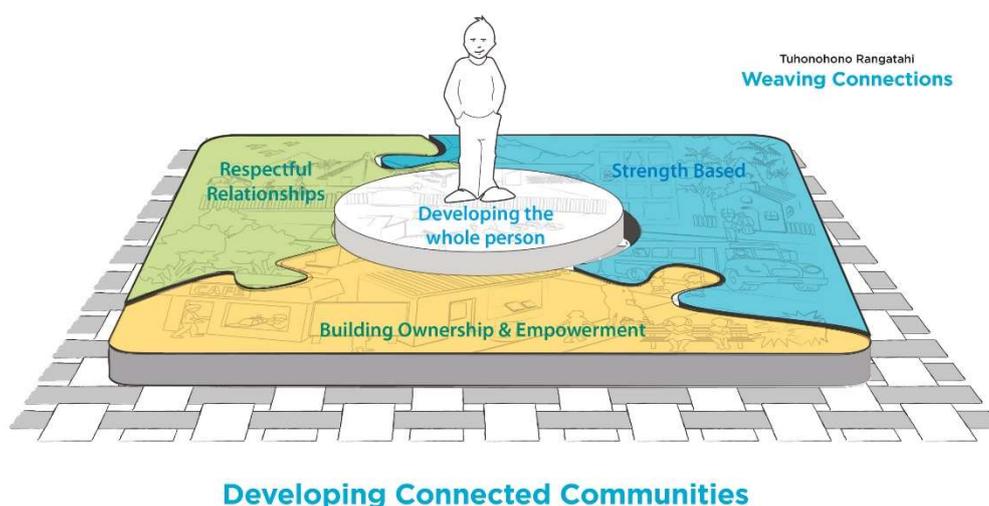


SUMMARY: Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa Framework

Positive Youth Development is an “approach that guides communities in the way they organise programmes, people and supports so that young people can develop to their full potential”.¹ This Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa (PYDA) framework seeks to explore the confluence between the various approaches to positive youth development documented in local and international literature, with the grass roots experiences of young people and organisations in Aotearoa.

The PYDA framework suggests that both informal and formal initiatives, activities and programmes intentionally weave connections by integrating two key outcomes and adopting three key approaches.



Key Outcomes

1) Developing the Whole Person

Developing the young person holistically addresses the developmental needs of the whole person collectively rather than separately. Various cultures and communities express that physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions are aspects of holistic development. For resilience and wellbeing to grow, all of these elements need to be addressed.

2) Developing Connected Communities

Young people can be supported in isolation from the community they grow up in but it is not the ideal approach. They need to be included and engaged in the larger social environment of family/whanau, peers, school/training/employment, and community. They need opportunities to use their assets, strengths and skills by participating in and taking leadership of valued community activities. Communities can create supportive and enriching environments for all young people that will lead to positive outcomes as well as reducing negative outcomes.

¹ Pittman, K. (2010) Positive Youth Development Resource Manual www.actforyouth.net

Key Approaches

1) Strength-Based

A strength-based approach is a perspective that assumes that people are active participants in the helping process (empowerment), that all people have strengths, often untapped or unrecognised, that strengths foster motivation for growth and that strengths are both internal and environmental.

Strengths include talents, skills knowledge, interests, dreams/hopes/goals, creativity, passion, connections etc. A strength-based approach recognises that both 'risk' and 'protective' factors are prevalent throughout a young person's development.

2) Respectful Relationships

We all have a responsibility to form respectful and challenging relationships with young people. Many studies have shown that the highest determinant of educational achievement is the expectations and belief from the educator in the young people they are working with.

The relationship we need is one of high support and respect, but also high challenge. In addition to the centrality of the relationship between the young person and the youth worker, this study found that relationship-based youth work also tended to focus on creating community connectivity.

3) Building Ownership and Empowerment

Programmes that have adolescent development as a primary objective need to focus on an intentional shift from dependence through independence and on to interdependence. This approach applies not only to work with individual young people but also to the way organisations work with the communities that the young people come from.

Building ownership and empowerment is inherently connected to having respectful relationships, having strength-based approaches, focusing on developing the whole person and being connected. This then provides the opportunity for young people to contribute to self, whanau and community with meaning and purpose.

Download the full Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa framework here:

<http://www.wfct.org.nz>

