AYIP CO-DESIGN

Phase 4 Report

BACKGROUND

The Youth Partnership Project (YPP) believes that if the right support is provided, to the right young people, at the right time, the demand on tertiary services will be reduced and, more importantly, outcomes for young people will improve. To do this, the YPP team has used co-design as a core strategy to understand the needs of young people and develop the YIP model.

In 2016, the first co-design phase brought young people together to identify protective factors needed to prevent a trajectory into the criminal justice system. The young people agreed that education support was a key protective factor. In the Change the Story Report, the YPP found that Armadale had a significant gap in education support services, especially given the high need in the area (YPP, 2017 p31). It was clear that in order for the YPP to provide holistic support to young people through the Youth Intervention Partnership pilot site in Armadale (AYIP), there needed to be an increase in early intervention education support.

As a result, the YPP sought support from WA Police and the Department of Education to develop the AYIP Education Program. Work began to develop this program in late 2017, with the Phase 2 co-design workshop bringing together service providers including school principals, police, child protection, youth workers, Aboriginal elders and young people. Key findings from this workshop have since been further developed by the YPP Team, AYIP Steering Committee, AYIP Aboriginal Elders Group and AYIP Education Program Team in the lead-up to the start of the AYIP Education program.

Phase 1: Sep 2016
Joint Workshop with Young People & Service Providers

Phase 2: Oct 2017
Education Program Workshop with Government, NGO Service Providers & Community Leaders

Phase 3:
Aboriginal Elders Group informs Education Program

Phase 4:
Young People workshop the education program

This report presents the findings of Phase 4 of the AYIP co-design process, where AYIP participants and staff worked together to consider the AYIP Education Program and how it could be developed to be relevant, effective and engaging. This phase took the form of three co-design sessions on different days, exploring:

- Participants' aspirations, strengths and skills;
- The AYIP Education Program's learning environment, and;
- The right people to provide support.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

METHODOLOGY

For this phase, the YPP implemented qualitative methodologies using the principles of co-design and human centred design. Activities, questions and materials were adapted to the participants' ages, needs and capabilities, using a trauma informed framework and a strengths-based approach.

MC Trooth helped to facilitate the co-design workshops, engaging young people with interactive activities using visual prompts to invite storytelling. The techniques used included:

- Presentation of real life stories of sports stars and other inspirational people;
- Interactive surveys;
- Brainstorming; and
- Group discussions.

PARTICIPANTS

Five participants from the AYIP Alternative Education Program aged between 10 and 12 years old took part in Phase 4 of the co-design process, however their attendance was not consistent across the three workshops.

This sample represents seventy-one percent of the participants enrolled in the 2018 AYIP Alternative Education Program. Forty per cent of attendees were Aboriginal young people.

ACTIVITIES

Activities implemented included:

Session 1 – Aspirations, Strengths and Skills[1]

This session started with the presentation of life-journeys of sports stars and inspirational people to introduce the concepts of aspirations, strengths and skills to participants. Next, the facilitator invited participants to discuss each of the cases presented and to brainstorm what aspirations, strengths and skills they could identify. Finally, participants worked one-on-one with a mentor to discuss their own aspirations, strengths and skills.

Session 2 – The Learning Environment

Three activities were delivered during this session. Firstly, the workshop started with a concentration task that was designed to compare participants' emotional responses while working indoors and outdoors. Then, participants were asked to complete an interactive survey designed to identify their preferences for learning environments. Finally, participants were asked to address what they liked and disliked about their prospective classroom. The AYIP Team and MC Trooth delivered this session aiming to understand how to create a learning environment that increases their school engagement and supports their overall wellbeing.

Session 3 – The Right People to Provide Support

In the last session three activities were implemented. Firstly, MC Trooth presented examples of positive and negative role models. Participants then drew on this to brainstorm key characteristics of positive and negative role models. Finally, participants listed the names of positive role models who could support them through their learning journey.

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[1] For this workshop AYIP had defined individual strengths as individual attributes which people are born with as opposed to individual skills which can be developed through training and persistence.

WHAT DID YOUNG PEOPLE SAY?

PARTICIPANTS ASPIRATIONS, STRENGTHS AND SKILLS

My Aspirations

- **To be employed**
  - One participant hopes to be a lawyer and/or youth worker.
  - Two other participants aim to be drivers working in mining and public transport.
- **To do well at sports**
  - Participants would like to be well-known athletes in sports they consider they perform well in, including ping-pong and football.
- **To be a game developer:**
  - One participant aims to create video-games and to engage in a diverse range of artistic activities such as drawing and making videos.

Participants' aspirations were shaped by their current skills. For example, the young person who wants to be a lawyer mentioned reading as a skill he has; similarly, the participant who hopes to create video-games mentioned being good at arts and playing video-games (PS4). In some cases, participants mirrored their wishes for the future according to the occupations of family members, including the participants who wanted to be drivers, who mentioned that it was a job their father/uncle had.

My Strengths and Current Skills

When participants were asked to list their individual strengths, they focused mainly on physical strengths related to their performance in sports, such as good eye-hand coordination, ping pong, running and playing football.

Skills I Need to Develop

When asked about skills they need to develop and/or improve to achieve their goals, young people gave the following responses (which have been categorised into three core groups):

- **Physical skills:** Balance, eye-hand coordination, kicking a ball;
- **Behavioural and functional life skills:** Self-awareness, patience, concentration, punctuality, and determination;
- **Technical skills**: Reading, knowledge of mechanics, drawing and colouring.

One participant identified TAFE as a pathway to develop the skills needed to achieve their aspirations.

AYIP Learning Environment

How I Feel in Different Learning Environments

Participants reported experiencing positive emotions when working indoors and outdoors. However, they reported three times more positive emotions when working in an outdoor area (see Figure 1).

Types of Classrooms I Like

When presented with images of different classrooms, participants reported a clear preference for 'unconventional' learning environments. Their preferences have been organised into three sections listed below: characteristics, resources and facilities.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

Positive   Negative

▪ Indoor ■ Outdoor

Characteristics:

- Neat
- Colourful
- Spaces that 'inspire adventure'
- Coloured lighting
- Multiple learning spaces in the room (for example, a reading corner such as in image 1, and a fun maths display on the walls)
- A door with their names
- Images or themes they relate to. Participants provided recommendations which included sports, TV Shows (e.g. Big Bang Theory) and super heroes.

Facilities

- Air conditioning
- High ceilings
- Windows & sky lights
- Cabinet design
- A slide
- Shared-work places, such as large desks and tables
- Fridge

Resources:

- Fun things, such as:
  - toys
  - decorations (including the hot air balloon theme in image 2)
  - novelty furniture (such as hand-shaped chair in image 3)
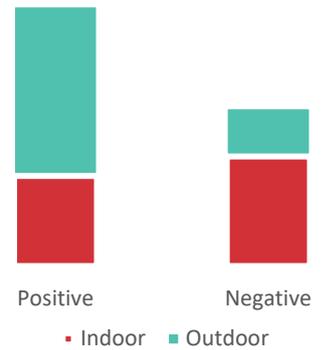- Less formal seating, such as cushions & bean bags

Figure 1 (Above): Proportionate graph of self-reported responses to learning environments
Image 1 (Below Left): Example reading corner
Image 2 (Below Right): Example classroom decorations

Image 3 (Above): Example Classroom Layout

Participants clearly stated their dislike of formal classroom layouts, saying it made them feel like they 'have to work'. Participants also expressed a dislike for 'childish' decorations and classrooms which look crowded, small or messy. Image 3 shows the classroom that obtained a positive response from all young people during the interactive survey.

What I think about Our Classroom

When shown pictures of their prospective classroom participants did not feel that it was an engaging learning environment and provided a range of recommendations describing what they would prefer. These have been organised into three sections: characteristics, resources and facilities.

Characteristics

- Neat;
- A space which feels comfortable, creative, safe and fun;
- Coloured walls (yellow specifically requested for the kitchen, red and black, or street art);
- Coloured lighting (red and blue);
- Multiple learning spaces, such as a boxing area, lab, chill-out area, technology or media area, arts area, exercise area;
- Images or themes participants relate to: sports stars, the kids in the program, MC Trooth, rappers, animals, Noongar art.

Facilities

- **Kitchen:**
  Participants liked the kitchen and wanted it to be functional, suggesting it should contain food, cooking equipment and kitchen appliances
- **Cabinets and storage:**
  Participants didn't like the open and cluttered cabinets. They asked to remove boxes and other 'junk' under benches and emphasised that they wanted the room to look neat and organised
- **Working benches, chairs and tables:**
  Participants wanted benches to be functional and a different option of desk to work at. They also said they would like wheels on their classroom chairs.
- **Air-conditioner and celling fans**

Resources

- Technology: Participants like the idea of having a TV. They also asked for computers and games (PS4).
- Fun things to decorate the classroom, such as bean bags and a disco ball.

There were similarities between what young people want in their learning environment and what service providers and community leaders recommended during the Phase 2 co-design workshop. For example, both groups wanted a learning environment that is creative, safe and consisted of multiple learning spaces. Both considered a kitchen essential and listed technology and 'fun items' as essential resources to make the classroom an engaging learning environment.

However, there were also some differences in recommendations. For example, Phase 2 participants recommended the use of neutral colours and natural lighting, while AYIP program participants asked for brightly painted classroom walls and coloured lighting.

Right People to Provide Support

Who is a good role model and why?

This part of the co-design process explored who could provide the right support[2] for AYIP Education Program Participants. Life trajectories of public figures were used to introduce the concepts of who is considered a good role model versus who could be considered a bad role model and why. Public figures who were considered bad role models in the past but are now leaders who had overcome great challenges were presented as good role models. Using this presentation as a reference, participants were involved in a group discussion to develop a list of characteristics that make for a good role model.

Young people considered a good role model to have the following characteristics:

- Cares about people
- Shows respect to everybody
- Inspires/encourages
- Helps the earth
- Helps the homeless
- Has a stable life
- Has a balanced life
- No violence. Participants listed different non-violent behaviours, such as
    - Do not hurt people
    - No domestic violence
    - No killing/ No harming
- Does not do drugs
- Does not drink excessively
- No gambling
- No stealing

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[2] For the purpose of this report, role models and supports were used as interchangeable terms.

Right People to Provide Support

When asked who could support them to achieve their aspirations, participants not only included family and community members but also public figures. The people suggested by participants have been grouped in five categories listed below.

- **Family:**
  Across all participants the following family members were mentioned: Nan, Mum, Dad, brothers, sisters. Members of extended family such as uncles and aunties were also included.

- **AYIP Staff:**
  Participants listed all members of the team, including the teacher, coordinator, youth workers and relief staff.

- **AYIP participants:**
  All participants listed at least one of their peers.

- **Community:**
  People who have been facilitators, speakers and mentors during their time in AYIP and the Deputy Principal of Armadale Senior High School who they know from the community.

- **Public Figures:**
  Participants mentioned people such as basketball players, football players, and rappers. One participant mentioned the Australian Prime Minister. Another one mentioned the author Stephen King.

Family was the strongest support network identified across the group, followed by AYIP team (staff and coordinator), AYIP participants and public figures. Please see figure 2 below.

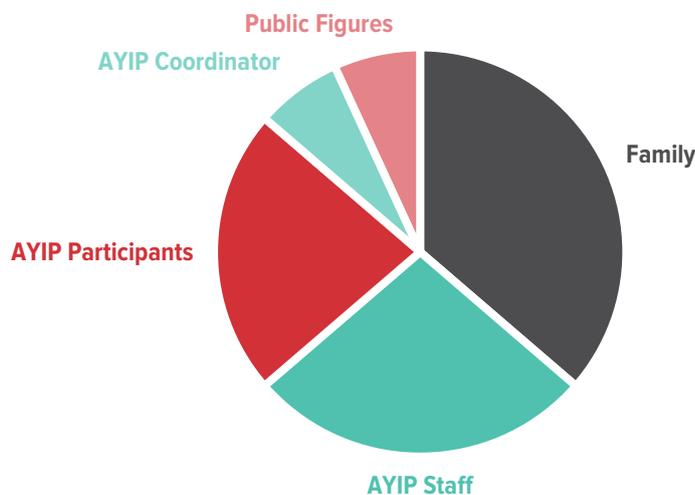## WHO CAN PROVIDE THE RIGHT SUPPORT?

Figure 1: Pie chart showing participants' responses by category

There were strong similarities between the answers given by practitioners during Phase 2 of the co-design process and those given by participants in this phase. Both groups highlighted the importance of family, community, AYIP staff and partners. The AYIP participants also included people in the categories of peers (AYIP Participants) and public figures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop Engagement Strategies Using Participants' Aspirations, Strengths & Skills

Participants have demonstrated a high level of self-awareness through the identification of their aspirations, strengths and skills. Young people's responses in this area should be utilised in the design of engagement strategies to increase attendance, engagement and to overcome challenges inherent to the learning process.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Develop Strategies to discover and expand Participants' Aspirations, Strengths & Skills

Participants have addressed their current aspirations by mirroring role models and/or building upon their current skills. While this is great, there could be benefits in exploring opportunities to expose participants to new environments, tasks and occupations. This could broaden their outlook, help participants discover new capabilities, strengths, skills and expand their individual aspirations.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Use Participants' Recommendations to Design the Learning Environment

Young people have clearly identified key characteristics, facilities and resources for the AYIP Education Program classroom. In particular, special consideration should be given to participants' emotional reactions. They demonstrated a clear dislike of 'traditional' classroom set-ups, as well as noisy and cluttered environments. They showed a preference towards working outdoors. When learning indoors, they preferred multiple learning spaces, furniture encouraging collaboration, and colourful decorations drawing on themes they could relate to.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Decorate the Classroom to Encourage Belonging

Young people liked the idea of classrooms having students' names on the door and wanted pictures of themselves included in the room. Strategies such as these should be used to increase the sense of ownership and belonging to the learning environment.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Engage Families and Communities in the Teaching and Learning Program

Participants identified family, AYIP partners and community members as people who could support them through their learning journey and achieve their aspirations. The role of these people in the teaching and learning program should be enhanced, especially for family.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Develop the Teaching and Learning Program Using Co-Design Principles

Co-design and co-creation techniques should continue to be a part of the education program as it is implemented. This will allow AYIP to demonstrate the leading role that young people have throughout the program, not just in the initial development. Ensuring young people have a say in how and what they learn will increase engagement, improve behavioural and academic outcomes and provide an inclusive, relevant program.