



C O N S U L T I N G

An Evaluation of the

Community Service Program Pilot

Derby District High School

Derby District High School is located in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Derby was the first town settled in the Kimberley and is 220km from Broome and is 2463km from Perth. It is the only government school in the area and caters for all students from kindergarten to Year 12. Over the years Derby DHS has established an enviable record in the area of visual arts program. Many exhibitions have been held and students have won a range of competitions. Partnerships are in place between the parents, the community and the school. Students are part of the Youth Advisory Council which recently won the state award for leadership.

(<http://www2.eddept.wa.edu.au/schoolprofile>)

Demographic Profile

- Student population: 455 FTE / 59 part-time / 130 in years 8-12
- Approximately 75% aboriginal students (85% in high school)
- Administrative Staff: 5 FTE
- Teaching Staff: 35.5 FTE
- School Support Staff: 25.1 FTE

Additional information:

- There are significant issues with attendance, transient life-styles and home life
- Main employers in town are Shire, Hospital, School, Main Roads, Mining companies and local businesses
- Many parents / caregivers are on CDEP
- The Shire of Derby has launched a Derby Revitalisation Project: an exciting concept strongly supported by the school

Approach to the Pilot

Derby elected to participate in the Community Service Program Pilot as a way of developing student ownership of the school and awareness of the wider community. There is also some perspective at the school that many of the students are used to having things done for them and this presented an opportunity to engage the students in doing for others.

Planning and Implementation

The planning and implementation of the Derby approach was undertaken as follows:

- Students were surveyed about the understanding of and commitment to community service
 - This survey revealed little or no understanding of the concept of community service
- Students also lack skills in the key areas that enable them to go into community service immediately
- A coordinator for next year's program was identified
- Also identified *Changemakers* as a vehicle to develop students' skills prior to undertaking their community service
- No students this year engaged in any community service.

Partnerships and service activities

The person identified as the coordinator for the 2007 program undertook the *Changemakers* training program.

Distinctive Contextual Factors

The Derby pilot was distinctive in that:

- It clearly demonstrates that implementation of the Community Service Program will not always be straightforward
- The decision to use the *Changemakers* model could have a significant impact on the skill development and preparation of young people

- There are significant challenges regarding retention and participation that also need to be addressed within the school
- Also demonstrated that WACE is not a significant motivating factor for students
- However, the intrinsic values that might be at the core of the program could actually be significant to Derby students as the program may engage them in ways that 'normal' school experiences do not.

Benefits

The benefits in the Derby model are most apparent in:

- The potential that *Changemakers* has to work toward real skill development in the students
- The opportunity for students to learn about community service
- The change that could happen over the longer term, as this becomes better understood in the school and in the community.

Challenges

Within the Derby model there were some significant challenges to overcome.

These included:

- A new school leadership team
- Identifying an appropriate staff member to assume responsibility for the program and to deliver *Changemakers* in 2007
- Having enough FTE to enable adequate planning / organising time
- Embedding *Changemakers* into the Year 10 curriculum
- Developing a community service culture in the students and the school community

Strategies to overcome challenges

Some of the strategies identified by Derby included:

- Attending all networking and professional development opportunities
- Identifying the upper school coordinator as the ideal person to deliver *Changemakers* and attending appropriate PD sessions.

Planning for 2007

In planning for 2007, Derby is:

- Building up students' skills so that they can develop the capacity to go out into the community and engage in community service
- Developing a list of potential projects to help the students learn to take the lead through the *Changemakers* process
- Preparing to be flexible with how the program develops
- Giving 0.2 FTE to the position even though the Department's allocation is only 0.1 FTE
- Running the *Changemakers* program for the full year even though it is designed to be run within a semester.