

Community development in australia

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Community development Australia is usually handled by a mix of several participants like the federal government, state government, community organizations and local government. The very principles of any community developments is to build the capacity for the local people and the community as a whole to indentify problems, look for their solutions and involve themselves in activities to solve these problems. To be able to do this effectively, the ones in charge of the projects need to have vision and leadership qualities as well as be creative. To enhance and sustain the above project, there is a generation that is often overlooked; the youth.

The youth are the next generation and need to be well equipped with adequate training and exposed to enough experiences in field work in order to sharpen and foster the right skills in them. This essay will look at youth empowerment both in participation and in leadership by the existing leaders who need to model and mentor the youth in order to foster hope and create opportunities for them. Youth participation and leadership There are several projects that have been undertaken in Australia to help enhance the youth in community life and to facilitate opportunities in leadership. These include; Jarjum Youth Group, Soaring, Reconciliation through Education, Cape York Youth Network and After Youth Drop-in Centre. These projects are operated by Testra Foundation, which is committed to supporting community development projects in Australia especially those that do affect the indigenous people and children.

These key projects were indentified by the Testra Foundation mainly because they were seen to contribute positive changes not only to the indigenous people but also communities and individuals. This is due to the <https://assignbuster.com/community-development-in-australia/>

fact that the indigenous people have higher rates of crime, unemployment, health problems and poverty than the rest of the population while school retention rates and that of university attendance are lower. For the indigenous children, they tend to suffer from preventable diseases, malnutrition, communicable diseases, mental health and drug abuse is higher than the non-indigenous ones. This is attributed to years of isolation from the mainstream economy, poverty and powerlessness hence the reason to empower the locals (Higgins D. 2005).

Jarjum Youth project is one such project that have partnered with the local schools to empower the local indigenous youths and help them strengthen their culture links. It targets the youth who have shown suicidal thoughts, have low self esteem with negative behavior patterns and who do not understand themselves. The objectives of the Jarjum is; to develop and implement a youth-range of social, education and sporting activities to support family cohesion and facilitate youth networking and mentor effective leadership skills in the indigenous youth. The project also empowers the community volunteer group to access earlier training, to develop and participate with a wide range of stakeholders in the government and the community elders (Higgins D. 2005). Jarjum works in Logan which is situated between Brisbane and the Gold Coast and is a home to about 5, 000 Aboriginals and Torres Straight Islanders.

Despite the fact that the adults socialize and relate to each other well, the young Aboriginals do not resonate with each other well. They are alienated from their indigenous heritage and are usually ashamed of their heritage mainly because of the negative media coverage and stereotypes. The project

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identified this gap and is trying to rebuild pride in the Aboriginal youth, restore faith and hope and organize social functions in order to overcome the splintering in the community by building up of strong communities. In order to reach the young people, it was deemed fit to use the young people themselves as facilitators. Jarjum gets its funding from Telstra foundation and the shortfalls are met by relying on donations from people of the community.

This creates conditions for entrepreneurial approach for the ongoing project (Higgins D. 2005). The project has recorded several key processes and principal among them is that it has provided part time employment to several youths. The project runs in local schools and its activities include running lunch time activities, meeting after school, culture and self identity camps and fun days. Jarjum has had great outcomes and achievements that clearly show that now it has a sustainable future. The successes include; it has offered a full time training to one of the workers, offering of part time work to two of the local youth workers, reduced the dropout rate of the local youths in school, holding of successful sporting events and as well as establishing of a micro-business where the youths borrow entertainment service equipments.

Jarjum identifies strong youths who act like role models for the younger people and pick them to work as mentors in children camps. Thus through the project, Jarjum has improved the social, spiritual and the well being of the young Aboriginal people. It has also improved the young people's relationships, recognized their contribution to the community and rewards them and this has greatly improved the youth's self esteem and can now

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identify with their culture (Higgins D. 2005). Finally, the success of Jarjum can be attributed to its collaboration with schools. Indigenous teachers act as important partners as they follow-up absent students from school.

Also due to the fact that the project was established at the Murri and Torres Islander where many of the Aboriginals are found and thus has a wider reach. This has resulted in improved confidence and a sense of pride amongst the people, motivating students to take their home-work (Higgins D. 2005). The Jarjum project in Logan where a quiet number of locals are found established that while the adults there have no problem with culture identity, the youth and the young people have alienated themselves from their own culture either due to the negative media coverage and the negative stereotypes. The project uses young people to organize various activities to empower the local Aboriginal youth as well as provide a livelihood for them. It has partnered with schools and this has ensured its success by improving the youth's relationships and improved the youth's self esteem.