

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Dr Seth Brown, Lecturer, School of Education, RMIT University
Professor Peter Kelly, Head, UNESCO UNEVOC Centre, RMIT University
Dr Scott Phillips, Director, Kershaw Phillips Consulting

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Contents

1. Executive Summary	4
21st Century Challenges and Opportunities for Young People's Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise	5
The Hume-Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN), Whittlesea Youth Commitment Committee (WYC Com), Action Research and Young People's Engagement in Middle Years Schooling: Belonging, Identity and Time	5
Mapping Stakeholders and Developing Logic Models	5
Reflections on Process	6
Socio-ecological Thinking and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	6
Recommendations	6
2. Introduction: Young People in the 21st Century – Challenges and Opportunities	7
Program of Research	9
Young People, Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise: Critical Perspectives for the Anthropocene	9
Research Focus	9
3. Socio-ecological Models of Young People's Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise	10
4. The Collier Charitable Fund and a Pilot Study of the problem of Non-attendance in the Middle Years of Schooling in Whittlesea.	12
5. Emergent Themes – Results of Workshop One	15
Belonging	16
Identity	17
Time.	18
6. Disruptive Ideas about addressing non-attendance of Middle Years Young People – Results of Workshop Two	20
Intervention A: Reframing times and spaces to maximise middle years engagement with school and family	21
Intervention B: Building more family involvement with school	21
Intervention C: Resourcing schools to empower independent young learners	21
Intervention D: Honouring family life and learning in school life and learning	21
Intervention E: Changing focus from exclusion to inclusion, and from mental health as disorder to mental health as positive well-being (flourishing)	21
7. Mapping Intervention Partners and Framing Disruptive Ideas as Logic Models – Results of Workshop Three	22
Mapping partnerships	23
8. Finalising the Logic Models and agreeing a way forward – Results of Workshop Four	26
Finalising the Logic Models	27



9. Reflections, Implications, Conclusions and Recommendations	32
Reflections on the Logic Modelling Process	33
Reflections on Action Research Process.	33
Conclusions	35
The promise of the socio-ecological approach in terms of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	35
Recommendations	35
10. Postscript: The Promise of Disruptive Interventions in to the Socio-Ecologies of Young People's Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise	36
The Maranguka ('caring for others') Justice Reinvestment Project	37
Collective Impact Model and Governance	37
The Outcomes	38
Appendices	39
Appendix A: Action Research Workshops	40
What is Action Research?	40
Action Research Workshop Participants.	40
Workshop One	40
Workshop Two	41
Workshop Three.	41
Workshop Four	41
Appendix B: Mapping WYC-RMIT Middle Years Project partnership actions.	42
Appendix C: Draft Logic Models.	46
Appendix D: Logic Models: A tool for Planning and Evaluation.	52
Why logic models?	52
Defining the elements of logic models	52
Logic models as a tool for planning	52
Logic models as the basis for evaluation planning	53
Appendix E: United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.	54
Appendix F: United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5	55
Appendix G: Sustainable Development Goal 8.	56

Cover: Cover art created by Seth Brown, "Water 14" Water Series, 2009, Relief Print

We would like to acknowledge the support and feedback given to us from the Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network, the Whittlesea Youth Commitment Committee and the City of Whittlesea.



1.

Executive Summary

21st Century Challenges and Opportunities for Young People's Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise

In the early 21st century young people are experiencing complex challenges and opportunities – individually as well as in the families, communities, nations and global order in which they live. The pilot project reported here was developed to address the ways in which young people engage and disengage with schooling during their middle years in the Whittlesea region.

In collaboration with a range of stakeholders this research aimed to investigate and co-design innovative responses to these challenges. In doing so, it shifted attention from an individual young person's well-being, resilience and enterprise, to the 'socio-ecologies' that can promote inclusion, social justice and democracy. As such, it is linked with a research program associated with the RMIT School of Education which aims to critically intervene into, and, where appropriate, disrupt conventional understandings of these concepts in an age where human activities continue to place the planet at peril.

The Hume-Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN), Whittlesea Youth Commitment Committee (WYC Com), Action Research and Young People's Engagement in Middle Years Schooling: Belonging, Identity and Time

With the support of a small grant from the [Collier Charitable Fund](#) the RMIT team, and the stakeholders from the Hume-Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN), and the Whittlesea Youth Commitment Committee (WYC Com), piloted a conceptual model, and a model for collaborative practice, framed by a sense of the need to identify and explore innovative and disruptive socio-ecological understandings of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise.

This model involved eight to ten participants from the HWLLEN and WYC networks in attending four two-hour Action Research Workshops during July-September 2018.

Participants in Workshop One considered a number of issues – including, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, problems with parenting, bullying, infrastructure, a patchy service sector, and the complexity of family life – as these might influence or impact on young people's engagement in the middle years of school.

The initial analysis of this discussion identified three recurring themes – **Belonging, Identity, and Time** – that became the structuring elements of the planning, discussion and analysis of the following three workshops, and the development of Logic Models from this analysis.

Mapping Stakeholders and Developing Logic Models

In Workshops Two, Three and Four these themes informed the development of 'disruptive' ideas about possible interventions to disrupt the usual practices and processes related to the engagement of young people during their middle years transitions. These ideas were translated into five intervention statements, and participants then undertook an exercise to map the range of community collaborations, relationships and partnerships in the Whittlesea region that could be involved in implementing these possible interventions (Appendix B).

This mapping of partners and stakeholders helped to identify the range of inputs and participants likely to be associated with each of the five possible interventions, and these were then translated into a Logic Model format.

During the third Action Research Workshop, three programs (or interventions) were developed from the initial five. A draft Logic Model was developed for each of these three agreed interventions.

- The first was focused on **reframing times and spaces to maximise middle years engagement with school and family.**
- The second concerned **building and honouring family involvement with school life and learning**
- The third was focused on **empowering independent young learners to flourish.**

In the fourth and final Action Research Workshop, participants reviewed these and combined them into two final Logic Models: one about **reframing times and spaces**, and the other about **empowering young people and families to flourish in school life.**

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Reflections on Process

Participants reflected on the value of logic modelling and the collaborative action research process they undertook, and highlighted the value of using logic models as a key tool for planning implementation and providing the basis for evaluating the outcomes to be achieved. The next step in the process will be to agree upon, and secure resources for, the implementation of the Whittlesea Middle Years (Re) engagement Project activities in line with the final Logic Models during 2019 and 2020, and to use the input and output statements as the basis for formative evaluation (at the 6 months point) and the outcome statements as the basis for impact evaluation at the 12 months, 18 months and 24 months stages.

Socio-ecological Thinking and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) provide a framework of action to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, prosperity, peace, and justice to obtain a more sustainable future.

The SDGs list seventeen interconnected goals to be achieved by 2030. In line with the research program and the UN SDG, this Action Research pilot project aspires to impact on three of the seventeen goals using a socio-ecological approach:

- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

The SDGs:

call for all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity [and] recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection and job opportunities (UNESCO, 2018).

Places such as Whittlesea are profoundly shaped by the changing world of work, digital disruption, and disappearing youth labour markets. More and more young people find themselves in precarious employment or marginalised from education, training and work. The promise of the socio-ecological approach in terms of

SDGs is how it disruptively connects to existing networks and initiatives, and introduces 'socio-ecological thinking' into these place-based interventions, so that:

- young people flourish during the middle years of schooling and beyond, and continue on their secondary school journey to successfully complete secondary schooling;
- become critical, creative and disruptive 'agents of change' in their communities;
- and are supported in achieving this by key stakeholders working collaboratively to create pathways into meaningful, fair and ecologically safe work and living arrangements for young people in Whittlesea.

Recommendations

Key recommendations that have resulted from this pilot research include:

1. That the HWLLEN uses the Logic Models and the final project report to engage the Department of Education and Training (DET) Area Director as a project sponsor. The aim is to secure the DET's involvement, support and investment during 2019 and 2020 in trialling the interventions arising from the current project.
2. That HWLLEN be resourced, as part of a two year project, to coordinate the convening of Working Parties comprised of key stakeholders to develop plans and implement the activities set out in the Logic Models resulting from the Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)engagement Pilot Project, and that the RMIT research team (associated with UNEVOC) provide ongoing research and evaluation support to this work.
3. That Working Party participants agree to commit sufficient time to the Working Party processes during 2019 and 2020, and that they work in collaboration with the RMIT research team to research, develop, implement and evaluate their project activities as part of building evidence-informed practices to improve middle years school engagement in the Whittlesea region.



2.

Introduction:

Young People in the 21st Century – Challenges and Opportunities

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



The start of the 21st century presents many challenges, and provides many opportunities, for individual young people, their families, and the communities, towns and cities that they grow up in.

The unfolding 'digital disruption' – driven by the 'Third Industrial Revolution', the Internet of Things (IoT), AI technologies, and rapidly advancing bio-genetic technologies – promises to profoundly transform traditional understandings of education, training, employment, and the trajectories of our life course. Some argue that the so-called 'gig economy' is already contributing to the growth of a global 'precariat' class, millions of whom are young people.¹

These challenges are compounded by the echoing effects of the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008; the expectation that young people provide enterprising solutions to their own economic insecurity; and by the 'moral economies of neo-liberalism and austerity' that are shaped by debates about the choices made by individuals, groups, communities and organisations in relation to what is 'good' for young people.²

These emerging and established challenges impact different populations of young people in different ways.

The capable, the successful, the included mainstream of young people are imagined as being able to respond to these challenges and opportunities through their capacities for innovation and enterprise. They are imagined as being equipped with a set of skills, capabilities, behaviours and dispositions that enable them to thrive in contexts of uncertainty, precarity, turbulence and disruption. They are resilient and enterprising.

In the foreword to a 2015 report from the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) titled *The New Work Order*, FYA's CEO Jan Owen suggested that:

At FYA we see a significant opportunity to sure [sic] up our nation's future by investing in the next generation and backing them to create the kind of world they want to live in. Core to this will be a generations [sic] of enterprising young people who are job builders and creators, not only job seekers.

That's why FYA is calling for a national enterprise skills strategy to ensure young people are prepared for the economy of the future and equipped with the tools to drive economic and social progress. We want all young Australians to learn the skills to be digitally-literate, financially-savvy, innovative and adaptable and help them navigate complex careers of the future.³

At the same time, more marginalised populations of young people – for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, refugee/migrant communities and young people from poorer households and communities – are more likely to disengage from education and training, experience unemployment or precarious employment at rates far higher than their peers and older workers, and experience a range of issues that impact on the state of their social, physical and mental health and well-being. Marginalisation suggests a lack of well-being, resilience and enterprise.

1 FYA (2015). *The New Work Order*, Melbourne, The Foundation for Young Australians.

Kelly, P. (2017) Growing up After the GFC: Responsibilisation and Mortgaged Futures, *Discourse*, 38, 1, pp. 57-69, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1104852>

Productivity Commission (2016) *Digital Disruption: What do governments need to do?* Commission Research Paper, Canberra.

Rifkin, J. 2015. *The Third Industrial Revolution: How lateral power is transforming energy, the economy, and the world.* <http://thethirdindustrialrevolution.com/>

Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London, Bloomsbury.

2 Kelly, P. and Pike, J. (editors) (2017) *Neo-Liberalism and Austerity: The Moral Economies of Young People's Health and Well-Being*, Palgrave, London

3 Jan Owen (2015) Foreword, in *The New Work Order*, Melbourne, The Foundation for Young Australians.

Program of Research

Young People, Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise: Critical Perspectives for the Anthropocene

It is against this general background, and the more specific details that emerge from detailed research, that RMIT University researchers from the School of Education have developed a program of research, comprising multiple research projects, that is titled *Young People, Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise: Critical Perspectives for the Anthropocene*.⁴

Research Focus

In collaboration with a range of stakeholders this program of research aims to investigate and co-design innovative responses to these challenges that shift attention from an individual young person's well-being, resilience and enterprise, to the 'ecologies' that can promote inclusion, social justice and democracy.

Through a variety of projects, the research program aims to critically intervene into, and, where appropriate, disrupt conventional understandings of these concepts in an age where human activities continue to place the planet at peril.

At a 'meta-level' our concerns in this program of research reference a number of the key challenges and aspirations embedded in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including:

- 3) Good health and well-being
- 4) Quality education
- 5) Gender equality
- 8) Decent work and economic growth
- 10) Reduced inequality
- 11) Sustainable cities and communities
- 16) Peace, justice and strong institutions

The concerns we outline are vital at a time when planetary systems (environmental, social, cultural, economic, political) are in crisis, and where the multiple dimensions of these crises are evidenced in a variety of ways, including:

- wide-spread precarious and under-employment;
- the rise of a 'gig-economy', and the disappearance of meaningful work with the rise of AI, and the emerging 'digital disruption';
- dis-engagement from education and training that appears to be increasingly (un)'fit-for-purpose';
- significant physical and mental health and well-being challenges for large sections of the human population – especially for children and young people;
- the continuing profound disadvantage and marginalisation of indigenous populations and communities;
- the wretchedness of life as experienced by the hundreds of millions of refugees and asylum seekers on the move around the globe;
- the rise of nationalisms, fundamentalisms, Islamophobia, trans* phobia, homophobia and far-right populism in the 'liberal' democracies;
- continued in(effective) action by key actors (local, national, global) on the unfolding consequences of the Anthropocene.

And when 'solutions' to these challenges and opportunities are often reduced to a set of technical inputs to what are imagined as 'technical', 'engineering' (social, mechanical, environmental) problems.

⁴ [The Guardian](#) newspaper reports that the word Anthropocene, 'from the Ancient Greek word *anthropos*, meaning "human", acknowledges that humans are the major cause' of the forces – 'extreme weather, submerged cities, acute resource shortages, vanished species, lakes turned to deserts, nuclear fallout' – currently transforming the planet. See, also, [Resilience Thinking for the Anthropocene](#).



3.

Socio-ecological Models

of Young People's Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise

The concepts of well-being, resilience and enterprise currently dominate community, academic, business and policy discussions about the challenges that large numbers of young Australians face in relation to education and training; employment and enterprise; and social and economic health and well-being.

These concepts are most often imagined – in State and Federal government policy, by Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) and NGOs (for example, Foundation for Young Australians) – as being able to ‘inoculate’ individual children and young people against many of the education, training, work and life ‘disruptions’ that characterise the start of the 21st century.⁵

Many mainstream accounts of the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, seek to identify and measure the individual psychological and physical characteristics of young people’s *resilience* (for example, the 10 item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale that forms the base of VicHealth’s 2015 *Community survey of young Victorians’ resilience and mental wellbeing*). Individual young people’s resilience is understood to protect them against the risk of harm, and of marginalisation from social, cultural, economic and political life. From this perspective, a resilient young person is ‘one who bounces back having endured adversity, who continues to function reasonably well despite continued exposure to risk’. In this sense, resilience tends to focus on such things as individual self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-awareness.⁶

Most often these *key-words* (well-being, resilience, enterprise) emerge and take the form of psychologically based encouragements for young people to care for their own physical, mental and social health and well-being, to develop their own resilience, and to become enterprising in a world that is taken-for-granted as being troubling, challenging and ‘disruptive’. The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), for example, identifies future

generations of ‘enterprising young people who are job builders and creators, not only job seekers’, as being ‘core’ to meeting the social and economic challenges that Australia faces.⁷

A significant gap in these approaches is that they take little account of the roles played by communities, Third Sector Organisations (TSOs), businesses and governments in shaping urban ecologies, and in building and supporting young people’s well-being, resilience and enterprise.

Given the scale of the challenges faced by young Australians, there is an urgent need to build ‘socio-ecological’ models of young people’s well-being, resilience and enterprise that are grounded in the relationships between communities, policies, practices and knowledge production.⁸

5 See, for example <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/mentalhealth/Pages/buildingresilience.aspx>

6 DET (2015). *Building Resilience*, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/resilienceframework.aspx?Redirect=1>

Gilligan, R. (2000). Adversity, Resilience and Young People: the Protective Value of Positive School and Spare Time Experiences, *Children & Society*, 14, 1, 37-47

Liebenberg, L., Ungar, M., & van de Vijver, F. J. R. (2012). Validation of sub-scales on the child and youth resilience measure-28 (CYRM-28). *Research on Social Work Practice*, 22, 219-226.

Ungar, M. (2012). *The Social Ecology of Resilience: A Handbook of Theory and Practice*. New York: Springer

Wodler, D. (2011). Building resilience in Looked After young people, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 39, 3, 2011

7 FYA (2015). *The New Work Order*

8 Resilience Alliance (2016) Resilience, <http://www.resalliance.org/resilience>

Resilient Cities (2013). 100 Resilient Cities Initiative, <http://www.100resilientcities.org/#/-/>



4.

The Collier Charitable Fund

and a Pilot Study of the problem of Non-attendance in the Middle Years of Schooling in Whittlesea

With the support of a small grant from the Collier Charitable Fund the RMIT team, and key stakeholders from the Hume-Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN), and the Whittlesea Youth Commitment Committee (WYC Com), developed a conceptual model, and a model for collaborative practice, framed by a sense of the need to identify and explore innovative and disruptive socio-ecological understandings of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise. Using this logic, the project aimed to:

- Produce innovative models of the 'ecologies' (social, cultural, economic and geographical environments) that shape young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise in neighbourhoods, communities and cities.
- Identify and analyse the ways in which communities, TSOs, businesses and governments might mobilise these 'socio-ecological models' to 'build' young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise.

HWLLEN is a not-for-profit, membership based organization, funded by the Victorian State Government that aims to improve transition outcomes and to help young people complete Year 12 (or equivalent).⁹ Founded in 1998 from a process based on a Spirit of Cooperation Agreement between partners in the Whittlesea community (including the City of Whittlesea, community support agencies and employer representatives, employment services, and stakeholders involved in secondary and tertiary education), WYC CoM is a community based intervention strategy designed to improve young people's transitions and education, training and employment opportunities.¹⁰

This pilot project developed from a number of concerns about the growing problems and challenges of school non-attendance in Whittlesea raised by the WYC Com.

- the Department of Education and Training's focus around issues of youth mental health being a factor in school retention and transition;
- the Brotherhood of St. Laurence's Reconnect program that caters for young people aged 15-24 years who are early school leavers and are not currently participating in education, training or employment;
- Invigor8ing Education (a partnership with Whittlesea City Council, WYC and the YMCA);
- the YMCA Engage program that aims to empower and train young people in understanding and assisting peers experiencing mental health distress;

- Kildonan Uniting Care's School Focused Youth Services (SFYS) that provide support for targeted young people at risk of leaving school;
- Melbourne Polytechnic's aim to engage people in education as a pathway to employment; and
- the Victoria Police's focus on high risk young people, employing two new Youth Specialists to work across four local government areas in the northern Melbourne metro region.

The project is linked to the strategic directions identified in the Whittlesea Middle Years Strategy, *A Collective Response*, and is aimed at addressing specific actions set out in the Whittlesea Middle Years Implementation Plan 2018. HWLLEN, WYC Com and the City of Whittlesea developed the Whittlesea Middle Years Strategy to support young people ages 9 to 14 during a time of significant transition, risk and opportunity.

A Collective Response was built on consultation and survey data, especially implementation of the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI). The MDI surveys children in Years 5/6 and young people in Years 7/8. It considers five dimensions related to wellbeing, health and academic achievement:

- Social and emotional development
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Connectedness to adults and peers
- School experiences
- Use of after-school time

Three rounds of the MDI survey have been run: in 2013, 936 Year 5 students were surveyed; in 2014 628 Year 8 students were surveyed; and in 2015 995 Year 5 students and 644 Year 7/8 students were surveyed. The *Collective Response* document noted that the MDI data pointed to several issues to be further investigated and explored, specifically, how to:

- Strengthen relationships with adults – at school, home and in the neighbourhood
- Strengthen students' sense of a positive school climate
- Improve nutrition (eating breakfast) and sleep
- Increase engagement in after-school activities ¹¹

9 Details of the Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network are available at <https://www.hwllen.com.au> – accessed October 2018

10 Details of the WYC are available at <http://dusseldorp.org.au/resource/whittlesea-youth-commitment-resources> – accessed October 2018

11 Whittlesea Youth Commitment, Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network, City of Whittlesea (2017) *Middle Years in Whittlesea: A Collective Response – A municipal middle years strategy for the City of Whittlesea*, p.14.

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



The *Implementation Plan* for the *Collective Response* strategy outlined a structured approach for supporting the rollout of the strategy. One of the key actions to be pursued is:

Work collaboratively with a research body to seek to implement an Action Research Project to strengthen the capacity of schools to understand, unpack share and make effective use of data available to them through the Attitude to School survey (and potentially other data sources). Further potential outcomes of the research include:

- Identification of effective school community partnerships
- Development of case studies
- Provision of municipal evidence for successful program implementation.¹²

The Action Research pilot project we report on here was envisaged by the research team as a collaborative process of action research and co-design of interventions to promote engagement of young people in middle years schooling and to reduce non-attendance by a cohort of students identified in school satisfaction surveys and other research instruments (notably the MDI) as constituting up to 30% of students in the middle years across Whittlesea.

The main method for working this way was to involve eight to ten participants from the HWLLEN and WYC networks to attend four two-hour action research workshops on the following days:

- Workshop One: Thursday, 26 July, 2018 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am
- Workshop Two: Thursday, 9 August, 2018 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am
- Workshop Three: Thursday, 30 August, 2018 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am
- Workshop Four: Monday, 10 September, 2018 from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm

In issuing invitations to participants, the Executive Officer of the HWLLEN emphasised that stakeholders' participation would be critical to taking the research project forward. The invitation noted:

We realise that this is a considerable amount of time for you to commit to in order to participate in this research, but hope that you are able to consider this as

an invaluable investment of time to support the ongoing work we have been doing for the benefit of young people's well-being, and that of our broader community.

The workshops were conducted at The Lakes South Morang P-9 School – the usual venue for WYC CoM meetings. The invitation encouraged invitees to refer the invitation to other members of their school/organisation/agency if it was not possible for them to participate. Appendix A provides a brief description of the action research method used in the workshops, and lists the participants involved in each workshop.

The activities and discussions at the first Action Research Workshop revealed three primary, intersecting themes concerning the engagement of young people in middle years schooling: *Belonging*, *Identity* and *Time*. These were reflected in discussions during the remaining Workshops, during which participants:

- articulated a number of possible interventions,
- mapped the range of stakeholders who could be involved in co-designing and implementing them,
- formulated the intervention ideas into a set of Logic Models to guide implementation of the activities in a strategic way and to provide the basis for an evaluation framework so the processes and impacts associated with the interventions could be monitored and assessed.

At the conclusion of each Workshop, participants reflected on what they were learning about working in a collaborative way, using a socio-ecological approach. This helped them to underline the relational and place-based nature of the issues associated with the disengagement of some young people from middle years school life and learning in Whittlesea (and elsewhere in a more general sense), and to agree on the sorts of relationships and commitments required to improve engagement and reduce non-attendance.

This report sets out the main themes, findings and outcomes arising from the Action Research Workshops. It also provides key tools, in the form of policy implementation mapping and Logic Models, which can be used by stakeholders in implementing the agreed interventions over the next 18-24 months.

¹² Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (2017), *Middle Years in Whittlesea: A Collective Response – A municipal middle years strategy for the City of Whittlesea – Implementation Plan* p.6.



5.

Emergent Themes –

Results of Workshop One

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



The first Action Research Workshop was built around three aspirations:

1. To work as part of a larger program of research that is trying to develop disruptive ways for imagining and responding to issues related to young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise
2. To develop and collaborate in place-based interventions in relation to particular problems (*such as 'non-attendance in the middle years'*) that have the potential to connect regionally, nationally, globally.
3. To develop an Action Learning/Research model for ongoing place-based collaborations with multiple and diverse stakeholders to understand and respond to an array of challenges and opportunities for young people in 'disruptive times'

Participants in the first Workshop considered a number of issues such as mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, problems with parenting, bullying, infrastructure, a patchy service sector, and the complexity of family life.

The researchers' initial analysis of this conversation identified three themes that they wanted to discuss in greater detail in Workshop Two: **Belonging, Identity, and Time.**

Belonging



Issues emerged around community infrastructure in schools that would enable students to belong. Issues also were identified in relation to the problematic nature of support systems in the community.

"We know that [of] the growing number and the growing distances between young people and services and I include schools and infrastructure in that [This] is obviously having an impact...so how do we as a community help to support that [need for this infrastructure]?"

The impact of community infrastructure to support issues of disengagement in schools has a knock-on effect to what is described as "generational disengagement" and the difficulty of institutions such as schools to address bullying and cyberbullying.

"You have generational disengagement from education for whatever reason. We also have a very big demographic in terms of different people, coming from different places with different outlooks on education and when you're talking about bullying it's two things there that come to mind with me immediately...one is the student's definition of bullying. However, there is bullying but now which is something in the last decade... there is cyber [bullying] and that's probably the biggest thing that schools have had to try and deal with in the last probably not even decade...five years."

Further, it was clear that parents along with others in the community, may exacerbate the issue of bullying.

"If we take that to the next step...one of the things that is growing in the Whittlesea community...it's not only the kids, so the kids are having their cyber tiff and then I'm the student's mum and she's having a fight with Kim and I'm the student's mum and I get on and give my six pence and so the bullying becomes multi-generational as well..."

The research literature on young people and belonging is extensive, but a number of themes are relevant to the discussion here.

The relationship between bodies, subjectivity and affect in educational spaces is complex, dynamic and messy. Central to this relationship are concepts of belonging: what it means to belong and not belong, who or what can belong or not belong, and the precarious nature of belonging otherwise. To belong in this sense is not inherently positive. Although not always negative, the inclusionary and exclusionary force of belonging can carry certain negative, discriminatory and restrictive

expectations for young people that often go unnoticed within the most mundane and incidental moments of school life. These normative forces are so embedded within school rituals, practices and routines that many young people, teachers and members of school communities accept them without questioning their implications.¹³

Belonging implies **Conforming** to expectations...

What are the rules of engagement in this school? (Rules that might be explicit or implied, or not even known or shared by different actors in school)

What do I have to do to participate? Does this seem too hard at some times? Easier at others?

What support do I get to enable me to belong? Or do I have to do all, or most of the work to belong?

What are the terms or measures of success? Are there affirmations of my sense of self? Or does school assault my sense of self?

Belonging is also about recognising and negotiating **Boundaries**:

Does it take a lot of effort (symbolically, mentally, physically) to traverse/cross these boundaries?

To let me in? For me to stay?

Identity



Participants noted how young people are taking on the role of being an adult far too young – sometimes as early as Grade 6.

“Often the girls by Grade 6 or whatever fulfil that role... they cook the meals and they mind the younger siblings and...that’s the cultural role that needs to be fulfilled.”

There also are differences between what students and what schools believe to be the reasons as to why students do not attend school.

“Our students report to us about why they stopped attending school or have poor attendance in the past...they will say that they didn’t receive adequate personal or learning support in their previous school... didn’t get along with the teachers and things like that come up. When we assess our students we see family dysfunction or difficulties as being most prevalent amongst our kids and poor mental health as being...and that’s both kids with diagnosed mental illness as well as with kids with noticeable poor mental health which is evident in severe behaviour and so that incorporates all of the kids with significant behavioural issues...When we assess students’ alcohol and other drug use is prevalent in our cohort which is probably the more pointy end but it’s more around about 75% that use drugs and alcohol.”

Parents also sometimes fail to recognise or understand the meaning of mental health.

“Parents sometimes use mental health incorrectly...they like to diagnose children themselves...they see mental health as an excuse for their behaviour.”

Schools can be understood – at one level – as ‘*intense interactional economies*’ where the most important work being done is about ‘*becoming somebody*’.

Philip Wexler, a US based critical social-psychologist, in his analysis of the ways in which identity is constructed for and by young people in the intense ‘*interactional economy*’ of schools, argues that against the backdrop of a ‘*seemingly shared mass youth culture*’, ‘*what students struggle for in becoming somebody and how they engage that interactional life project during high school is different depending on where their school is located in the larger societal pattern of organised social differences and inequalities*’.

¹³ Emma Charlton, Leanne Coll, Lyn Harrison, Debbie Ollis (2018) Incidental moments: The paradox of belonging in educational spaces, in Christine Halse (editor) *Interrogating Belonging*, Palgrave, London, pp.31-50.

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



'The ideal and the route to becoming somebody in the suburban white working class is not the same as becoming somebody in a high school in a professional middle class suburb. Both are as different from urban under class among youths, as it is for their parents'.¹⁴

Identity, a sense of self, is an important element that shapes young people's participation and engagement in schools.

Identity can be understood in various ways.

In terms of this project we want to suggest that a sense of self is always relational and always embodied.

Our sense of ourselves, of others, of who I am, who I can be, what I want to do, always has others implicated in it, involved in it, shaping it – positively and/or negatively.

And, it is not just about how we think about things. It is embodied in that sense that bodies move, feel, change over time, are considered attractive or not, are what we 'live' in/through, are what others see/respond to, and can do some things/not others.

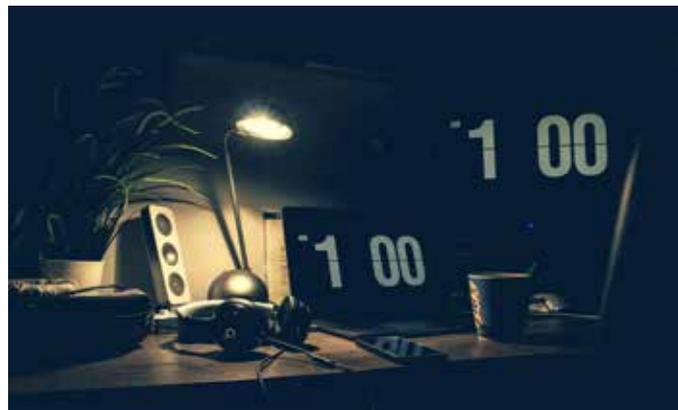
Rosi Braidotti talks of a '*nomad self*' – *one that has to continually move in, and across, and between different networks of relationships, different communities of belonging.*

A nomad self – young people – have to develop strategies for developing and maintaining (holding) a sense of self as a consequence of these mobilities. Often in ecologies that are supportive of it, but which may, also, be hostile to it.¹⁵

Elsewhere we have found this concept really powerful for thinking about young people's transitions, and their 'struggles' to be and become somebody – in schools, in training spaces, in work, at home, with peers, on-line, in the neighbourhood.

And the shifting dimensions of these struggles at different times.

Time



Participants observed that young people struggle to manage their time.

"Our young people are just totally overwhelmed. They just feel swamped. They have too many things for them to try to filter through and they don't know where to start."

Discussion was also focused on the MDI data which revealed that about 25% of the Year 8 cohort are not getting a good night's sleep more than three times a week¹⁶, and how school times could be adjusted to accommodate the need for adolescents to get sufficient sleep. Trying to accommodate an appropriate school schedule for young people in this regard is complicated.

"Teachers' working conditions and when they have to have their lunch breaks and whatever would come into play...there are defined boundaries about what the earliest start time is...what the finish time is...when lunch has to be and whatever else...so that's another layer that probably needs...could be addressed."

¹⁴ Philip Wexler (1992) *Becoming Somebody*, The Falmer Press, London (p.8)

¹⁵ Rosi Braidotti (2013) *The Posthuman*, Polity Press, Cambridge

¹⁶ *A Collective Response* p.17.

However, schools that do not have these regulations can accommodate students more flexibly.

“We do start the day at all sorts of staggered times...it depends...we will enrol a student in a particular group depending on their needs...most high-risk kids...the ones that have been disengaged for the longest amount of time and are the most dysregulated might start in our [school at] 1:00 pm in the afternoon class time and do like a three-hour class. Most of our kids start at 9:30 am because we found that to be a good in-between start time.”

There also may be other situational reasons that impact on young people’s sleep and wake patterns.

“For many, because of cultural reasons, they don’t have dinner till 10:00 pm at night.”

The regulation and management of individuals and populations is an activity that requires human experience to be subdivided, so to speak, by time and space. Regulation occurs across different ‘time zones’. In schools these ‘zones’ include the timetable, the school day, the school week, the school term, the school year, and out-of-school-hours. And in different spaces such as the classroom, the staff room, the head teacher’s office, the canteen, the school yard, the playground...These ‘time zones’ and ‘spaces of government’ are not natural phenomena. They have to be thought about and brought into being, made real, as times and spaces appropriate to particular tasks and objectives. In this way, schools – with their timetables that break the day up into governable bits and the curriculum that divides knowledge up into knowable bits – have been built as spaces in which the ‘making up’ of desirable behaviours and attitudes in young people might be readily accomplished.¹⁷

We have lots of ways of talking about and thinking about time – lots of time based metaphors: Time rich, time poor, time is money, free time, school time, work time, quality time, childhood-youth-adulthood, being (the present), becoming (the future),...

Schools are time based organisations.

Schooling is a time based institution.

Time can be Inflexible, flexible,...more or less so.

There are ‘times in a life’ when we require young people to conform to ‘inflexible time’ – but at certain ‘times’ this might be just too hard.

Time can also be entangled in complex ways with **Belonging** and **Identity** in shaping whether young people attend school...or not!

¹⁷ Kerry Montero and Peter Kelly (2016) *Young People and the Aesthetics of Health Promotion: Beyond Reason, Rationality and Risk*, Routledge, Abingdon (UK), pp.28-29.

The image features three glowing light bulbs hanging from black cords against a clear blue sky. The bulbs are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with two on the left and one on the right. The text is overlaid on a horizontal band across the middle of the image, with a dark teal section on the left and an orange section on the right.

6.

Disruptive Ideas about addressing non-attendance of Middle Years Young People –

Results of Workshop Two

During the second Action Research Workshop participants were asked to develop five disruptive ideas under each of the themes of **Belonging, Time and Identity**.

Participants initially broke into small groups and workshopped their ideas in relation to these themes. Each group then reported their ideas back to a plenary session. The resulting ideas, organised by theme, were written up after the Workshop by the RMIT research team, and circulated to participants via the HWLLEN.

Intervention A: Reframing times and spaces to maximise middle years engagement with school and family

Reshape Years 7 to 9 classes so middle years students have a greater sense of belonging to a small class group when they are at school. School staff, school bus operators and Middle Years parents will collaborate to develop bespoke timetables that give middle years students more flexibility around school start times and attendance. On the school campus, create a structured space that offers 'Child Care for Child Carers' – so children-as-carers can be relieved of their responsibilities (caring time) and can participate in school activities (learning time).

Intervention B: Building more family involvement with school

Support parents to participate in their local school in ways that express their family's cultural identity, support their children's learning, and help them and their children to relax together in culturally safe and age-appropriate spaces.

Intervention C: Resourcing schools to empower independent young learners

Employ an appropriate complement of social workers and youth workers to work alongside teachers in helping families to engage their children in school learning and life. Empower students to build their skills and strengths as independent learners – by allowing them to use discretionary time more productively to advance their learning in particular subjects, and to see how their informal learning at home helps equip them to function as responsible and caring adults.

Intervention D: Honouring family life and learning in school life and learning

Support families to participate in their local school in ways that express their cultural identity, support their children's learning and enable them to relax with other school parents in culturally safe spaces. Empower students to build their skills and strengths as independent learners and young adults – by building their time management skills, and helping them to see how their informal learning at home helps equip them to function as responsible and caring adults.

Intervention E: Changing focus from exclusion to inclusion, and from mental health as disorder to mental health as positive well-being (flourishing)

Rather than exclude children experiencing 'poor mental health' (anxiety, depression), resource schools to work with middle years students to develop 'positive mental health' or 'flourishing'.¹⁸ Develop bespoke timetables that give middle years students more flexibility around school start times and attendance. And help parents and their children to relax together in culturally safe and age-appropriate spaces.

¹⁸ Seligman, M (2011). *Flourish*. New York: Free Press Huppert, F. A (2014) *Interventions and Policies to Enhance Well-Being* Wiley-Blackwell; Sharp, T (2014), *The Happiness Handbook* (Finch Publishing)



7.

Mapping Intervention Partners and Framing Disruptive Ideas as Logic Models –

Results of Workshop Three

In the third Action Research Workshop, participants mapped the various partners associated with implementing the ‘disruptive ideas’ interventions they co-created in the second Workshop.

In this process they looked at how these might be made sense of through translating them into Logic Models (to tease out the ‘If-Then’ relationships between inputs, outputs and outcomes, and to clarify underlying assumptions and external factors that would influence implementation).

Mapping partnerships

A partnership mapping tool was used to map the range of community collaborations, relationships and partnerships in the Whittlesea region. The research team adapted an approach used previously by the consultant (S.K. Phillips 2012), which involved using a policy continuum approach, to identify levels of policy responsibility for initiating, implementing and delivering partnership activities in a region for widening participation in higher education.¹⁹ The framework is an adapted version of a policy continuum model developed by British researchers Alison Fuller and Karen Patton (2006)²⁰:

- *At the **macro level** are organisations associated with inception of national policy focused on widening participation. This can be adapted in the Australian context to include State governments which are also responsible for inception of education and health policies at the State level.*
- *At the **meso level** are organisations associated with implementation of the national policy on widening participation. This can be adapted in the Australian context to include organisations associated with implementation of State government policies on widening participation.*
- *At the **micro level** are organisations associated with service delivery, including higher education institutions, further education [TAFE equivalent] colleges and training providers as well as employers involved in activities addressing widening participation issues for their workforces.²¹*

Using this approach, the research team worked with the Action Research Workshop participants to map the collaboration partners for each of the five intervention ideas they had co-designed around middle years school engagement in the Whittlesea region (see Appendix B).

This mapping of partners and stakeholders helped to identify the range of inputs and participants likely to be associated with each of the interventions, and these were then translated into a Logic Model format.

In doing this work, the research team compressed the five intervention ideas into three, and developed logic models for each of these. One modelled the ideas co-designed as Intervention A; the second combined the ideas in Interventions B and D; and the third combined those from Interventions C and E.

During the third Action Research Workshop, three programs (or interventions) were developed from the initial five (A through to E). An initial Logic Model was developed for each of these three agreed interventions.

- The first (based on Intervention A) was focused on **reframing times and spaces to maximise middle years engagement with school and family.**
- The second (Combining Interventions B and D) concerned **building and honouring family involvement with school life and learning**
- The third (Combining Interventions C and E) was focused on **empowering independent young learners to flourish.**

Each of these initial Logic Models is reproduced in Appendix C.

Evaluation literature demonstrates that logic models are a useful tool for thinking logically and strategically about a program of activity (or an intervention) that has been developed to address a situation – i.e. an issue or issues within a complex of circumstances. They also provide the

19 Phillips, S.K (2012) *Widening Participation in Higher Education for People from Low SES Backgrounds: A Case Study of Deakin University's Existing Community Partnerships and Collaborations*, Alfred Deakin Research Institute Working Papers Series Two No 34, p.27ff.

20 Fuller, A and K. Paton (2006) 'Widening Participation in HE: Mapping and Investigating the Stakeholder Landscape', Paper Presented at SRHE annual conference, Brighton 12 – 14 December 2006, accessed online at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/164927.pdf>

21 Phillips, S.K (2012), p.27



basis for formulating evaluation questions, to help program stakeholders evaluate their processes as well as their impacts.²²

In logic model terms, programs are developed in response to a situation. Each program includes inputs, outputs, and outcomes. We model the way we expect these inputs and outputs to 'work' in a specific situation by showing how *IF* we use a particular combination of inputs and produce specified outputs, *THEN* we should produce outcomes that will change the situation with which we are concerned.²³

In this way, a logic model portrays the ideal causal relationships among program elements and identifies underlying assumptions about how the program should operate and the program's environment of external factors:

*'Fundamentally, a logic model describes how the intervention elements might cause the program goals and objectives to be achieved.'*²⁴

The participants in the third Action Research Workshop worked collaboratively to develop and use logic models to sharpen their focus on the elements of the interventions they were co-designing with regard to middle years engagement in school. The models not only provided a useful planning tool. They also helped to describe expected changes to be produced by the interventions. A full description of the theory and practice of how logic models can be used for the planning and evaluation of interventions is provided in Appendix D.

22 Nutbeam, D and A Baumann (2006) *Evaluation in a Nutshell: A practical guide to the evaluation of health programs* McGraw Hill

23 P.F. McCawley (2014) 'The Logic Model for program planning and evaluation', University of Idaho Extension, accessed online at <https://www.d.umn.edu/~kgilbert/educ5165-731/Readings/The%20Logic%20Model.pdf>

24 Nutbeam and Bauman (2006) *Evaluation in a Nutshell*



8.

Finalising the Logic Models and agreeing a way forward –

Results of Workshop Four



Finalising the Logic Models

In the fourth and final Action Research Workshop, participants reviewed the initial draft Logic Models and combined them into two: one about **reframing times and spaces**, and the other about **empowering young people and families to flourish in school life**.

Participants also reflected on the mapping of key players in the local policy ecology, and agreed that the **HWLLEN should be the key meso-level organisation responsible for coordinating partnership collaborations** when implementing the interventions described in the Logic Models. This backbone agency role of the HWLLEN as coordinating links between local partners and State government system partners is reflected in the Logic Models.

Participants also agreed that it will be important to agree the **'authorising environment'** for the interventions, and that this would entail securing clear buy-in from the Victorian Government's Department of Education and Training (DET) Area Director and staff. In this sense, participants thought it would be helpful to use the Logic Models and the final project report to secure the involvement of the DET Area Director as a project sponsor. Doing this would lock in and underline DET's involvement and a contribution of resources towards trialling the interventions to see if they might be proven to be promising practices worthy of further rollout and scaling up.

In finalising the models, the researchers acted upon feedback from the project participants, and adjusted the titles, context statement, and all the elements of the models to reflect participants' views about their refinement. As a result, the final Logic Models now show more clearly how the 'If-Then' relationship follows, by indicating the relationship between short term and medium term elements in alphabetical order across the page. The final Logic Models have also been rephrased so they reflect strongly the participants' key words of **engagement, disengagement, wellbeing and resilience, identity, belonging** and **time**. Lastly, the final Logic Models now bring out more clearly how the innovations are seen as situated in an authorising environment that facilitates local innovations to yield promising practices that can contribute to system reform.

The finalised Logic Models are reproduced on the following pages:

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Program: Whittlesea Middle Years Re-Engagement Project: Tackling the Problem of Non-Attendance. Reframing times & space to promote young people's engagement with school.

Situation/Context: Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey data for Whittlesea (2013 and 2015) and school satisfaction surveys suggest a cohort of up to 30% of middle years (MY) students in Whittlesea are at risk of not attending school. Many schools around the state are disrupting

Inputs	Outputs	
	Activities	Participation
<p>Hume and Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN) as Coordinating Network</p> <p>Whittlesea Youth Commitment Committee (WYC)</p> <p>Schools in Whittlesea</p> <p>Department of Education and Training (DET) regional staff and finance</p> <p>Department of Premier & Cabinet (DP&C) - Multicultural Affairs</p>	<p>HWLLEN convenes a Working Party to collaboratively draft, refine and finalise an early intervention plan to support students in Year 6 of Primary School to transition into secondary school by fostering their sense of belonging to a small class group in Years 7 to 9.</p>	<p>Primary school (PS) transition partners – in P-9 schools and in feeder PSs to local schools (including Epping School)</p> <p>Principals, timetabling team</p> <p>Year 6, 7, 8 and 9 Parents and students</p> <p>DET Regional Area Director and staff</p> <p>Baseline</p>
<p>Department of Human Services (DHS)</p> <p>Department of Health (DH)</p> <p>Collier Fund Grant</p> <p>City of Whittlesea (CoW) Youth Services – Baseline for Young People</p> <p>Whittlesea Community Connection (WCC)</p> <p>Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council (WMCC)</p>	<p>HWLLEN convenes a Working Party to collaboratively draft, refine and finalise a plan for re-engaging MY young people and families (including those at risk of disengaging) to develop innovative understandings of time, and how these can be used flexibly to engage in school, fulfil family roles, and achieve learning success.</p>	<p>Principals and school staff</p> <p>Families</p> <p>SWs</p> <p>YWs</p> <p>Local non-government agencies (including WCC)</p> <p>Community bus providers</p> <p>Baseline</p>
<p>RMIT Researchers and Consultant</p> <p>Social Workers (SWs)</p> <p>Youth Workers (YWs)</p>	<p>HWLLEN convenes a Working Party to collaboratively draft, refine and finalise a plan to explore how child care and out of school hours care (OSHC) can be used freshly so students-as-carers can be relieved of care duties, and experience improved wellbeing and learning.</p>	<p>Principals</p> <p>Child care/OSHC providers</p> <p>DHS/DH</p> <p>MY Parents</p> <p>CoW staff</p> <p>SWs and YWs</p>

Assumptions

Key stakeholders participate actively and regularly in each Working Party ('plan, do, review')

Involving families and students in reframing school times and child care spaces will enhance their sense of belonging in school life and reduce non-attendance

School leaders can coordinate stakeholders and gain commitment to implement projects

conventional approaches to timetabling and the forms of support offered young people and families to better engage them in achieving learning outcomes. The HWLLEN is using a socio-ecological (SE) approach to co-design and coordinate initiatives that promote MY (re)engagement and prevent disengaged young people encountering the criminal justice system. SE approaches promise to enable communities to better facilitate MY young people's engagement, transitions and pathways into future education and work. Stakeholders recognise MY students' engagement in school is shaped by the complex relationships between belonging, time and identity.

Outcomes -- Impact		
Short	Medium	Long
<p>Using the plan:</p> <p>A) MY school leaders (i) recognise the importance of creating a sense of 'belonging' for students to feel engaged, and (ii) map relevant programs/resources in Whittlesea</p> <p>B) Primary school transition partners recognise that all Year 6 students need to feel assured they will belong to a 'home group' during Years 7-9</p>	<p>In line with the plan:</p> <p>A) MY schools create 'home groups' as the basic belonging unit for MY teaching and learning (T&L) across Years 7-9, by adapting other relevant models/efficient resource use</p> <p>B) Primary school transition partners prepare Year 6 students and parents to view Years 7-9 as a safe and reassuring learning time within high school</p>	<p>MY students flourish during their early years of high school and continue on their secondary school journey to successfully complete secondary schooling</p> <p>Young people's experience of education and family life enables them to be critical, creative and disruptive 'agents of change' in their communities, and to develop diverse capabilities to engage with meaningful education and work opportunities.</p> <p>In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, social, economic and education partners support each other in creating pathways into meaningful, fair and ecologically safe work and living arrangements for young people in the HW region.</p>
<p>Using the plan:</p> <p>A) School leaders agree to flex school start times at certain times for MY young people who might dis-engage from school</p> <p>B) Families & students, SWs, YWs & teachers develop a shared understanding of how to use time flexibly to balance family & school</p> <p>C) Families learn to use community buses to attend school at different times during the day</p>	<p>In line with the plan:</p> <p>A) School leaders & teachers adjust timetables, teaching practices</p> <p>B) SWs, YWs, teachers & families document promising practices that help students use time flexibly to engage</p> <p>C) Students use community buses to attend school at flexible times agreed with school</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <p>Prepared by and copyright of Seth Brown and Peter Kelly, RMIT University, with Dr Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting (August 2018).</p> 
<p>Using Plan:</p> <p>A) Child care/OSHC providers explore innovative ways to offer services to MY families</p> <p>B) Stakeholders discuss how child care/OSHC can help families & MY young people better balance their lives</p>	<p>In line with the plan:</p> <p>A) Child care/OSHC services are delivered in innovative ways to assist MY young people—as-carers engage in school</p> <p>B) Students previously impacted by care roles are able to productively re-engage with school.</p>	<p>Source: <i>University of Wisconsin - Extension, Cooperative Extension, Program Development and Evaluation</i> (2003) at: https://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/designing-programs/</p>

External Factors

DET staff provide an authorising environment for trialling and evaluating these approaches in Whittlesea, and DET agrees to fund evidence-based promising practices as part of ongoing system improvement

Community bus agencies help MY students use services to improve school engagement

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Program: Whittlesea Middle Years Re-engagement Project: Tackling the Problem of Non-Attendance– Empowering Young People and their Families to Flourish in School

Situation/Context: Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey data for Whittlesea (2013 and 2015,) and school satisfaction surveys suggest a cohort of up to 30% of middle years (MY) students in Whittlesea are at risk of not attending school. Many schools around the state are disrupting

Inputs	Outputs	
	Activities	Participation
<p>Hume and Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN) as Coordinating Network</p> <p>Whittlesea Youth Commitment Committee (WYC)</p> <p>Schools in Whittlesea</p> <p>Department of Education and Training (DET) regional staff and finance</p>	<p>HWLLEN convenes a Working Party to collaboratively draft, refine & finalise a plan for resourcing “Middle Years Transition Brokers” - SWs, YWs - to work in schools as part of an integrated school re-engagement team in Whittlesea schools (including mapping of existing resources/ programs).</p>	<p>Principals and school staff</p> <p>DET Regional Director/staff</p> <p>Local non-government agencies (including WCC)</p> <p>SWs and YWs</p>
<p>Department of Premier & Cabinet (DP&C) - Multicultural Affairs</p> <p>Department of Human Services (DHS)</p> <p>Department of Health (DH)</p> <p>Collier Fund Grant</p> <p>City of Whittlesea (CoW) Youth Services – Baseline for Young People</p> <p>Whittlesea Community Connection (WCC)</p> <p>Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council (WMCC)</p> <p>RMIT Researchers and Consultant</p> <p>Social Workers (SWs)</p> <p>Youth Workers (YWs)</p>	<p>HWLLEN convenes a Working Party to collaboratively draft, refine and finalise a plan for communicating and engaging with the SES, ethnic and gender/sexual diversity of Whittlesea’s young people and families about participating in schools in ways that:</p> <p>A) express and affirm their identity (through involvement in events and celebrations at convenient times);</p> <p>B) encourage a diversity of recreation activities and non-school/work activities in safe spaces at or near schools.</p>	<p>Principals and school staff</p> <p>Parents and MY students</p> <p>WMCC</p> <p>CoW/Baseline</p> <p>Local businesses and workplaces where school parents are employed</p> <p>DET</p> <p>SWs and YWs</p> <p>Stakeholders from other schools and organisations such as Queerspace to discuss issues related to Whiteness, homophobia, transphobia.</p>

Assumptions

Key stakeholders participate actively and regularly in each Working Party ('plan, do, review')

Involving families and students in co-designing school events and recreational spaces will enhance their sense of wellbeing, belonging in school life and reduce non-attendance

HWLLEN can coordinate stakeholders – including YWs and SWs as MY Transition Brokers – in a ‘team-around-the-learner’ approach to implement projects.

conventional approaches to timetabling and the forms of support offered young people and families to better engage them in achieving learning outcomes. The HWLLEN is using a socio-ecological (SE) approach to co-design and coordinate initiatives that promote MY (re)engagement and prevent disengaged young people encountering the criminal justice system. SE approaches promise to enable communities to better facilitate MY young people’s engagement, transitions and pathways into future education and work. Stakeholders recognise MY students’ engagement in school is shaped by the complex relationships between *belonging*, *time* and *identity*

Outcomes -- Impact		
Short	Medium	Long
<p>Using the Plan:</p> <p>Principals can secure resources to employ SWs and YWs to work with teachers & families as “MY Transition Brokers” to build mental health, resilience and wellbeing to promote young people’s engagement.</p>	<p>In line with the plan:</p> <p>Principals employ SWs and YWs to work alongside staff, students & parents to build a sense of belonging, and to value all young people’s identity to promote engagement. The aim is to enable young people to flourish in school, and demonstrably reduce non-attendance (supported by qualitative and quantitative evidence)</p>	<p>MY students flourish during their early years of high school and continue on their secondary school journey to successfully complete secondary schooling</p> <p>Young people’s experience of education and family life enables them to be critical, creative and disruptive ‘agents of change’ in their communities, and to develop diverse capabilities to engage with meaningful education and work opportunities.</p>
<p>Using the Plan:</p> <p>Principals & staff build understandings of the direct and indirect benefits of engaging families in MY school life</p> <p>A) MY students, families and communities feel encouraged and enabled by schools and other agencies to attend events that affirm a sense of identity and belonging</p> <p>B) CoW staff work with school communities to co-design recreation activities needed by MY young people and families on, or near school sites</p>	<p>In line with the plan:</p> <p>Principals, staff and WMCC implement activities to support family involvement in school and to collect evidence (qualitative and quantitative) of increased engagement</p> <p>A) MY students, families and communities participate in school-based events that affirm their identity and sense of belonging</p> <p>B) Recreation activities and spaces are conducted and created on, or near, school sites to meet MY young people and families’ needs</p>	<p>In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, social, economic and education partners support each other in creating pathways into meaningful, fair and ecologically safe work and living arrangements for young people in the HW region.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Prepared by and copyright of Seth Brown and Peter Kelly, RMIT University, with Dr Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting (August 2018)</p>  <p>Source: <i>University of Wisconsin - Extension, Cooperative Extension, Program Development and Evaluation (2003) at: https://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/designing-programs/</i></p>

External Factors

DET staff provide an authorising environment for trialling and evaluating these approaches in Whittlesea, and DET agrees to fund evidence-based promising practices as part of ongoing system improvement

Businesses/workplaces enable school parents to participate in school events

9.

Reflections, Implications, Conclusions and Recommendations



Reflections on the Logic Modelling Process

While the Action Research Workshops were a forum for participants to use logic models for refining their co-designing work, there was limited time in the meetings – usually no more than 2 hours – to use the framework to disrupt thinking and refine ideas about intended outcomes and what needs to be done. A learning from this pilot project is that more time needs to be allocated to the logic modelling process. This would allow participants to discuss more fully how ‘usual practices’ might actually be disrupted, and who the partners are that could help to achieve new and promising practices with schools and families that would improve engagement of middle years young people in school life.

Action Research Workshop participants recognised that a key means for doing this would be to develop Working Parties – involving key partners (micro, meso and macro levels) – to formulate a plan that focuses attention on changing practices in bespoke and flexible ways so young people can be (re)engaged in school life during their middle years. The HWLLEN was identified as the key meso-level organisation that would provide the backbone role in the coordination of Working Party stakeholders in developing the plans, which would be used to guide implementation and evaluation during 2019. These insights were reflected in the Logic Models when they were finalised.

In the ‘**Reframing times and spaces**’ Logic Model, therefore, two key activities were identified:

The HWLLEN convening a Working Party to develop an early intervention approach to support Year 6 students in transitioning into high school by placing them in small ‘belonging’ groups in Years 7 to 9

- The HWLLEN convening a Working Party to develop a plan to enable young people at risk of disengagement from school, their families and schools to build innovative understandings of time, and how these can be used flexibly to engage in school life, fulfil family roles and achieve learning success.

In the ‘**Empowering young people and their families**’ Logic Model, two key activities were identified:

- The HWLLEN convening a Working Party to develop a plan for resourcing social workers and youth workers to be employed as ‘Middle Years Transition Brokers’ to work in schools as part of an integrated school re-engagement team in Whittlesea schools (including mapping of existing resources/programs)

- The HWLLEN convening a Working Party to develop a plan for communicating and engaging with the SES, ethnic and gender/sexual diversity of Whittlesea’s young people and families about participating in schools in ways that express and affirm their identity (through involvement in events and celebrations at convenient times), and encourage a diversity of recreation activities and non-school/work activities in safe spaces at or near schools.

In relation to each of these key activities, the two Logic Models were seen as an enabling tool for clarifying who the participants will be for each activity and what outcomes were intended in the short, medium and longer terms. But each not only provides a model of what is expected to be a productive, ‘promising’ intervention. They also provide a model for guiding implementation of these new ways of working, and for evaluating the extent to which participation and processes were undertaken as planned and outcomes were achieved.

The next step in the process will be to agree upon, and secure resources for, implementation of the Whittlesea Middle Years (Re)engagement Pilot Project activities in line with the Logic Models during 2019 and 2020, and to use the input and output statements as the basis for formative evaluation (at the 6 months point), and the outcome statements as the basis for impact evaluation at the 12 months, 18 months and 24 months stages.

Reflections on Action Research Process

Participants concluded the fourth Action Research Workshop sessions by offering reflections on the process overall, and discussing what is required to translate these disruptive ideas into practice.

There was positive and general agreement that the Action Research Process had been productive and had been well facilitated by the research team. Participants said they valued being able to have frank and candid discussions about what was needed at the local level to address disengagement of middle years students in Whittlesea, and to be introduced to models and frameworks to facilitate strategic thinking about what needs to be done.

“Anyway, I think it has been really useful. I think the discussions that we have had have been really frank, and candid, and thank you to everybody for that”.

At the same time, participants acknowledged that local level action is insufficient, and that larger scale systemic change is also necessary.

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



"We wouldn't need to have this depth of conversation were we to have a better systemic response to this issue, which has not particularly changed in the last however many years that there has been compulsory secondary education. It is the same thing, and so I guess that the concern – maybe somewhat like that... this is just another thing".

While it had been helpful to unpack the problem at the local scale, participants agreed that a more productive response to the issue of disengagement (using evidence-based approaches) would be to help schools reduce non-attendance and build engagement and flourishing of all middle years students in ways that inform system change.

"Often, the systems change because you have done this place-based thing".

Another reflection was that 'buy in' to the intervention ideas developed by the stakeholders involved in the Action Research project would have to come from the schools.

"I think we knew all along that where we would end up is exactly where we are in terms of, okay, if we are going to take anything further, the buy-in needs to come from the school".

Participants felt they had been offered an opportunity to participate in (and learn about) a model for collaborative ideas generation and planning. They felt that the Logic Models provided them with a valuable resource for implementing their disruptive ideas and evaluating the extent to which they managed to affect meaningful change.

"You want to plan to disrupt the system and the ministerial order that directs us very clearly with what we have to do...."

But the process was not without some frustration. Some participants felt disappointed by the variable attendance of stakeholders at the Workshops. While it was understood that work pressures might sometimes make it difficult for people to attend, there was a concern that irregular attendance amounted to insufficient 'buy in'.

"I look around the table today and most people...have been here for all of them, but it does make it really hard when you have discussions and there are people missing or new people on board".

In this sense, there is a need to ensure buy in and commitment to participation for the whole period of the project. Otherwise, inconsistency in stakeholder attendance can slow the development of meaningful collaboration and the formation of partnership relationships.

Another concern was the compressed nature of the project. This was essentially a 'pilot project'. The research team had envisaged a more extensive series of workshops – at least three half-day workshops across three broad themes (Education and Training; Employment and Enterprise; and Health and Wellbeing) over twelve months. Limited funding for the pilot study meant that this process had to be compressed into four two-hour workshops focused around one topic of concern (engagement of young people in middle years schooling).

"I understand your point about the compressed timeframe. Yes, sometimes it is easy to make the meetings, and consistency is a huge issue for me as well, because we chop and change".

As a result, while the Action Research Workshops allowed local stakeholders to work collaboratively in new ways to imagine innovative approaches to addressing disengagement, promoting engagement, and tackling non-attendance, the short duration of the workshops made it difficult to get into topics at depth, and the whole process was telescoped into four workshops.

Nevertheless, one participant said that the group had been the most sustainable that they had experienced, and believed that this was the result of regular input from participants.

"I think the fact that we have had a couple of people dip in and out is quite common. In the years that I have been in this kind of work, and that is twelve, this has been probably the most sustainable group that I have worked in".

Stakeholders acknowledged the valuable contributions from the staff from the two schools in the region, but expressed disappointment that there had not been greater involvement of other schools in the project.

"The hardest part of any of this is going to be getting an effective working party together to be able to do it, because if the working party is just coming from the LLEN or the WYC, there is not a lot of school representation on this, so we will have to go outside beyond that".

In seeking to implement the Logic Model interventions, the coordinating agency (HWLLEN) will seek to secure the involvement of a wider number of schools – including those that have already implemented ideas along the lines of those discussed by the Action Research Workshop participants.

“The place this will get the most legs will be for the Whittlesea Principals Network to set up a community of practice that is focused around this, because it can be achieved fairly quickly”.

Conclusions

The promise of the socio-ecological approach in terms of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) provide a framework of action to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, prosperity, peace, and justice to obtain a more sustainable future. The SDGs list seventeen interconnected goals to be achieved by 2030. In line with the RMIT School of Education research program and the SDGs, this Action Research project aspires to impact on three of the seventeen goals using a socio-ecological approach:

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning (see Appendix E)

- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (see Appendix F)
- Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. (see Appendix G)

These goals, along with the other SDGs, are important – locally, nationally and globally – because they:

call for all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity [and] recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection and job opportunities (UNESCO, 2018).

Places such as Whittlesea are profoundly shaped by the changing world of work, digital disruption, and disappearing youth labour markets. More and more young people find themselves in precarious employment or marginalised from education, training and work. The promise of the socio-ecological approach in terms of

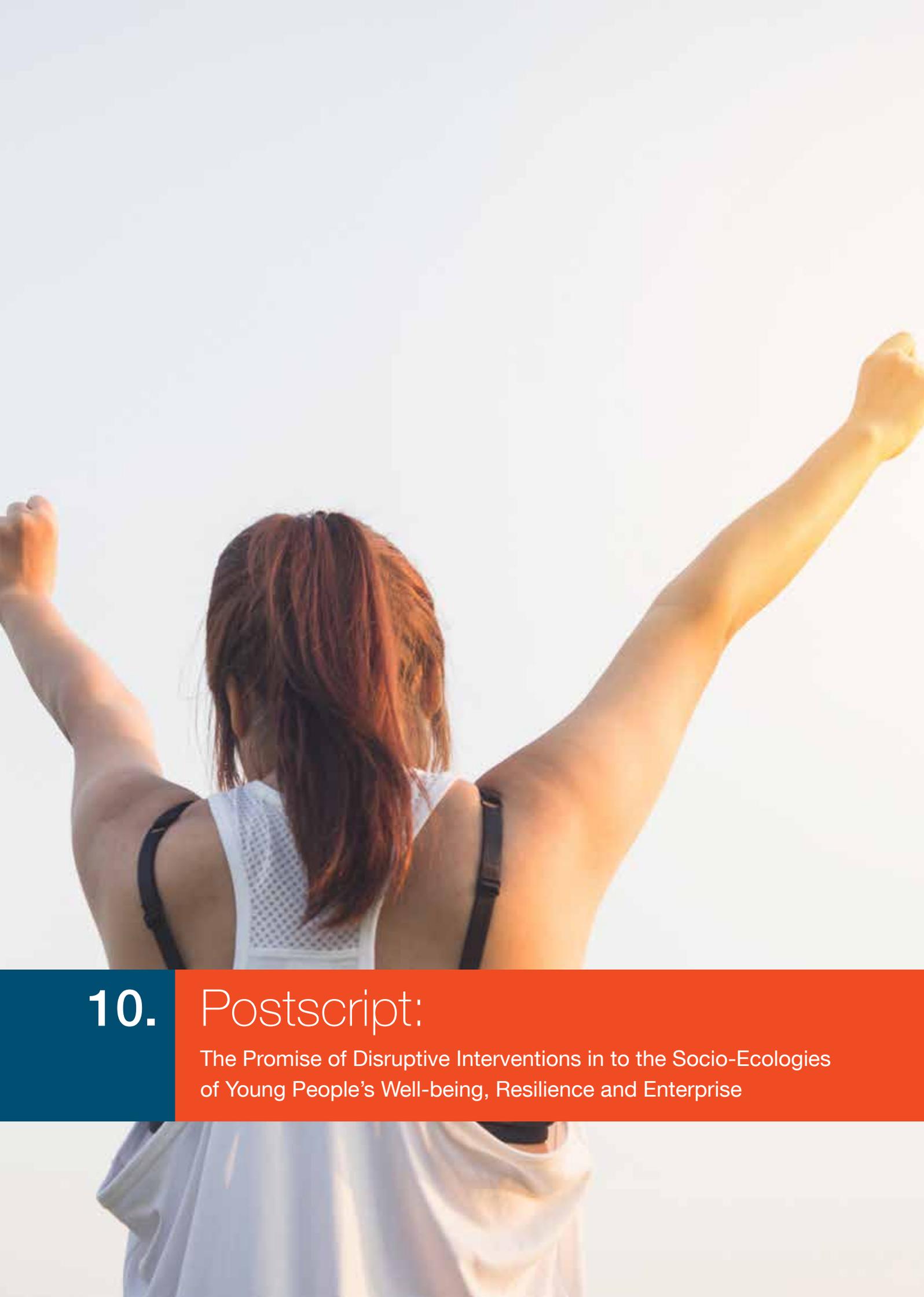
SDGs is how it disruptively connects to existing networks and initiatives, and introduces ‘socio-ecological thinking’ into these place-based interventions, so that:

- young people flourish during the middle years of schooling and beyond, and continue on their secondary school journey to successfully complete secondary schooling;
- become critical, creative and disruptive ‘agents of change’ in their communities;
- and are supported in achieving this by key stakeholders working collaboratively to create pathways into meaningful, fair and ecologically safe work and living arrangements for young people in Whittlesea.

Recommendations

Three key recommendations have resulted from this pilot research project:

1. That the HWLLEN uses the Logic Models and the final project report to engage the Department of Education and Training (DET) Area Director as a project sponsor. The aim is to secure the DET’s involvement, support and investment during 2019 and 2020 in trialling the interventions arising from the current project.
2. That HWLLEN be resourced, as part of a two-year project, to coordinate the convening of Working Parties comprised of key stakeholders to develop plans and implement the activities set out in the Logic Models resulting from the Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)engagement Pilot Project, and that the RMIT research team (associated with UNEVOC) provide ongoing research and evaluation support to this work.
3. That Working Party participants agree to commit sufficient time to the Working Party processes during 2019 and 2020, and that they work in collaboration with the RMIT research team to research, develop, implement and evaluate their project activities as part of building evidence-informed practices to improve middle years school engagement in the Whittlesea region.



10.

Postscript:

The Promise of Disruptive Interventions in to the Socio-Ecologies of Young People's Well-being, Resilience and Enterprise

This project is not unique, nor does it claim to provide all the answers. Part of the ethos of the research program at RMIT's School of Education is to look to what others have done that might show promise, and the possibilities of learning from what others are trying to do.

We finish this report with a Postscript that showcases the promising practice of the Marunguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke (NSW).²⁵

The Marunguka ('caring for others') Justice Reinvestment Project²⁶

The NSW outback town of Bourke has population of 2,465, 30% of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (762 people). *As a result of past government Aboriginal specific policies such as forced relocations and removals in the 1920s, today there are 21 different Tribal Groups living in Bourke.*

The median age of Bourke's Indigenous population is 25 years, approximately 33.7% of which are children aged 0 to 14 years and 4.7% are aged 65 years or over.

Over \$4 million each year is spent locking up children and young people in Bourke. Local community members have had enough.

The Marunguka Justice Reinvestment project emerged as Bourke was concerned about the number of Aboriginal families experiencing high levels of social disadvantage and rising crime.

Marunguka, which meaning 'caring for others' in Ngemba language, is a model of Indigenous self-governance which empowers community to coordinate the right mix and timing of services through an Aboriginal community owned and led, multi-disciplinary team working in partnership with relevant government and non-government agencies.

Alistair Ferguson, a Bourke local, is the manager of the project:

"Kids were being taken away. Too many of my community were being locked up. Families were being shattered,

again and again...And this was happening despite the huge amount of money government was channelling through a large number of service organisations in this town."

"So we started talking together. We decided that a new way of thinking and doing things needed to be developed that helped our children. We decided it was time for our community to move beyond the existing service delivery model...a model which had clearly failed."

"...so...together we could look at what's happening in our town and why Aboriginal disadvantage was not improving, and together we could build a new accountability framework which wouldn't let our kids slip through."

Collective Impact Model and Governance

The Marunguka project is framed by a methodology called the *collective impact approach*.

Collective impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. The underlying premise of collective impact is that alone, no single individual or organisation can create large-scale, lasting social change. "Silver bullet" solutions to systemic social problems do not exist; they cannot be solved by simply scaling or replicating one organisation or program. Strong organisations are necessary but not sufficient for large-scale social change.²⁷

This methodology, which is similar in a number of ways to the socio-ecological, action research approach outlined in this report meant that:

The first stage of the justice reinvestment project has focused on building trust between community and service providers, identifying community priorities and circuit breakers, and data collection.

²⁵ Lorena Allam (2018) Unique community policing sees crime rates plunge in Bourke, *The Guardian*, October, 8, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/oct/09/unique-community-policing-sees-rates-plunge-in-bourke?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other
Just Reinvest NSW <http://www.justreinvest.org.au/>

²⁶ The text in this section draws largely from the account of Marunguka found here: <http://www.justreinvest.org.au/justice-reinvestment-in-bourke/>

²⁷ Collective Impact Model: <http://www.justreinvest.org.au/collective-impact/>

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



These sorts of approaches require developing 'surprising alliances' and thinking 'disruptively' about seemingly 'wicked problems':

Regular meetings have been held with Bourke community members and visiting and/or local representatives from most government departments. Government attendance and ongoing commitment towards exploring alternative means of service delivery during this time has gone a long way towards building a better relationship between community members and the government.

The local community has spent a lot of time thinking about how to reduce offending and make the community safer. They have identified and are in the process of implementing, in partnership with local service providers, a number of cross-sector initiatives or 'circuit breakers' to achieve this, including three justice circuit breakers addressing breaches of bail, outstanding warrants and the need for a learner driver program in Bourke.

Various data sources have been drawn on to identify problems, provide evidence of the outcomes from programs and interventions, and on 'issues' that, at first glance, might not seem connected to a particular problem, including on:

young person's passage through the criminal justice system in Bourke and how the community is faring in terms of offending, diversion, bail, sentencing and punishment, and re-offending rates. Data has also been collected on the community's outcomes in early life, education, employment, housing, healthcare, child safety, and health outcomes including mental health and drugs and alcohol.

The Outcomes²⁸

The Guardian reports that between 2015 and 2017 the rates for various crimes in Bourke fell by:

- 18% for major offences
- 34% for non-domestic violence related assaults
- 39% for domestic violence related assaults
- 39% for drug offences
- 35% for driving offences

In addition, rates of "reoffending also dropped significantly. There was a 72% reduction in the number of people under 25 arrested for driving without a licence."

And, it is often the 'surprising alliances' that drive the most 'disruptive' interventions into the socio-ecologies of a particular place-based problem, and the development of practices that show the most promise:

A key initiative under the Maranguka project has been to help more than 200 mostly young people obtain a driving licence. Eight off-duty police officers volunteered in the licensing program, "helping young learner drivers get their hours up," Inspector Andrew Hurst of Bourke police said.

While he couldn't pinpoint the causes, Insp Hurst said there had been a noticeable improvement over the past 12 months, as collaboration between the community and police has increased.

"We're working a lot more closely around youth engagement and family violence. The closer we work together the better," he said.

"The collaboration is geared to problem-solve rather than us using arrest as the only tool in the kit."

The chair of Just Reinvest NSW is Sarah Hopkins. She says that the place-based response to the challenges and opportunities for young Aboriginal people in Bourke suggests a promising way forward for thinking about a number of related concerns:

"Over previous decades, we have seen the imprisonment rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, women and children increasing dramatically," Hopkins said.

"The experience in Bourke demonstrates that the solutions to this national crisis lie in community-led initiatives.

"We need to build communities, not prisons."

²⁸ Lorena Allam (2018)



Appendices

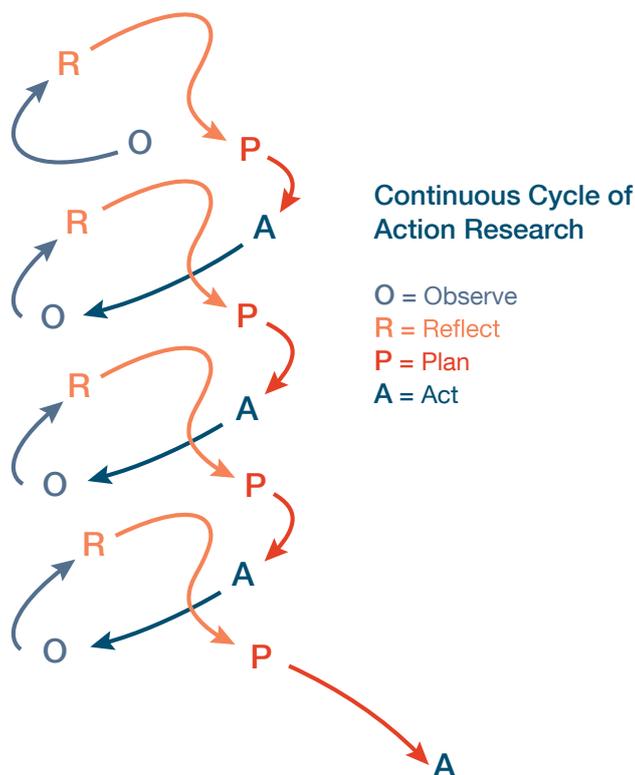
Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Appendix A: Action Research Workshops

What is Action Research?



Action research methodologies draw on Lewin's collaborative action research 'spiral' of planning, acting, observing and evaluating.²⁹ (see above: **Source: Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2008**). Action research establishes an explicit, direct link between theory and action so that the process of inquiry contributes 'directly to the flourishing of...persons, and their communities'.³⁰ The most productive form of action research is one in which those who are involved have a responsibility for implementing the results of their learning.³¹

Action research is often used in situations where there is a desire to improve local practice. It is seen as a useful and accepted method for systematically analysing situations, instigating change and providing professional development to address complex issues and ongoing problems.

There is a significant body of literature in relation to action research, but the following points are worth making in this necessarily brief account.

'...Action research aims at changing three things: practitioners' practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practise. Action research is a critical and self-critical process aimed at animating these transformations through individual and collective self-transformation: transformation of our practices, transformation of the way we understand our practices, and transformation of the conditions that enable and constrain our practice...'³²

Action Research Workshop Participants

Workshop One

Attendees:

- Kim Stadtmiller, Executive Officer Whittlesea, Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network (HWLLEN)
- Kerrie Heenan, Principal, The Lakes South Morang P-9 School
- Annette Spence, Student Engagement, The Lakes South Morang P-9 School
- Navin Dhillon, Youth & Community Engagement Director, Whittlesea YMCA
- Khan Churchill, Team Leader, Baseline for Young People, City of Whittlesea
- Ange Brown, Case Manager, Youth Unit, Melbourne Polytechnic
- Josie Howie, Campus Principal, The Pavilion
- Melissa Lenten, Adolescent Health Nurse, Wellbeing and Specialist Services Branch Department of Education and Training
- Rachael Scoble, School Focused Youth Services Coordinator – Whittlesea, Uniting Kildonan

29 Lewin, K. (1946) Action research and minority problems, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 2, pp 34-46

30 Coghlan, D. & Brannick, T. (2005) *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organisation*, 2nd Edition, Sage, London. p.14

31 Heron, J. & Reason, P. (2001) The practice of cooperative inquiry: Research "with" rather than "on" people', in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research*, Sage, London;

Mumford, A. (1997) Action research as a vehicle for learning, in Mumford, A. (Ed.) *Action Learning at Work*, Gower, Aldershot, UK.

32 Kemmis, S. (2009) Action research as a practice-based practice, *Educational Action Research*, 17:3, 463 – 474

- Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting
- Seth Brown, RMIT
- Peter Kelly, RMIT

Apologies:

- Wendy Shields, YRO, Victoria Police
- Elizabeth Wyndham, Greensborough headspace
- Helen Lambropoulos, Senior Wellbeing and Engagement Officer, Department of Education & Training

Workshop Two

Attendees:

- Kerrie Heenan, Principal, The Lakes South Morang P-9 School
- Annette Spence, Student Engagement, The Lakes South Morang P-9 School
- Khan Churchill, Team Leader, Baseline for Young People, City of Whittlesea
- Angela Brown, Case Manager, Youth Unit, Melbourne Polytechnic
- Josie Howie, Campus Principal, The Pavilion
- Melissa Lenten, Adolescent Health Nurse, Wellbeing and Specialist Services Branch Department of Education and Training
- Andrew Falconer, Inspector, Whittlesea Local Area Commander, North West Metro Region, Victoria Police
- Joseph Youhana, Programs Manager Settlement, Youth and Families, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Multicultural Communities Team, Epping Community Services Hub
- Kim Stadtmiller, Executive Officer Whittlesea, HWLLEN
- Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting
- Seth Brown, RMIT
- Peter Kelly, RMIT

Apologies:

- Navin Dhillon, Youth & Community Engagement Director, Whittlesea YMCA
- Rachael Scoble, School Focused Youth Services Coordinator – Whittlesea, Uniting Kildonan – Rachael did turn up for the last 10 mins or so.
- Wendy Shields, YRO, Victoria Police
- Elizabeth Wyndham, Greensborough headspace
- Helen Lambropoulos, Senior Wellbeing and Engagement Officer, Department of Education & Training
- Emma Antonetti and Dean Marando, Whittlesea Community Connections,

Workshop Three

Attendees:

- Andrew Falconer, Victoria Police
- Ange Brown, Melbourne Poly Reconnect program
- Annette Spence, The Lakes
- Brooke Streatfeild, Department of Education & Training
- Emma Antonetti, Whittlesea Community Connections
- Josie Howie, The Pavilion
- Kerrie Heenan, The Lakes
- Khan Churchill (Baseline for Young People)
- Martin Collins (DET)
- Thea Geddes, Neami YFlex
- Navin Dhillon, Whittlesea YMCA
- Kim Stadtmiller, HWLLEN
- Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting
- Seth Brown, RMIT
- Peter Kelly, RMIT

Apologies:

- Joseph Youhana, BSL – said he might send a replacement
- Melissa Lenton (Brooke Streatfeild attended in her place)
- Wendy Shields (Victoria Police – Andrew Falconer attended for Victoria Police)
- Rachael Scoble was tentative (as she had a clash at the time of the Workshop)

Workshop Four

Attendees:

- Josie Howie, The Pavilion
- Kerrie Heenan, The Lakes
- Annette Spence, The Lakes
- Brooke Streatfeild, Department of Education & Training
- Martin Collins, Department of Education & Training
- Andrew Falconer, Victoria Police
- Kim Stadtmiller, HWLLEN
- Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting
- Seth Brown, RMIT
- Peter Kelly, RMIT

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Appendix B: Mapping WYC-RMIT Middle Years Project partnership actions

Prof Peter Kelly (RMIT University), Dr Seth Brown (RMIT University), Dr Scott Phillips (Kershaw Phillips Consulting)

Partnership-based Middle Years interventions in Whittlesea (built around the themes of Belonging, Identity and Time)	Intervention objectives in a nutshell
Intervention A: Reframing times and spaces to maximise middle years engagement with school and family	Reshape Years 7 to 9 classes so middle years students have a greater sense of belonging to a small class group when they are at school. School staff, school bus operators and Middle Years parents will collaborate to develop bespoke timetables that give middle years students more flexibility around school start times and attendance. On the school campus, create a structured space that offers 'Child Care for Child Carers' - so children-as-carers can be relieved of their responsibilities (caring time) so they can participate in school activities (learning time).
Intervention B: Building more family involvement with school	Support families to participate in their local school in ways that express their family's cultural identity, support their children's learning, and help them and their children to relax together in culturally safe and age-appropriate spaces.

Macro level partner(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – organisations associated with inception of national/state policy focused on middle years student engagement 	Meso level partner(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – regional / sub-regional policy makers and organisations, – publicly funded intermediary organisations implementing policies through regional partnerships 	Micro level partner(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – families – peers – local organisations associated with service delivery, including: (a) schools, higher education institutions, TAFE, training providers; (b) mental health; (c) AOD; (d) community support and family strengthening – local employers involved in activities addressing education and training issues for their workforces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education and Training (DET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WYC • Whittlesea Council – Early Years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principals and teachers • Local bus companies • South Morang child care providers (Bluebird Early Learning Centre; Little Learners Early Education) • Primary school transition staff • YMCA (peer advocates)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DET – Parent Support program; multicultural education resources • Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DP&C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council • VICSEG • WYC • Whittlesea Council – Community Support (Multicultural Action Plan) • Whittlesea Council – Community Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principals and teachers • Local businesses • Families • Churches/faith groups

Continued...

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Partnership-based Middle Years interventions in Whittlesea (built around the themes of Belonging, Identity and Time)	Intervention objectives in a nutshell
<p>Intervention C: Resourcing schools to empower independent young learners</p>	<p>Employ an appropriate complement of social workers and youth workers to work alongside teachers in helping families to engage their children in school learning and life. Empower students to build their skills and strengths as independent learners – by allowing them to use discretionary time accountably to advance their learning in particular subjects, and to see how their informal learning at home helps equip them to function as responsible and caring adults.</p>
<p>Intervention D: Honouring family life and learning in school life and learning</p>	<p>Support families to participate in their local school in ways that express their cultural identity, support their children's learning and enable them to relax with other school parents in culturally safe spaces. Empower students to build their skills and strengths as independent learners and young adults – by building their time management skills, and helping them to see how their informal learning at home helps equip them to function as responsible and caring adults</p>
<p>Intervention E: Changing focus from exclusion to inclusion, and from mental health as disorder to mental health as positive wellbeing (flourishing)</p>	<p>Rather than exclude children experiencing 'poor mental health' (anxiety, depression), resource schools to work with middle years students to develop 'positive mental health' or 'flourishing' [Martin Seligman, Felicia Huppert, Tim Sharp]³³. Develop bespoke timetables that give middle years students more flexibility around school start times and attendance. And help parents and their children to relax together in culturally safe and age-appropriate spaces.</p>

³³ See Seligman, M (2011). *Flourish*. New York: Free Press

Huppert, F. A (2014) *Interventions and Policies to Enhance Well-Being* Wiley-Blackwell; Sharp, T (2014), *The Happiness Handbook* (Finch Publishing)

	Macro level partner(s)	Meso level partner(s)	Micro level partner(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DET – School Focused Youth Service; – Whittlesea, Uniting Kildonan • Department of Human Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VicHealth • Whittlesea Council Youth Services – EDGE facility (including South Morang campus of the Pavilion School) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principals and teachers • Families • Sports clubs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DET – Parent Support program; multicultural education resources • Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DP&C) • DET – School Focused Youth Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council • VICSEG • WYC • Whittlesea Council – Community Support (Multicultural Action Plan) • Whittlesea Council – Community Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principals and teachers • Local businesses • Families • Sports clubs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DET – School Focused Youth Service; • Department of Human Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headspace Greensborough • DET – Healthy Minds resources (including materials on building family and community partnerships in school settings) • Department of Health - mental health promotion website • Victoria Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principals and teachers • Families

In doing this mapping, we considered several prompts to guide our thinking:

- We need to map the interventions – get clear about what it is, who is doing what, and investing what, at which level in the Whittlesea region
- We need to map the relationships between levels/agencies (to understand the network logic of the intervention/ policy community)
- We then need to think about what to do with the map. That is, how can we use the map to better imagine and guide our network partners in working differently and in a more integrated and effective way to reduce disengagement of middle years youth?

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Appendix C: Draft Logic Models

Program: WYC RMIT Middle Years Non-Attendance Program - Intervention A: Reframing times and spaces to maximise middle years engagement with school and family.

Situation/Context: Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey data for Whittlesea (2013 and 2015) demonstrate opportunities and needs

Inputs	Outputs	
	Activities	Participation
WYC Members The Lakes South Morang School staff The Pavilion School staff Primary school transition partners RMIT Research staff Independent Research Consultant Collier Fund Research Grant DET staff City of Whittlesea (CoW) staff Local bus company staff Child care providers	Reshape Years 7 to 9 classes so Middle Years (MY) students have a greater sense of belonging to a small class group when they are at school. School staff, school bus operators and MY parents will collaborate to develop bespoke timetables that give middle years students more flexibility around school start times and attendance. On the school campus, create a structured space that offers 'Child Care for Child Carers' - so MY children-as-carers can be relieved of their responsibilities (caring time) so they can participate in school activities (learning time).	Principals and school timetabling team Primary school transition partners Parents and Year 6 and MY students School bus company School staff Parents Students Child care providers Principals MY children-as-carers Parents

Assumptions

That the experience of belonging to a home group will improve middle years students' engagement with school (similar to 'hubs' at Mill Park Secondary College p14)

That flexible school start times will increase the re-engagement of non-attending MY students

That school staff can adjust T&L practices and timetables to create more flex for MY students

That bus executives and drivers respond positively to flex initiative and can do so profitably

That child care providers and schools can establish a cost-effective alliance arrangement

That students / parents will use child care services to regain school time from caring time and enhance their identities as connected positively with family and school

to improve engagement of middle years (MY) students with their schools and families. Policies and practices are increasingly focused on developing a lifecycle approach to help families and students transition into and through MY development positively. Stakeholders in Whittlesea are developing a socio-ecological approach to co-design initiatives that address MY non-attendance. We recognise MY students' engagement in schooling is shaped by the complex relationships between belonging, time and identity.

Outcomes -- Impact		
<i>Short</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Long</i>
<p>Principals and staff understand importance of creating 'belonging' groups with which middle years students can identify</p> <p>Primary school transition partners motivated to assure transitioning students to feel positive about belonging to a small class group as their 'home group' for Years 7-9</p> <p>School bus operators understand need for flexible bus timetable to help young people with care responsibilities to attend school</p> <p>Principals and teachers agree to adjust the timetable to allow flexible start times for Years 7-9 students who would prefer a later school start time</p> <p>Child care providers motivated to offer child care services on school campus or in the home to enable children as carers to participate in schooling</p> <p>Students and parents are made aware of opportunity to use flexible start times, bus services and child care to better balance their home and school identities</p>	<p>Principals and staff create 'home groups' as the basic belonging unit for middle years teaching and learning (T&L) across Years 7-9</p> <p>Middle Years T&L practices are adjusted to accommodate delivery in 'home groups'</p> <p>Primary school transition partners prepare Year 6 students and parents to view Years 7-9 as a safe and reassuring learning time within high school</p> <p>School bus companies adjust timetables, and train drivers to be positive towards middle years students catching the bus at later times in the day</p> <p>Principals and teachers adjust timetables and teaching practices to allow flexible start times for Years 7-9 students</p> <p>Child care for child carers is established as a pilot program at Lakes and Pavilion schools</p> <p>Students previously non-attending use flexible timetable to re-engage</p>	<p>Middle years students flourish during their early years of high school and continue on their secondary school journey to successfully complete Year 12</p> <p>Young people remain positively engaged with education beyond secondary school and view their school community and family relationships positively</p> <p>Young people transition successfully into adult roles and responsibilities, and participate in ongoing employment and training opportunities throughout their lifecycle</p> <p>Social, economic and education partners support each other in creating pathways into meaningful, fair and ecologically safe work and living arrangements for all citizens in the Whittlesea region specifically and Victoria as a whole</p>

External Factors

Award conditions associated with teaching start times and finishing times
 DET policies around schools' capacity to create flexible timetables

Source: University of Wisconsin - Extension, Cooperative Extension, Program Development and Evaluation (2003) at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/designing-programs/>
 Draft prepared by, and copyright of Seth Brown and Peter Kelly, RMIT University, with Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting (August 2018).

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Program: WYC RMIT Middle Years Non-Attendance Program - Intervention A: Reframing times and spaces to maximise middle years engagement with school and family.

Situation/Context: Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey data for Whittlesea (2013 and 2015) demonstrate opportunities and needs

Inputs	Outputs	
	Activities	Participation
WYC Members The Lakes South Morang School staff The Pavilion School staff Primary school transition partners RMIT Research staff Independent Research Consultant Collier Fund Research Grant DET staff City of Whittlesea (CoW) staff Local bus company staff Child care providers	Reshape Years 7 to 9 classes so Middle Years (MY) students have a greater sense of belonging to a small class group when they are at school. School staff, school bus operators and MY parents will collaborate to develop bespoke timetables that give middle years students more flexibility around school start times and attendance. On the school campus, create a structured space that offers 'Child Care for Child Carers' - so MY children-as-carers can be relieved of their responsibilities (caring time) so they can participate in school activities (learning time).	Principals and school timetabling team Primary school transition partners Parents and Year 6 and MY students School bus company School staff Parents Students Child care providers Principals MY children-as-carers Parents

Assumptions

That involving families and their children in identity affirming cultural activities will enhance their sense of belonging to the school and help reduce non-attendance

That school principals, staff and parents will collaborate with government, NGO and business stakeholders to co-design events, times and spaces that improve family involvement in school

to improve engagement of middle years (MY) students with their schools and families. Policies and practices are increasingly focused on developing a lifecycle approach to help families and students transition into and through MY development positively. Stakeholders in Whittlesea are developing a socio-ecological approach to co-design initiatives that address MY non-attendance. We recognise MY students' engagement in schooling is shaped by the complex relationships between *belonging*, *time* and *identity*.

Outcomes -- Impact		
<i>Short</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Long</i>
<p>Principals and staff understand importance of creating 'belonging' groups with which middle years students can identify</p> <p>Primary school transition partners motivated to assure transitioning students to feel positive about belonging to a small class group as their 'home group' for Years 7-9</p> <p>School bus operators understand need for flexible bus timetable to help young people with care responsibilities to attend school</p> <p>Principals and teachers agree to adjust the timetable to allow flexible start times for Years 7-9 students who would prefer a later school start time</p> <p>Child care providers motivated to offer child care services on school campus or in the home to enable children as carers to participate in schooling</p> <p>Students and parents are made aware of opportunity to use flexible start times, bus services and child care to better balance their home and school identities</p>	<p>Principals and staff create 'home groups' as the basic belonging unit for middle years teaching and learning (T&L) across Years 7-9</p> <p>Middle Years T&L practices are adjusted to accommodate delivery in 'home groups'</p> <p>Primary school transition partners prepare Year 6 students and parents to view Years 7-9 as a safe and reassuring learning time within high school</p> <p>School bus companies adjust timetables, and train drivers to be positive towards middle years students catching the bus at later times in the day</p> <p>Principals and teachers adjust timetables and teaching practices to allow flexible start times for Years 7-9 students</p> <p>Child care for child carers is established as a pilot program at Lakes and Pavilion schools</p> <p>Students previously non-attending use flexible timetable to re-engage</p>	<p>Middle years students flourish during their early years of high school and continue on their secondary school journey to successfully complete Year 12</p> <p>Young people remain positively engaged with education beyond secondary school and view their school community and family relationships positively</p> <p>Young people transition successfully into adult roles and responsibilities, and participate in ongoing employment and training opportunities throughout their lifecycle</p> <p>Social, economic and education partners support each other in creating pathways into meaningful, fair and ecologically safe work and living arrangements for all citizens in the Whittlesea region specifically and Victoria as a whole</p>

External Factors

Businesses and workplaces cooperate with staff to take time away from work to attend school events
 DET and DP&C staff, policies and resources are available and can assist WYC and stakeholders

Source: University of Wisconsin - Extension, Cooperative Extension, Program Development and Evaluation (2003) at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/designing-programs/>
 Draft prepared by and copyright of Seth Brown and Peter Kelly, RMIT University, with Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting (August 2018).

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Program: WYC RMIT Middle Years Non-Attendance Program - Interventions E&C combined: Empowering independent young learners to flourish.

Situation/Context: Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey data for Whittlesea (2013 and 2015) demonstrate opportunities and needs

Inputs	Outputs	
	Activities	Participation
<p>WYC Members</p> <p>The Lakes South Morang School staff</p> <p>The Pavilion School staff</p> <p>RMIT Research staff</p> <p>Independent Research Consultant</p> <p>Collier Fund Research Grant</p> <p>Headspace Greensborough</p> <p>DET staff – Healthy Minds resources (including materials on building family and community partnerships in school settings); School Focused Youth Service;</p> <p>Department of Human Services (DHS)</p> <p>Department of Health (DH) - mental health staff</p> <p>City of Whittlesea (CoW) – Community Infrastructure staff and resources</p>	<p>Focus principals, staff and parents on having youth workers and social workers work with MY students, teachers and families to develop 'positive mental health' or 'flourishing' and a sense of belonging to the school community</p> <p>Develop bespoke timetables so MY students have flexibility around school start times and attendance.</p> <p>Empower students to be independent learners by using discretionary time accountably to advance their learning in particular subjects, and see how their informal learning at home helps equip them to identify and function as responsible and caring adults</p> <p>Enable parents and their children to relax together in spaces that are age-appropriate and that affirm their cultural identity.</p>	<p>Principals and school staff</p> <p>Social workers (SWs)</p> <p>Youth workers (YWs)</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Families</p> <p>Social workers</p> <p>Youth workers</p> <p>School principals and staff</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Middle Years students</p>

Assumptions

That flexible school start times will increase the re-engagement of non-attending MY students

That school staff can adjust T&L practices and timetables to create more flex for MY students

That involving families and their children in identity affirming cultural activities will enhance their sense of belonging to the school and help reduce non-attendance

to improve engagement of middle years (MY) students with their schools and families. Policies and practices are increasingly focused on developing a lifecourse approach to help families and students transition into and through MY development positively. Stakeholders in Whittlesea are developing a socio-ecological approach to co-design initiatives that address MY non-attendance. We recognise MY students' engagement in schooling is shaped by the complex relationships between *belonging*, *time* and *identity*.

Outcomes -- Impact		
<i>Short</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Long</i>
<p>Principals & staff learn about positive mental health and wellbeing approaches to development and learning</p> <p>Principals are motivated to employ SWs and YWs to work with teachers & families to reduce non-attendance and build positive mental health</p> <p>Principals and teachers agree to adjust timetables to assist Years 7-9 students who would prefer a later school start time</p> <p>CoW staff & school communities co-design recreation spaces</p> <p>Students and parents receive information from school about using discretionary time to advance their learning</p> <p>Families and students are helped by SWs, YWs to see home learning as part of healthy MY development</p> <p>Youth workers gain skills in school-focused youth work in collaboration with DET, CoW and Whittlesea Uniting Kildonan</p> <p>Social workers gain skills and support from DHS</p>	<p>Principals & staff work with parents, SWs & YWs to build the self-image of MY students as flourishing learners</p> <p>Principals employ SWs and YWs to work alongside staff, students & parents to reduce nonattendance, and report on changes</p> <p>Principals and teachers adjust timetables and teaching practices for Years 7-9 students; Teachers, SWs, YWs form integrated service identity</p> <p>Recreation spaces are built to meet CALD people's needs</p> <p>Students use discretionary time for school learning</p> <p>SWs, YWs & families document informal learning at home as building skills valued in school and workplaces</p> <p>YWs apply school-focused youth work skills/resources to improve MY students' school engagement & belonging</p> <p>SWs apply school-focused social work skills and resources to improve MY engagement with learning</p>	<p>Middle years students flourish during their early years of high school and continue on their secondary school journey to successfully complete Year 12</p> <p>Young people remain positively engaged with education beyond secondary school and view their school community and family relationships positively</p> <p>Young people transition successfully into adult roles and responsibilities, and participate in ongoing employment and training opportunities throughout their lifecourse</p> <p>Social, economic and education partners support each other in creating pathways into meaningful, fair and ecologically safe work and living arrangements for all citizens in the Whittlesea region specifically and Victoria as a whole</p>

External Factors

DET, DHS and DH staff, policies and resources are available and can assist WYC and stakeholders

Positive mental health professionals in service agencies like Headspace and in research settings can apply research findings to improve positive mental health outcomes for youth

Source: University of Wisconsin - Extension, *Cooperative Extension, Program Development and Evaluation* (2003) at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/designing-programs/>

Draft prepared by and copyright of Seth Brown and Peter Kelly, RMIT University, with Scott Phillips, Kershaw Phillips Consulting (August 2018).

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Appendix D: Logic Models: A tool for Planning and Evaluation

Why logic models?

Defining the elements of logic models

Before outlining the Logic Models developed as part of this pilot project, it is useful to clarify what is meant by the various elements that are contained in these tools.³⁴

First, a logic model usually contains a **situation statement**. This describes the originating problem, or issue, set within a complex of socio-political, environmental and economic circumstances. It also clarifies the key collaborators and their strategic priorities for addressing the situation, and the outcomes they intend to achieve. The situation is the beginning point of logic model development.

A logic model clarifies the **inputs** to be used in implementing the program/intervention. Inputs are the resources and contributions that are invested in the program: These include such elements as staff, money, time, equipment, partnerships, and the research base.

A logic model also portrays program **outputs**. These are what we do and whom we reach: activities, services, events, products and the people reached. Outputs include such elements as workshops, conferences, counselling, products produced and the individuals, clients, groups, families, and organizations targeted to be reached by the activities (i.e., participants).

If the inputs and outputs are used effectively, in line with the strategy developed to address the situation, then the intended **outcomes** should be achieved. In brief, outcomes are what results from implementing the outputs – the value or changes for individuals, families, groups, agencies, businesses, communities, and/or systems. In logic modelling there are three degrees of outcome: short term, medium term and long term:

- **Short-term** outcomes include benefits such as changes in awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions and intent.
- **Medium-term** outcomes include benefits such as changes in behaviours, decision-making and actions.
- **Long-term** outcomes include benefits (often called impact) such as changes in social, economic, civic, and environmental conditions. (University of Wisconsin 2003)

During the course of preparing a logic model, stakeholders are invited to think critically about the **assumptions** they bring to designing their program/intervention. These are the beliefs they have about: the program, the people involved, and how they think the program will work. Assumptions include the program co-designers' ideas about the problem or situation; the way the program will operate; what the program expects to achieve; how the participants learn and behave, their motivations, etc.; the resources and staff; the external environment; the knowledge base; and the internal environment. Faulty assumptions are often the reason for poor results (University of Wisconsin 2003).

Finally, a logic model usually specifies **external factors**. These are aspects external to the program that influence the way it operates, and are influenced by the program. The factors that interact with the program include the cultural milieu, biophysical environment, economic structure, housing patterns, demographic makeup, family circumstances, values, political environment, background and experiences of participants, media, policies and priorities, and so on. These are elements that affect the program over which there is little control on the part of those implementing it.³⁵

Logic models as a tool for planning

Logic models should not be seen as imposing a linear form of logic upon researchers and stakeholders. The elements of the framework can be used in various ways to stimulate imagination of program aims and reflection upon what is required and what needs to be done to achieve those aims. The justification for programs often involves specifying why allocated resources are invested

³⁴ This section draws extensively on evaluation research and training workshops prepared for, and conducted with, community organisations and local governments by Scott Phillips, which is informed strongly by the Cooperative Extension Program Development and Evaluation materials developed and used by the University of Wisconsin in its community development work. It also draws on work by Nutbeam and Baumann (2006).

³⁵ University of Wisconsin (2003) *Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models*, University of Wisconsin-Extension, accessed online at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/programdevelopment/files/2016/03/lmcourseall.pdf> ; McCawley (2014), 'The Logic Model for Program Planning and Evaluation', accessed online at <https://www.d.umn.edu/~kgilbert/educ5165-731/Readings/The%20Logic%20Model.pdf>

into specific activities. This approach typically entails the following logical sequence:

- 1) We invest this time/money so that we can generate this activity/product.
- 2) The activity/product is needed so people will learn how to do this.
- 3) People need to learn that so they can apply their knowledge to this practice.
- 4) When that practice is applied, the effect will be to change this condition;
- 5) When that condition changes, we will no longer be in this situation.

Some researchers warn against using this approach, suggesting that logic model development which begins with inputs and works through outputs to outcomes may focus attention on existing practices, concepts and research. Inverting the process, and starting with the current situation and imagining how it might look once the intended outcomes have been achieved, focuses attention on creating ideas about what needs to be done. The sequence in this case is as follows:

- 1) What is the current situation that we intend to impact?
- 2) What will it look like when we achieve the desired situation or outcome?
- 3) What behaviours need to change for that outcome to be achieved?
- 4) What knowledge or skills do people need before the behaviour will change?
- 5) What activities need to be performed to cause the necessary learning?
- 6) What resources will be required to achieve the desired outcome?³⁶

In the Whittlesea pilot project, we worked with participants first to clarify the situation and how they wished to disrupt it, and then used logic modelling to co-design the elements of interventions that could change the situation.

³⁶ Millar, A., R.S. Simeone, and J.T. Carnevale. 2001. Logic models: a systems tool for performance management. *Evaluation and Program Planning* 24:73-81. Cited in P.F. McCawley (2014) 'The Logic Model'

³⁷ McCawley (2014),

Logic models as the basis for evaluation planning

As well as providing a valuable tool for planning how an intervention can be resourced and implemented to change people's capacities and conditions, logic models also constitute the basis for preparing an evaluation framework.

They help participants to formulate questions for evaluating their processes as well as their outcomes.

Process evaluation questions usually are focused around the extent to which inputs and outputs were implemented as planned. Typical process evaluation questions include:

- Were specific inputs made as planned, in terms of the amount of input, timing, and quality of input?
- Were specific activities conducted as planned, in terms of content, timing, location, format, quality?
- Was the desired level of participation achieved, in terms of numbers and characteristics of participants?

The logic model's elements concerned with outcomes provide the basis for formulating **outcome evaluation** indicators. Typical outcome evaluation questions include:

- Did participants demonstrate the desired level of knowledge increase, enhanced awareness, or motivation?
- Were improved management practices adopted, behaviours modified, or policies altered to the extent expected for the program?
- To what extent were social, economic, political, or environmental conditions affected by the program?³⁷

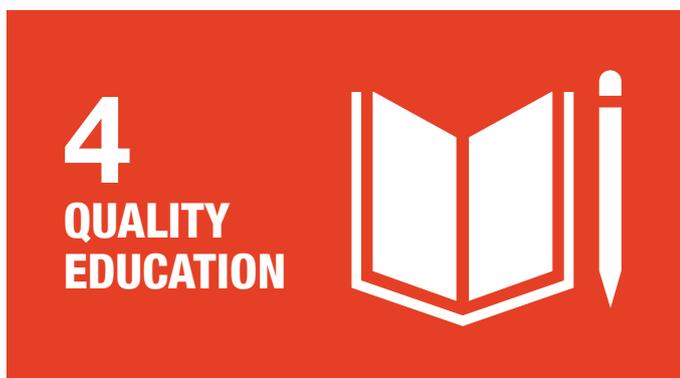
By preparing logic models in the way we did the RMIT research team and Action Research Workshop participants developed key tools for guiding not only the implementation but also the evaluation of their surprising alliances and disruptive interventions.

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Appendix E: United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4



Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development. Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrolment rates in schools particularly for women and girls. Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education goals. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.

Targets

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- *By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university*
- *By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship*
- *By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations*
- By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- *By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- *By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries*
- By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

Appendix F: United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5



Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals (including equal access to primary education between girls and boys), women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

Targets

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- *Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life*
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- *Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women*
- *Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels*

Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project



Appendix G: Sustainable Development Goal 8



Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

Roughly half the world's population still lives on the equivalent of about US\$2 a day. And in too many places, having a job doesn't guarantee the ability to escape from poverty. This slow and uneven progress requires us to rethink and retool our economic and social policies aimed at eradicating poverty.

A continued lack of decent work opportunities, insufficient investments and under-consumption lead to an erosion of the basic social contract underlying democratic societies: that all must share in progress. The creation of quality jobs will remain a major challenge for almost all economies well beyond 2015.

Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs that stimulate the economy while not harming the environment. Job opportunities and decent working conditions are also required for the whole working age population.

Targets

- Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- *Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services*
- Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead
- *By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value*
- *By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training*
- Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
- By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
- Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all
- Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries
- By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization



Socio-ecological models of young people's well-being, resilience and enterprise:

The Whittlesea Middle Years School (Re)Engagement Pilot Project







Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

