significance of the after school rafting activity the young people organised themselves. The young people valued this experience and used it as an example of the way PAYFPF developed leadership skills and self confidence.

### **The Journey**

Young people were very positive about the journey. They were quite animated in their descriptions of events and experiences and a number of them gave examples of how proud they were when they had completed parts of the journey and the confidence they had developed from this. The facilitators also commented on the effectiveness of the journey, in particular, being able to spend quality time with the young people over an extended period of time. Some young people noted that they were really sad when the journey came to an end. Another said the experience had been “awesome”.

### **Connection and relationship**

The facilitators found the journey very valuable, most importantly in the opportunity it created for them to live with participants, extend their relationships with them, and connect at a deeper level. They recognised that over the course of the journey they were able to form a new level of relationship with the young people. Both facilitators and young people commented on the effect the journey had on relationships young people had with each other, such as giving them more insight into, and appreciation for people who are different from them through spending an extended period of time together.

### **The environment and spirituality**

Both facilitators and young people identified the value of the time they spent outside of their 'normal settings', as a very valuable part of the journey. The facilitators said the journey and its natural setting provided young people with significant places and experiences they could connect with, outside of themselves, giving them a valuable opportunity for self-reflection. They observed that a number of young people were visibly affected by their journey experience, particularly in their connection with nature.

.....when we went to Mt Summers they felt a real connection to that place, a couple of them in particular, and they were really quite sad when they left it, they didn't want to go back and I think, you know, that to me, yeah, sometimes what happens when they came back from those journeys is they just go wild for a while...(Facilitator)

One of the boys said "I really like it here, it's quiet, it's peaceful, the rules are fair, it's common sense, there's no rules here, it's just to know what we bring with us and when I get back I don't think anyone will understand me and understand what I've done", yeah there's a little bit of this fear of not being understood a little bit.... (Facilitator)

### **Developing independence and decision making skills**

Young people commented on the challenges of the journey, such as having to walk the whole way and 'having to carry their own water' and the sense of achievement and pride they experienced on completion. They also gave examples of how these experiences helped them to develop more independence and better decision making skills, such as being involved in group decision making when they had to decide what to do next as a group.

### **The Family Weekend**

The young people said the family weekend was good, they liked the relationship they formed with other parents, the food and the activities they all did together.

...relationships with the group's parents (were) good. (Young person)

There was mean food, good barbecue, mean walking and caving... (Young person)

Cave Stream was awesome. (Young person)

The parents also found it highly valuable and said forming relationships with the other young people on the course and their families had had a positive impact on everyone. For instance, one parent said they were impressed by the way the young people looked after the children who had been taken on the family weekend and commented on the opportunities this gave for the development of their social skills and self confidence.

## **Safety and Trust**

The stakeholders identified the value of the strong safety processes that were implemented in PAYFPF. A number of the young people also commented on the trust they developed with facilitators during the programme activities and said that this, coupled with the carefulness of the planning, helped them feel safe when participating, particularly in outdoor activities.

All the activities we did someone else had done before us and they'd planned it all so we didn't double up on activities, and made it all safe...  
(Young person)

## **Summary**

Overall the participants were very positive about the different components of PAYFPF. The integration of activities that involved parents throughout the programme was seen as an important theme in creating opportunities to consolidate new ways of relating and parenting skills. For the young people, the activities were identified as helping them to develop skills, created a sense of achievement and challenged them to 'make good choices' and develop personal responsibility and self confidence.

## **AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

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All participants thought PAYPFP was valuable and believed it should carry on.

### **The Parents**

The parents suggested possible future directions for PAYPFP as:

- The development of a course for girls
- Utilising young people who have been through PAYPFP as mentors
- More opportunities for parents to meet and set up their own support networks
- A contact list for parents
- A longer course
- Better communication processes when activities unexpectedly changed

### **Utilising young people who have been through PAYPFP as mentors**

A number of parents believed that using young people who had already been through PAYPFP as mentors, would help them continue their own development. For instance, they believed the mentors would be able to take the self-confidence and communication skills they had learnt on the programme and extend them in another role. One parent said their young person had also suggested that this would be a good idea.

Because I said to Paddy about, how come we don't have a programme where the kid has already done, like our kid has already done this course, come back again and say for next year and have a buddy-up system with a new kid, you know, and so that's their buddy... (Parent)

And also they would be gaining skills and more of the responsibility side of it too. (Parent)

Bring the boys back and that's their buddy for the weekend and they get to teach them. (Parent)

### **More opportunities for parents to meet and set up their own support networks**

The parents valued the involvement they had with PAYPFP highly, and suggested that this component could be developed. They recommended that a contact list of other parents be made available at the start of the programme. They also suggested that the facilitators organise an event such as a BBQ at the start of the course, for parents to meet each other.

Actually one thing that would have been quite good, if they had done a contact list for parents, so that we were actually able to contact each other... (Parent)

It was not long enough for the parents, because we only just got to connect with each other at the GAIN course. It would have been good if

they had set something up earlier where we could all get together and get to know each other better...Even if it was just a BBQ or something.  
(Parent)

### **Better communication when activities unexpectedly changed**

One parent suggested more formal processes for communication when activities unexpectedly changed (such as bad weather delaying return from an activity). They suggested a phone list of other parents at this time would have also helped for support, and they would have liked more updates on the situation.

On the journey, my son got snowed in, and stranded with the group. I felt very isolated and wanted more updates on their situation. They were stuck in a big snow drop and the access points were closed...I got so worried I ended up calling Waipuna, and managed to talk to a CEO person – he was reassuring, but couldn't really help...It may have helped to have a phone list of the other parents so we could support each other through it, or a radio to contact them, or a phone tree would have helped. (Parent)

## **The Stakeholders**

All the stakeholders believed it would be a valuable programme to continue in the community and said it would be sad to see it stop. They identified important possible future directions as;

- Building awareness of the value of programmes such as PAYPFP in the area
- The need for skilled people to carry on the initiative or develop a new one
- Supporting people who create any new initiatives to 'get up to speed'
- The high cost of any future programme needs to be weighed up against the possible wider positive impacts of the initiative

### **Building awareness of the value of programmes such as PAYPFP in the area**

The stakeholders said there is a lack of programmes and activities such as this in the Rolleston area. They noted that the need for something was evident. One stakeholder said he had noticed other young people in the community asking if they could do the programme as well.

I mean some of the kids from badminton that were on parallel with the GAIN programme were actually telling us...saying how do we get on this? (Stakeholder)

The stakeholders believed that PAYPFP has built awareness in the wider community of the value of programmes such as this and said to facilitate this 'we need to engage the whole community in the process, not just the young people'. They saw the possibility of using PAYPFP as a 'springboard' to raise awareness with key people and introduce the idea that these supports are needed. They said that Rolleston lacked a sense of community ownership and involvement and raising awareness of the need for youth activities in the area is something that could be worked on.

...which is honestly raising more...(awareness) of what else can we provide and we need to provide...(and) what does that look like. but definitely giving them a sense, well we need to do something then, it's not going to be provided by someone else necessarily, what can we do...needing to raise that awareness....Rolleston is really lacking in that area...community ownership and involvement, they really don't want to be involved with anything, so they sort of say well...(we won't) change it if we don't have to do it. (Stakeholder)

### **The need for skilled people to carry on the initiative or develop a new one**

Even if awareness is raised the stakeholders said that it could be difficult to convert this into a particular programme for the area as they would require skilled people to develop and implement an initiative. They noted that this was particularly true of initiatives such as PAYPFP as they required facilitators skilled in adventure therapy. One stakeholder believed it was more likely that a certain person with the skills and personality to develop a youth programme would be needed to translate this momentum into a particular outcome. They also said for this to be successful it would be important to be able to bridge between PAYPFP and the new initiative, such as helping new facilitators to 'get up to speed'.

...I guess the goal would be to kind of introduce those two (PAYPFP and any new initiatives) and get them working alongside of each other so they do have a common link and common understanding of where these young people are... (Stakeholder)

### **The high cost of any future programme needs to be weighed up against the possible wider impacts of the initiative**

The stakeholders acknowledged the high cost of a programme such as this but said that the flow on effect of it into the wider community should be taken into account when assessing its value in these terms.

... so that's what makes it different. I know it is only for ten people but it is not only ten people, every one of those ten kids has got a family around them, and there are other people that are influenced and while it does seem really, really costly, on the other hand... it's a start, it's a move in the right direction, so yes please let's keep it going. (Stakeholder)

### **The Young People**

While the young people did not express many ideas for future development they agreed PAYPFP was valuable and should continue. The young people believed it would be good to be able to have ongoing support after PAYPFP had finished such as still being able to contact the facilitators or call in if they were passing by.

It might be over but still like communication with them and stuff. (Young person)

Like if we are going past, like call in and see them. (Young person)

## **The Facilitators**

The facilitators said PAYPFP has evolved to meet the needs of the community and programme participants. They see this as a strength and part of a reflective learning process that they have used to develop it. They identified an important theme that underpinned development and remained constant throughout PAYPFP, as ensuring they honoured the individual 'journey' of each young person they worked with and continued to build quality relationships with them.

1. The identified areas of development for the current programme as:
  - Introducing community oriented activities in PAYPFP
  - Developing the after school programme to include more time and more youth-initiated and directed activities
  - Being more consistent with feedback to young people
  - Developing their work with families
  - Their workload
  - Referral systems
  - Involving young people who have completed PAYPFP as mentors
2. They identified areas for development for the future as:
  - Transferring PAYPFP to the Rolleston community, before they left
  - Transferring not only the practical components of PAYPFP but is underlying values and philosophies as well
  - Developing a two way relationship in which the community 'grows towards independence'
  - Taking into account important demographical features

### **1. Areas of development for the current programme**

#### **Introducing community oriented activities in PAYPFP**

With regards to changes to the current programme facilitators introduced the idea of creating more activities that involve the young people 'giving back to the area'.

#### **Developing the after school programme to include more time and more youth-initiated and directed activities**

The facilitators also wanted to include more self-directed activities in the current programme. They said as the young people lived in a geographically isolated community with a lack of youth focused activities there would be value in showing them how to create their own activities. Another area they suggested could be developed in the after school programme, was structuring it to create more time. One facilitator said if they'd had more time they may have been able to do additional activities and 'deeper work' with participants.

#### **Continuing to evolve to meet the needs of the young people and the area**

The facilitators acknowledged that PAYPFP needs to continue to evolve to meet the needs of the young people in the specific context that is Rolleston.

We started with something that we knew worked with young people but it was in a different community - a school community, we took that across and stuck it into a geographic community. Then there's other dynamics that happen and other needs within the wider community those young people are in relationship within that community, so how do we meet those needs? and that's the emerging goal thing we keep our reference point as to meeting needs and what is the needs of these young people. (Facilitator)

### **Being more consistent with feedback to young people**

Being more consistent in their feedback with the young people, particularly in writing feedback letters to them, was also highlighted as an area for development.

### **Developing their work with families**

Facilitators said the family work they engaged in has evolved as a particular strength of PAYPPF and they would like to develop it further. Most importantly they identified the need to 'better utilise the time they had with families to best maximise the benefit of their relationship with them', and the need to develop their own skills in family work. They said they wanted to build on the reflective family work they are currently doing, continuing to keep the needs of the young people central. They see this as the importance of addressing the wider needs of the young person within the family context. This included better integration of GAIN with the rest of the programme.

...it's worked well but I'm sure we can work a heck of a lot better in utilising the best time that we have with those families to the maximum benefit of the relationships that exist within those families. (Facilitator)

### **Their workload**

Because PAYPPF has developed to meet the specific needs of the community such as more emphasis on family work than was initially anticipated, the facilitators said their workload is bigger. From this perspective they acknowledge it is taking more time to develop and while this was not a significant issue they said this needs to be taken into account for future development.

It's meant that the workload on this programme is probably bigger than other comparative programmes in our service.... and coupled with that the fact that it's a new programme, there's new elements in it, getting used to it, it's taking more time. (Facilitator)

### **Referral systems**

The facilitators highlighted sources of referrals as a consideration for future development. They would like to be able to get referrals to PAYPPF from the young people themselves and the wider community.

...we were trying to get the young people referring people and that worked to some extent and it would be cool to keep working with that and find a way that that was really effective. (Facilitator)

### **Involving young people who have completed PAYPFP as mentors**

Facilitators also suggested that they explore involving young people who have already completed PAYPFP, to mentor participants currently on the programme.

I think it would be awesome to see the young people starting to do it for themselves to some extent, you know, you've got some of the older guys who have been through programmes starting to talk to the younger guys. (Facilitator)

## **2. Areas for development for the future**

### **Transferring PAYPFP to the Rolleston community, before they left**

The facilitators all noted the importance of needing to transfer the programme to the community.

Ultimately it's really the community taking responsibility and I think as a community takes responsibility young people take responsibility because who are they looking up to, who are we looking up to? (Facilitator)

However, they identified the biggest challenge for the future as being able to do this successfully before they left and commented on the need to engage the wider community more to assist in this possible transference.

There is also work to do within the relationships with the wider community ....with the dynamic that exists or what we've picked up in the last year... (Facilitator)

They also suggested that this may require developing better ways to communicate with the community to help with this possible transference.

We might need to change some of the ways we are communicating and doing things to...but we need to keep working hard at that, I believe, to do that. (Facilitator)

### **Developing a two way relationship in which the community 'grows towards independence'**

The facilitators commented on the need to acknowledge the two-way relationship between the community and PAYPFP. They said that while it was their responsibility to communicate the stories and successes of PAYPFP, it was the community's responsibility to ultimately take ownership of it and decide whether it will continue or not.

We are trying to grow that awareness and we haven't got the answer to that yet but we also recognise that we are not responsible for that, we're responsible for working hard to ensure we communicate in the best way that we can, and can communicate the stories and successes of those young people, they have a responsibility to do that themselves as well.

We can go to the fence but if we jump over it then we are making that community dependent on us. (Facilitator)

They acknowledged while they are trying to grow awareness, this is something they would like to develop especially as PAYPFP will be ending in one and a half years. From this perspective they said it is important for any initiative that the community does not become dependent on it but 'grows towards independence'. They also acknowledged that this more likely to happen if they are able to engage and mentor the community.

There will be challenges – we hope to support them. We feel we do a good job of meeting those needs on the programme and that we are here for three years – this is a golden opportunity the Rolleston community, to be mentored in some of the skills and competencies and designing things so that those needs can get met. (Facilitator)

### **Transferring underlying values and philosophies**

The facilitators said if PAYPFP is to be successfully transferred to the community it needs to transfer not only its practical components, but also its underlying values and philosophies, particularly values such as being youth needs driven.

We need to remember that it needs to belong to young people, they need to own it, so it needs to be somewhat driven by them, often all the negative things are seen but we need to remember that it is about the young people there and that they are the future of that community. (Facilitator)

With a youth development focus.

...if young people on the programme respond to the opportunities within an environment that is respectful and allows youth development ....., the expectation outside of the programme is that that should transfer immediately into the community, but (if) the relationships in the community with the police or whoever else aren't respectful of (a) youth development focus, then there's no way in my opinion that it can transfer. (Facilitator)

### **Taking into account important demographical features**

The facilitators identified important demographics of the community in relation to the future direction of PAYPFP as:

- Rolleston is a 'dependant community'
- Low resilience within the community
- The young people are very visible in the community and 'under a microscope' so when they get in trouble it's more evident
- A lack of youth focused activities
- Being a middle class community
- Being a more transient community with families moving in and out quite often

- Having many two parent working families in which the parents are likely to be home later, creating a gap in parental supervision of children after school
- A lack of after school and holiday activities creating opportunities for young people to 'get into trouble'
- Rolleston is geographically isolated creating less opportunity for young people to access youth friendly facilities and activities outside of the community

They said as it is a more isolated community young people are more familiar with each other, which is both a strength and a weakness. It is a weakness as difficulty can arise through the opportunity it gives for young people to get in trouble through association. They said this has created an increase in the police and community perception that young people 'hanging out' can lead to trouble, and are therefore a problem. It is a strength because of the opportunity for support and the development of relationships amongst young people from their shared experiences. The facilitators believed that this is something that could be built on in developing PAYPFP.

Rolleston is an island in a lot of ways and it's isolated to some extent but I don't think that should be used as a cop out, it is an opportunity to create, you know, they are their own resources and I would say that the young people that we work with are just doing what young people have always done, taking risks, pushing boundaries, pissing off older people, it's just what they do, and because they are in a community that is, geographically isolated it all happens there on their back doorstep...  
(Facilitator)

## Summary

This section outlined the possible future directions for PAYPFP identified by participants. The parent's highlighted areas such as creating more opportunities for relationship building between families from the start of the programme, using young people who have already completed the course as mentors and better communication processes when activities were changed. While the young people did not offer much comment on future directions they believed the course was valuable and should continue and a number expressed a desire to stay in contact with the facilitators.

The stakeholders and the facilitators talked about the value of the PAYPFP in the community and said the need for a programme such as this was evident. They both highlighted the lack of 'community ownership' in the area and the need to better communicate the successes of the programme to the community, in helping to transfer ownership of it to them, before the facilitators left. The stakeholders believed that this may also require skilled people to help develop and implement any ongoing initiatives.

The facilitators also commented on possible changes for the current programme, these included, introducing community oriented activities, developing the after school programme, referral systems, being more consistent with feedback to young people and developing their work with families.

## FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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In terms of the process aspects of this evaluation it is important to assess the extent that the underlying philosophies of the programme have been instigated in practice. Many components of this have already been addressed in previous sections of this report as young people, parents and stakeholders have addressed the strengths and impacts of the programme and have discussed the individual components and future directions of PAYFPF. In this section the programme facilitators are given the opportunity to illustrate the theoretical approaches guiding their practice and how they saw this play out in the PAYFPF.

### Role of Facilitator

The facilitators saw their main roles in Pumanawa Atawhai Youth Leadership programme (PAYFPF) as: being coordinators, mentoring young people, being positive role models, facilitating activities safely, building on the strengths of the young people, working with the families, and looking for 'therapeutic moments'.

### Youth Development Approach

One of the most significant themes of the data is the importance of the 'Youth Development Approach' that underpins PAYFPF. The facilitators summarised this as, what is most important is not 'what' they do with young people but 'how' they do it. This theme was significant for every focus group. Many participants gave examples of how it is the quality of the relationships developed between the facilitators and the young people that ultimately determine the success of PAYFPF.

For the facilitators a 'Youth Development approach' is encapsulated in the development of relationships, based on honouring the individual journey of each young person, as they grow in their capacity. They saw these relationships as mutual and multi-dimensional - starting with the young person and the facilitator and then expanding to influence and strengthen relationships with the young people and themselves, their families and the wider community.

...relationship... so for me it's more about keeping things really real and being a person and being human and not so much... I am this or that or I've got something more, you know, I'm actually a part of this group as well on the same level as them.... that's quite important for building relationships. (Facilitator)

...it's that two-way relationship again, and that's what's honouring....it is not only honouring (the) young people, it's actually (honouring) myself in my relationship with them, - it's cool. (Facilitator)

From this perspective change is not seen as a concrete outcome of each component of PAYFPF, which affects each young person in the same way. For instance facilitators stated that 'you cannot just wave a magic wand and change happens'. They acknowledge change is a process. One facilitator said there will continue to be setbacks for the young people, but change is something that builds over time and is

part of a developmental pathway, so they also need to focus on the long term impact and changes within each young person. The facilitators see change as something that unconsciously builds through the experiences and relationships they develop with the young people, and unique to each individual.

at the beginning it might be having experiences together (by) doing... learning and understanding in the action of the relationships around me, that gives the ability to build (change), there's an unconscious building, it's not necessarily 'you sit down at the end of the day and oh gee this is where we're at'. (Facilitator)

Its not wave the magic wand, that's it, it's done... I think that's really, really unhelpful if we're talking about a development process pertaining to youth. (Facilitator)

it's not what we do but it's how we are doing it that does create the difference how we have an honouring relationship with someone who is displaying at risk behaviours, (the) challenges in things like that (are) hugely important, let's continue to do that regardless of the forces that exist that want, the magic wand. (Facilitator)

The facilitators commented on "the long term effect of significant experiences that reside within us". They said when talking about change and outcomes, relationships with the young people need to be unconditional and 'you could not force change'. From this perspective they emphasised the quality of 'experience' the young people had, primarily in the type of relationships they were able to build throughout PAYLP, as having the most significant impact. They see the *impact* of the programme as part of a developmental pathway. One facilitator summarised this as a 'bank of experiences from the programme that reside within the young people, which they continue to learn from and draw on'. The facilitators said,

"(it's) crucial that when we focus on experiences, experiences are something that actually reside within us, they don't go away..."

"a healthy experience is one that involves relationships, involves those five areas of development – you don't see the impact straight away."

'Change is not something you can necessarily quantify at a point in time or after the programme finishes. So over a longitudinal study it would look quite different, Its part of a longer term developmental pathway, they carry what they have learnt with them.'

"....you know that it's not just a programme that they do for 16 weeks.... or 16 weeks in their lives that they will remember... it's actually a developmental pathway that they can carry on with."

"...I can think of young people I've worked with and it looks like they've flat-lined across the programme if you measured it at a point in time

but... five years later when you make contact then, (you find) that it's been really important..."

"(It) is crucial that when we focus on experiences, experiences are something that actually reside within us, they don't go away..."

"...a healthy experience is one that involves relationships, involves those five areas of development and I think it is really important that when we talk about change and we talk about outcomes.... that I think we need to have an unconditional-ness about our relationship... that it doesn't map out that life of that young person..."

"... I don't believe we have the right to actually even expect change, we have expectations about relationships which usually does involve some change, but I think there's a place where you sometimes bank your experiences and then there's a point in your life when you go, I'm going to use them now, and for whatever reason there's a crossroads and they meet and it makes sense..."

"...so over a longitudinal study it would look quite different, the impact of the experiences, I guess it's a bit about rites of passage, there's times when we chose when we're going to use what we've gathered in our bank.....so one has to inherently acknowledge a helpful, healthy process of growth and know and believe and hope in that the value of that...that that is increasing..."

### **Type of relationship**

The facilitators identified the most important part of a youth development approach as building relationships based on mutual trust and respect that honours the individual journey of each young person.

The participants identified the most important components of this relationship as being:

- Non Hierarchal
- Trustworthy
- Respectful
- Reciprocal
- Transparent
- Peer Led

The facilitators said this type of relationship "develops rather than demands respect". Role modelling, mentoring, and peer lead relationships were identified as the primary ways in which a relationship with the young person was developed. The facilitators were deliberate in creating this type of relationship; they did not take on an 'expert role', rather they created 'reciprocal relationships' that acknowledged the crucial role of the young person in the outcome.

More specifically, the facilitators identified this type of relationship building as being established on non-hierarchical peer relationships. They noted that despite the age difference between young people and facilitators, a peer-based relationship was able to be developed - if it was trustworthy, respectful and reciprocal. Once this relationship developed facilitators were then able to use the 'bank of trust' and respect they had built with young people to challenge them.

We asked them (the young people) to give examples of peer leaders... and they put some of our names down. (Facilitator)

...what I'd come to appreciate was that age didn't make a difference to who they saw as leaders or who they saw around them, it was actually relationally based, so if your relationship was honouring and respectful of that young person then you were their peer... (Facilitator)

Facilitators said this 'bank of trust' is built on consistent, stable and respectful relationships that develop rather than demand respect, giving them the ability to influence the young people. They develop authority with young people through relationship, rather than being authoritarian.

...a good example was when we were on the journeys some stuff went down with them and we made an agreement on some safety stuff and they broke that agreement, (but) because of the foundation of our relationship we had laid beforehand we were able to really challenge them on that and... at first... trust was lost and respect was lost, but within an hour... all was forgiven and I felt like the relationship was deepened... (Facilitator)

...there'll be some challenges out there and the fact that we've been consistent with our relationship, we've operated with that sort of authority but not authoritarian, is going to give us the ability to (challenge them). (Facilitator)

...it's really each day and meetings and those sorts of things but at the end of it there's this growing bank of trust and that we are not going to divorce them, we're not going to abandon them and that's hugely important in the ability for us to also still have some authority,... it's about relationships again. (Facilitator)

I like this term where we walk with young people at the start of the relationship, then we have a responsibility to dance with them, that's a lot more proactive, it's about ensuring... that the maximum ability to develop is in place.... (Facilitator)

The facilitators commented on the value of these relationships saying,

...they (the young people) gain strength being in relationship, the support they can get from each other having shared those experiences...connecting with each other on a more ongoing basis, I

think that's a real strength, and also probably the families, although they haven't all connected, there has been some relationships that has been built between families that have been involved in the programme....  
(Facilitator)

The facilitators believed they were more able to positively influence young people, if they had gained their respect. They believed this gave the young people more of an opportunity to develop, as they were able to learn within reciprocal and real life relationships, rather than 'just being told what to do'. From this perspective they said, the young people were more likely to learn positive social skills if they had them modelled to them. This focuses on change as a result of positive relationships and role modelling, rather than deficit models that concentrate predominantly on 'changing bad behaviour'.

...that role modelling and when they see that, and when they see you as not being perfect, I think they realise that you are... you're human and the relationship deepens. (Facilitator)

...for me it's more about keeping things really real...being a person and being human... (Facilitator)

I think around the relationship building there's no 'I'm the expert and you are the person that I am working on'...for me it's about keeping it real, so when I make a mistake, I'll own it and acknowledge it and apologise if I need to and it's that role modelling and when they see that, and when they see you as not being perfect, I think they realise that you're human and the relationship deepens. (Facilitator)

The facilitators emphasised the need to take risks and challenge the young people once they had developed this relationship. The facilitator's ability to do this successfully was underpinned by the trust and respect they had earned with the young person. It was from this 'bank of trust', that they were able to challenge the young people. They believed both components of the relationship were important, building the relationship and then maximising the opportunity this gave to challenge the young people to develop.

...strength doesn't mean just saying you're a good fellow all the time and, you've got all these strengths and that's really good, it's being challenging around those things and operating with some authority and ensuring that happens... (Facilitator)

...we're really proactive about utilising the resources to ensure that we do get to dance (challenge the young people) and maximise the benefit of the relationship we have. (Facilitator)

This perspective is summarised by the facilitator's comments that it involves 'high support and high challenge' for young people.

....having high challenge and high support, and I think in the support there's belief as well, having belief in that young person, that they have what they need and they have the qualities to make successful choices and that they will, but then holding the challenge to that as well, applauding the mistakes that they might make and challenging them to tell the truth about things and to tell the truth to themselves and to use those qualities and attributes that they've got... (Facilitator)

### **Mentoring and role modelling**

The facilitators believed the most important component of mentoring was being able to listen and give participants a place where they could be heard. They saw providing them with good feedback as essential, and a very important way in which young people were able to learn and develop.

...there's some role-modelling there ..... and I think they really value that, you know, I know for sure when Paddy is not around these guys really miss him....they're like, where's Paddy, is he coming, he is going to be there? And I think that's really important for them to have someone older than them that they can look up to a little bit and they think is a valuable person in their life, they think it's quite cool.... (Facilitator)

The positive influence of the way the facilitators related to each other was also acknowledged.

....talking about role-models, I think the other important thing is, particularly these guys what they role-model in their relationship with each other, is really important to those young people, so it's not what each does within each individual, it's what they observe about how they relate...." (Facilitator)

.... the ceiling of what is able to be achieved is dependent on the relationships that exist between the facilitators on it.... (Facilitator)

### **Strengths Based**

The facilitators identified this approach as Strengths Based. For them this means building on the young person's strengths using:

- Encouragement
- Celebration of success
- Provision of opportunities for reflection
- Development of positive problem solving skills
- Learning from mistakes
- A shift away from focusing on deficits to developing personal and social skills.

It doesn't matter about their at risk behaviours, that's just a side show really, at the core of those people is incredible goodness and they have

a lot to offer the world around them...we like feeling hope in our young people and the program is a great opportunity for that... (Facilitator)

...it's his power, they have power with them. (Facilitator)

They said it creates opportunities for young people to input into and develop leadership skills within the group, such as the rafting activity they planned themselves. Rather than just 'telling the young people what to do' or 'organising activities for them' it emphasises their responsibility for the outcome of activities which develops independence, confidence and interpersonal skills.

It's about building on their strengths, so they need to know their strengths and to believe in their strengths and the personal skills that come into that. (Facilitator)

Strengths based means challenging with some authority...but you have to earn this first. (Facilitator)

...so we basically provided, we provided time and resources, safety and sometimes a little bit of knowledge but ideally we've left it up to the young people to come up with the ideas and to provide resources of their own as well, so it was really driven by them ideally... (Facilitator)

...(you) can't always expect people to give you stuff ..... there's a little bit of value in that but much more value in (them) creating it for themselves in a way that is inclusive for everybody... (Facilitator)

The facilitators believed one of the most important components of being strengths based was being able to listen and help the young people reflect on issues as they arose. This included celebrating successes and being able to 'applaud their mistakes' and tell them the truth when it was needed. From this perspective they see the power to change as residing within the young people. They said,

We've taken ideas from the young people and from their parents, and used those ideas, which is fantastic, because they're driving it. (Facilitator)

For example, the young people planned one of their own activities – the success of this activity and what it reflected about PAYFPF was commented on by every focus group. Particularly in the sense of ownership that this gave the young people, and the confidence and skills they were able to build as a result. Underpinning this is a belief that PAYFPF ultimately needs to belong to the young people, as this creates a sense of responsibility for their own journey and outcomes. The facilitators said:

Rather than stepping out the front and dragging them along, (you need) to walk beside, or even behind them sometimes, and just go where they are going and work with what they've got because there's a lot of talent, there's a lot of skill there... (Facilitator)

I think ...how the programme has evolved it has been really beneficial... We've taken ideas from the young people and from their parents, and used those ideas, which is fantastic, because they're driving it. So we are not stuck in our ways, we're fresh... (Facilitator)

Ownership, the young people owning the fact that they need to create their own place, where they are and their own fun. I'd say that would be the most valuable. (Facilitator)

I think that's really valuable for young people, is for them to not only realise they have skills but to actually start to use them and to see that they have value and they can create things for other people as well, I think that's really valuable and it's therapeutic in itself in some ways. (Facilitator)

### **Therapeutic Moments**

The facilitators identified opportunities to challenge the young people to develop different ways of interacting and problem solving, as 'therapeutic moments'. These were moments that helped the young people to develop life skills via reflecting on, and learning from, significant events. For example, using a potentially negative event such as breaking the rules to help the young people reflect on the consequences of their actions, and inviting them to take responsibility.

From this perspective the facilitators acknowledge that they cannot force programme participants to change, but are there to provide skills, opportunities and support for them. The activities in PAYPPF therefore become a tool that creates opportunities for change, rather than change being a direct result of doing them. The facilitators said this was encapsulated in moments when a young person "owns part of themselves that hasn't been heard before". They see their job as professionals, to follow through on and make the most of these opportunities for self reflection and change.

...looking for therapeutic moments and then actioning that at that point in time. (Facilitator)

focusing on what these guys actually brought to it and we're actioning, particularly in terms of those principles of youth development. (Facilitator)

...a therapeutic moment for me is when a young person .... in some way owns a part of themselves that we haven't heard before, or owns something that has happened, so they are really telling the world at that moment in time that they want that to be heard and I see a responsibility for us as skilled professionals to follow that through and see where that goes, so I would then offer a therapeutic question as a result of that therapeutic moment. (Facilitator)

### **Regular feedback**

Regular feedback from the facilitators was seen to 'cement' new learning for participants. This included both formal feedback such as letter writing and informal feedback such as phone contact when problems arose. All the focus groups identified the informal support the young people and their families received from facilitators as a significant strength of PAYPFP. What was identified as most important for all groups was that the facilitators were available as problems occurred.

### **Family work**

The facilitators also identified the work they did with families as a significant part of PAYPFP. They recognised that an important component was their commitment to be available for the young people and families as needs arose, rather than waiting for specified times. The facilitators, young people and parents saw this flexibility as very important for the success of PAYPFP.

The facilitators estimated that working with families made up approximately 20% of their work. Examples included attending family group conferences and court appearances. They believed that working with families became essential for PAYPFP's success. They also noted that this type of work could not be fully structured into PAYPFP, because of its unpredictable nature.

...the family is still important and I'm quite struck by that and feel some desire to improve my own skill sets in reflective family work, still keeping the needs of the young person very much at the heart of that...  
(Facilitator)

...I think with this program one of the defining things of it is that involvement that we have with the young person and their context, (this) also includes their family. So that when there's a requirement for support like that, it's hugely beneficial to the young person, to us and to the relationship, to be there for them. I think it's key (to) relationship building... (Facilitator)

### **Professional development**

The facilitators recognised their own professional development throughout PAYPFP. They identified important components as - the mentoring they received from the coordinator, peer support they received from other facilitators, personal contribution to the direction and development of PAYPFP, and reflective practice. They said that developing PAYPFP at the same time as facilitating it was at times challenging, but acknowledged that it extended them professionally. They further acknowledged the importance of reflective practice in being able to constantly review their work and take ownership of the process.

I think that we were given a lot of free creative space, I think that has been quite an advantage to some extent...it was a real challenge.....I think it has been really cool as well the outcomes that we've got with these young people, it's been awesome. (Facilitator)

... (we) were given the programme with, very little framework really, we were given a lot of creative space and I think that was good, it was challenging, it was hard, we didn't have the answers, and we were taking risks and we put it really out there on the edge, to some extent, but I think for our professional development, mine in particular, it has been really, really beneficial. I think for how the programme has evolved it has been really beneficial as well. (Facilitator)

.... it has given us a chance to be creative and to learn and to develop personally and having Paddy alongside, has definitely has been beneficial... (Facilitator)

I would start with myself and that if it is not working it is about me... (Facilitator)

That I take ownership of that as a facilitator that I critique myself and I have other people critique me... (Facilitator)

Constantly keep moving around the compass to work at the relationship and understand to make it work. (Facilitator)

## **Outdoor Activities as a Medium**

One of the most significant themes identified was the importance of the type of experiences the young people had, rather than the actual activities they did. The facilitators explained this by saying that the outdoor activities were a medium for experiential learning, rather than being important within themselves. They identified the strengths of using outdoor activities as a medium as:

- It works with young people in the present
- There are immediate causes and effects through which to work
- It engages programme participants
- Nature is non-judgemental
- There is an element of risk
- It fosters the development of individual responsibility, social skills and self-confidence

## **Experiential learning**

The facilitators said an important strength of outdoor activities was that it gave them the opportunity to 'work in the moment'. They said in an outdoor setting the consequences of a young person's actions are usually immediate, with understandable causes and effects that a young person is able to reflect on. They also said 'nature is fair and non-judgemental' - the young people learn that if you do not respect it there will be consequences, which are the same for everybody. For example one facilitator said;

it's live material, it's in the present, it's cause and effect, there's choices made in the moment and it's in that moment that understanding is often made sense of...you do something, you get it back straight away... if you don't eat breakfast in the morning on a journey, by 10 o'clock you

will be really hanging out... whereas you might get away with that in town... (Facilitator)

Outdoor activities also provided an element of risk, and experiences for young people to develop decision making skills, self confidence and independence.

...I think of journeys as being quite valuable too... in the sense that you are carrying everything that you need on your back and...the idea of being self-sufficient and independent from everything else around you except for what you have and who you have... (Facilitator)

...I think what for me that stands out is it's engaging because it's doing, it's not sitting and talking... but it's active...the actual activities, the young people find them interesting, also often there is an element of risk and some of these people that we are working with... quite enjoy that element of risk...it's live material which we can speak to them about...we as facilitators, are not in a position of power but in a position of authority...having some skills that are useful and are needed, so we are not in a position of you need to do this, which they are used to ...like school...but rather we are in a position of knowing some stuff that they need...so it's more alongside them than telling them to do stuff, I think that is what's so useful. (Facilitator)

### **If engages and develops skills**

All the participants identified the outdoors as an effective medium for developing practical and social skills. They said the element of risk engages young people and helps develop practical, group, relational and life skills which increase self-confidence, and self-reliance.

...definitely self-belief...and self-confidence...rock climbing is a good example of that...or even just climbing up a huge hill, whatever you may be on, a bike ride...quite a few young people stand at the bottom and go, man that's huge, I can't do that and then they get up there before they know it and looking back and going, wow, I can do that, if I can do that, what else can I do? And I think that's very valuable. (Facilitator)

This part of PAYFPF was identified as particularly significant for young people, who commented on being able to 'learn to take a risk' and develop confidence and skills through the challenges they had overcome.

### **Peer leadership, conflict resolution, and communication skills**

Participants also recognised the social and leadership skills that the young people developed through working as a group. The development of these skills was enhanced by outdoor activities they participated in, as many activities could only be successfully completed through group work. The participants commented on the communication and conflict resolution skills young people developed. The facilitators summarised this as the personal growth that comes for the young people, from the collective experience of being part of a group. They said:

I think they definitely take with them the experience, the collective experience that they've had and being part of the group... (Facilitator)

## **Spirituality**

The facilitators commented on the opportunity the outdoors provided for “encounters with spirituality”. For example, they gave illustrations of encounters with nature that had caused young people to reflect on the relationships they have with other people, and their place in nature and society. A further example was given of a young person who developed a significant attachment to a particular place. The facilitator said when they left the young person recognised that he would always leave a part of himself there, while also taking away with him what they had learnt.

...one of them said I will leave a part of my spirit here. (Facilitator)

An example of spirituality...there was massive big rimu and matai trees and these two kids stopped and said ‘far out, these are huge’ and then one says, ‘that must be a hundred metres tall’... and nothing more was said... two days later, we were in a hut with pretty stormy weather outside, and a fire was going...one of them said...‘oh, I couldn’t get over the size of that tree, those trees when we walked in, it was huge’ and then another kid says ‘...man imagine how old that is’ and another kid said ‘oh, like 500 years or something’, and then one of them said ‘imagine what that tree has seen in its life, it’s seen us a few days ago and other people 500 years ago’ and (they) just kept on going deeper and deeper and deeper into a world with mystery, of the unknown, of adventure...I probably see that (as) spirituality in a youth development understanding... (Facilitator)

...I think it’s important to note that we don’t go to do activities but go to have experiences and there is a difference and I know a lot of outdoor work does concentrate on activity but that’s not our goal at all...I think there’s lots of encounters with spirituality in the natural world that take them into a place of the unknown, whatever that means for them so...there’s an encounter with those areas of development in the natural world setting that’s sometimes a bit difficult to encounter in the urban setting and they seem to want to be there... (Facilitator)

## **Summary**

This section provided an opportunity for the facilitators of the PAYPFP programme to describe the underlying philosophies of the programme and their practice. It also provided an opportunity for facilitators themselves to reflect on the job they are doing and how they see the theory underlying their work being played out in practice.

Placed alongside the comments from young people, parents and stakeholders presented previously, it is apparent that in many ways PAYPFP has been successful in implementing the philosophies that underlie it. In addition it is also evident that these philosophies have been useful in assisting the young people and their families in PAYPFP to develop important skills to help contribute towards ongoing healthy development.

## Conclusion

The Pumanawa Atawhai with Young People and their Families Programme was perceived by focus group participants as successful both in terms of the outcomes achieved and the process by which these outcomes occurred.

The main processes that underpinned this success were identified as: the holistic nature of PAYPFP such as the inclusion of both the young people and their families in the programme and the process of encouraging change based on fostering good supportive relationships.

The processes that were mentioned as the strengths of this programme are also reflective of the main principles of successful adventure therapy programmes and of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa as outlined in the literature review. In this way, this programme can be viewed as successfully implementing a positive youth development model.

In addition this programme has also been successful in meeting the main objectives of the programme which can be summarised as facilitating behaviour change by encouraging young people to meet their developmental potential. Findings from this study indicate that one of the main mechanisms by which this change occurred was the programmes focus on the development of quality relationships.

The most frequently recognised strengths of PAYPFP were the facilitator's skill and ability to form effective relationships with the young people and the positive impact of the relationships the parents and young people formed with other programme participants. The main components of this were;

- Mutually respectful relationships were identified by facilitators as the 'main tool' of the programme. The facilitators linked their ability to develop relationships based on mutual respect with the young people, to their ability to challenge them to change. They believed emphasis on this did not take away from their ability to challenge the young people, but strengthened it. They called this creating opportunities for both 'high support' and 'high challenge' for the young people on the programme.
- As the young people were seen as active rather than passive participants in the process, the facilitators were able to encourage them to take ownership of the process and their own outcomes.
- Participants particularly highlighted the impact of these mutually respectful relationships in mentoring and role modelling positive ways of relating for the young people. Participants gave many examples of how they had learnt off each other, such as a parent who commented on understanding their own young person better after interacting with other young people on the GAIN programme.

- This approach was summarised by both the focus group participant's and the facilitator's comments that what is most important about the programme is 'not what the facilitators do with the young people, but how they do it'.
- From this perspective the activities on the course, rather than just being recreational, were used as opportunities for mentoring, role modelling and learning through the challenges they provided.
- For example, the challenge of getting along with others in a team, learning to lead and organise activities for the group, being involved in decision making and the sense of achievement the young people experienced on completion of activities.
- This was also underpinned by comments from the young people. What they believed they would most take from the programme activities centred on how different activities challenged them to develop better skills, both in their relationships with themselves and with others; improved communication skills, better decision making skills, an increased sense of personal responsibility, leadership skills and improved self confidence.

Youth participants also linked this approach to the development of a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own outcome. This was encapsulated by young people's comments that the facilitators did not 'just tell them what to do' but supported them to develop their own skills and make their own decisions. For instance, one young person said powerfully that he had learnt what happens 'is up to us'. From this perspective the facilitators commented that the programme would not be successful if it just 'supported' the young people without these challenges and gave examples such as the need to address and help young people to reflect on mistakes.

The young people identified the power of this approach to challenge them to change. They said they liked it that the facilitators didn't get angry but addressed problems constructively, such as stopping an activity to deal with problems as they came up and challenging them to make better choices, think about what they were doing and take responsibly for their actions.

The impact of this approach was identified by participants as influencing other areas of the young people's lives as well. This included improved relationships with family and other adults and improved stability such as better school attendance, a reduction in antisocial behaviour and a reduction in truancy. A powerful example was a parent who noted their son could now introduce himself to adults at a party he did not know and relate with them. Some parents also reported quite dramatic changes in their relationship with their young people with comments such as they have 'let us into their world' and the acknowledgment of the 'return of a lost son'.

For the parents the main impacts identified were improved parenting skills, better relationships with their young people and increased family support networks. They identified a significant element of the programme for them as also being the way the facilitators related to them, not taking on an 'expert role' but relating in an honest and

open way that was genuine and 'on the same level'. The activities that involved the parents in the programme such as the family weekend and GAIN were commended for the opportunity they provided to develop these relationships. Participants also highlighted the way that including family in the programme helped to 'cement' learning for the young people as it was being reinforced at home - they changed together.

The success of this approach cannot be commented on without acknowledging the two way nature of 'relationship'. The young people's and parents willingness to engage with the facilitators and meet the challenges of the programme was recognised as a vital and integral part of its success.

The significantly relational nature of this process and the outcomes for the young people and their parents supports the notion that it is the quality of relationships developed and what the programme participants are able to learn through them on the programme, that have the most significant impact on its success.

Positive impacts of the programme on the wider community while not addressed to the same extent by participants were also recognized, particularly by the stakeholders. The need to engage the community further and better communicate the successes of the programme was also acknowledged, particularly when the stakeholders and facilitators commented on the need for the community to take ownership of the programme before Waipuna left, for it continue. Underlying this was the belief that the value of a programme such as this in the community was evident.

The strengths of this evaluation are that it is independent, with good representation of people in the focus groups, of those involved in the programme. It is also important to note the enthusiasm and depth of feeling for the programme projected by all participants in the focus groups.

At this point it is also important to acknowledge that not all sections of the community were represented in the report. While this was not a significant limitation in the evaluation as the main groups were included, future evaluations could include a wider canvassing of community perspectives. More in depth data may also be gained from the young people if individual interviews as well as focus groups were undertaken in any future evaluation, as the young people may have been inhibited in sharing some more personal stories in a group setting. Individual interviews may also capture people who could not or would not take part in a focus group. Future evaluation could also consider a longitudinal perspective which would add considerably to the data.

Over and above this, all of the main groups involved in the programme; the parents, the young people, the facilitators and the stakeholders while acknowledging that there is still challenging behaviour from the young people at times, gave this programme an overwhelmingly positive evaluation. All groups believed that it was highly value both in its processes and its outcomes, and would like to see it continue in some form in the future.

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