



Steps to the Future Learning Pathways for Young Mothers Project

'Innovations in Adult Literacy'

**Presentation to the Tasmanian Council for
Adult Literacy (TCAL) State Conference**





Steps to the Future: Learning Pathways for Young Mothers



Funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund through the Building Tasmania as a learning community grants program

Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. (<http://www.unesco.org/en/literacy>)

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'I tried going to a parent group that was not for young parents. I was not confident in this group, I felt judged, there was a bit of a stigma about being a young parent' STF

Participant

- **Steps to the Future - Learning Pathways for Young Mothers is an innovative project that has been operating in Glenorchy for the past 18 months.**
- **Glenorchy City Council received funding to develop and implement a family literacy project specifically for young mothers aged 17 – 25 years who live in the Glenorchy local government area (LGA).**

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The image shows the Glenorchy City Council building with a sign that reads "GLENORCHY CITY COUNCIL". To the right is a stylized logo featuring a large letter 'G' with a sunburst effect around it.

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'you are very isolated as a young parent, friends who don't have kids don't understand' STF participant

The Steps to the Future (STF) project aims to provide positive, supported and flexible pathways to personal learning and development, formal training, work opportunities, and enhanced health literacy and wellbeing for young mothers and their children in Glenorchy.

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'I want more on parenting skills – things like toilet training are what I struggle with' STF Participant





Profile of Need

- **Teen parents enrolled in CU at Home program 23.9% (66.7%) (16.5% Tas)**
- **Australian Early Development Index results for Glenorchy (2010) showed 24% Glenorchy children developmentally vulnerable on 1 + domains, 12.7% on 2 + domains**
- **13% of families with children under 15 yrs are single parent families.**



Key Issues for young Mums in Glenorchy

Key issues identified by young mothers in Glenorchy include early school leaving, unemployment, low income, housing, social isolation, depression & anxiety, lack of transport, limited access to child care, poor/no family or community connections, poor nutrition and health & wellbeing issues including smoking, alcohol & drug issues.

‘I want support to get my license, I don’t have anyone to look after the kids, or anyone to go with me or tutor me while I learn to drive’.(STF Participant)



**'It has given me the confidence to be able to what I want' STF
Participant**

Project Management

- **Project Management is shared by 2 Community Development staff of GCC & guided by the Glenorchy LINC and a steering committee made up of Child, Youth & Community services**
- **STF staff design, develop, implement and run programs with young mum's and volunteers and engage trainers as required.**



Guiding the STF project

The steering committee includes representation from:

- **Royal Hobart Hospital, Glenorchy LINC, Child Health and Parenting, Community Houses, Polytechnic, Pulse Youth Health and Glenorchy City Council & Young Mum's**
- **There is also broad service network support via YANG, GAIN and other key groups.**



First Steps

February to May 2010:

- **Consultation with over 50 young mums at Claremont College, Pulse, Centacare, The Salvation Army, Mission Australia, West Moonah and Goodwood Community Houses.**
- **STF also delivered a number of ‘Looking Good Feeling Great’ and ‘Rock and Rhyme’ sessions at the consultations (March 2010).**



Creative Me!





First Steps

May 2010:

- The STF Project was officially launched on 27th May (2010) at the Glenorchy LINC - attended by 65 young mums
- The STF Project Managers mapped existing services & programs for young mums in Glenorchy & identified program gaps/needs.
- STF staff led a program with young mothers on Community Service Orders in partnership with Community Corrections, Pulse YHC and Anglicare.



Getting into the swing! STF Programs

- Continued working with the Young Mums from the CSO group – with high participation rates and long term engagement of this group in STF (May 2010)
- Offered basic computer training course as partnership with Glenorchy LINC (July/August 2010)
- Designed & hosted the ‘Kick Start Your Future’ course at West Moonah Community Centre (September to November 2010).
- Hosted ‘Tapping Inner Strengths’ relationships course with Colony 47 (October to Dec 2010).



So this is what learning is all about!





Other Activities of STF in 2010

- **Taster sessions were held at other venues in 2010 included - Career Reference Centre, YMCA Rock & Rhyme and Story Time sessions – at Glenorchy LINC & Northgate Shopping Centre**
- **Hosted a ‘Let’s Get Driving’ event at Goodwood Community Centre.**
- **Hosted a ‘Zumba’ Dancing and BBQ at the Chigwell Barn.**
- **Held a celebration event at Botanical Gardens.**

What has happened in 2011?

- We expanded the program - offering accredited training (2 x 3 month courses)
- We formed partnerships with the YMCA, Polytechnic, Anglicare & Mission Australia to deliver programs at a range of sites
- We Continued the ‘taster’ sessions model
- We commenced an innovative Retail & Work skills training program with Vinnies



Pathway Planning

- **Development of Pathway Planning Guide and program to support individual learning pathways and support family literacy** (guide available & on display here)
- **Introduced individual orientation session with each new STF participant to assist in tailoring programs to their needs, interests and abilities.**

How did Young Mum's get Involved with STF?

- A range of sources including Mission Australia, RHH, children's services, Community Corrections, LINC, Pulse, Flyers and via friends who brought them along to a session.

Why they engaged in the STF Project:

- Friendship/social contact/ overcoming isolation
- Something for themselves
- Planning for the future - work/training/ volunteering.



‘Clearly the group members had formed a strong bond between themselves and with the facilitators. The members appeared to have joined for a prolonged period rather than just attending a short course’ STF evaluator Nov. 2010.

Overall experiences so far:

- **The importance of having a young parent specific group tailored to their needs, abilities and ‘futures’**
- **The fact that supported child care, catering and transport is provided (initial drawcards)**
- **Young Mums are goal focused and want to get back into the workforce /training**
- **Enjoy planning a future for themselves and their children.**



‘People think when you are a young mother you are doing nothing – coming here is doing something useful for my future’ STF participant

- **Identified need for individual pathway planning and mentoring/ support to develop portfolio etc.**
- **Needed support on health, wellbeing, relationships and parenting issues & skills were also priorities**
- **Wanted tailored & accredited training – across range Industry areas (high % community services)**
- **Valued the personal and practical skills side of the learning - looking at learning for life**
- **Needed Childcare , transport, time with staff, extra support (Mission case worker), specific skills training.**



STF Project Milestones

- **There have been 257 young mums and over 300 children involved in the program**
- **There are currently 64 young mums registered with STF**
- **There are 20 children who attend regularly with their parent**
- **20 young mums have been involved in the pathway planning program.** (series of sessions offered, average of 3 – 4 per annum)



STF Project Milestones

- **Since March 2010 there have been over 28 courses/events offered to STF participants**
- **This totals 210 sessions!!** (in under 18 months)
- **The average program length is 1 to 6 weeks**
- **The average session length is 3 hours**
- **In December 2010 STF had 29 regular participants, we now have 64!**



Issues & Challenges for STF

- **Program/sessions length (under 3 hours works best)**
- **Reading Together Program (now: Creative Me!)**
- **Childcare & Transport issues**
- **Pathway Planning & Support Services (emerged as issues as the model developed)**
- **Educating other services to understand the STF Model and not just 'plug' young mum into programs**
- **This is a labour intensive program with a high investment of project manager time & skills!**
- **Sustainability of STF**



Learning Pathways: 2012 & Beyond!

Continuation of short programs including:

- Relationships & Interpersonal Communication
- First Aid Training
- Learn to Drive
- Parenting skills development
- Children's learning & development
- Pathway Planning
- Literacy & Numeracy



An emerging Artist!





Comments from Young Mum's

(from focus groups held as part of evaluation project)

'Studying with other mothers is a more motivating way to learn'

'Being able to attend courses in my own community – not having to travel to Hobart'

'I cant wait to get back into work – I think about it a lot'

'For me its about planning for the future – for me'

'The child care is great, prepares them for school, its on site and secure'



Comments from Young Mum's

'it gives us time to meet each other – we have formed a bond'

'It is a supportive group'

'It keeps me sane'

'People think when you are a young mother you are doing nothing – coming here is doing something useful for my future'.



Evaluation of the STF Project

- The project team have appointed an external evaluator. A range of evaluation tools have been developed to assist STF staff to collect data and review each program/session and each stage of the project.
- The STF model will be reported at the end of the project and promoted Statewide through Local Government.

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Let's Celebrate what we have achieved! Thank You

