

Y-Change is about vulnerable young people having the skills and opportunities to break down barriers themselves. Ultimately they are the experts of their own lives. We have an obligation to not only listen to them, but to have the courage to be led by them too.

Background

In recent years a range of youth-led and youth-focused organisations, programs and projects have emerged offering young Australians access to leadership and development opportunities aimed at catapulting them into a global, connected and successful future. These are a reflection of exciting times for young people. Nevertheless there remain a large number of young people for whom such opportunities are out of reach.

Young people in Out of Home Care, homeless young people, migrant and refugee young people, Indigenous young people, those with a criminal or substance abuse history - these and many other young people experience barriers to many basic opportunities (education, employment, community connectedness etc.) as well as to the opportunities to lead, advocate and advance.

Y-Change is a twelve month program that aims to bridge this gap for a range of young people experiencing disadvantage by offering a pre-accredited course covering a range of skills integral to leadership, advocacy and self-empowerment.

What will we do?

- Train up to 15 disadvantaged young people in leadership, social change and advocacy skills;
- Provide the Young Changemakers (Y-Change participants) with a range of opportunities to exercise their new skills;
- Support the Young Changemakers to pursue their personal leadership, education and career ambitions.

How will we do it?

Y-Change, will offer young people (Young Changemakers) aged 16-25 a twelve-month program in which they will receive training and experience in skills related to and including:

- Public speaking;
- Digital literacy;
- Group facilitation;
- Advocacy/Activism/Campaigning; and
- Engaging with the media.

The training component will be undertaken over three months, and will involve a combination of class time, guest expert presentations/activities, experiential visits and externally-provided workshops that add to the in-house training. In many cases we will engage other young people to share their knowledge and experiences in leadership and advocacy.

Following completion of the training program the Young Changemakers will be employed by Berry Street and invited to engage in a range of opportunities to use their skills. Opportunities

will include speaking engagements, conference presentations, workshop facilitation, staff training development and delivery, project development and campaigning events through which to practice their learned skills.

The Young Changemakers

Y-Change is a Berry street Childhood Institute initiative and as such it has a remit to engage with young people *externally* to Berry Street programs and services, as well as internally.

Young people will be recruited through the range of Berry Street programs and services and through a network of other Victorian organisations working with young people experiencing disadvantage.

The total capacity of the program, in order to be able to provide opportunities to all the young people involved, is estimated to be 15.

Candidates will undergo a full application and interview process intended to mirror traditional employment processes. The program will seek to engage young people who have shown a spark of leadership potential and/or interest and show a willingness to engage fully.

Budget

The project requires a total of \$55,000 to operate. Berry Street has committed \$10,000 and we have secured \$6,000 in funding from the William Angliss Foundation.

To break it down:

- \$20,000 will ensure we can pay the young people at a rate above minimum wage for up to 10 full days of work once they are trained;
- \$10,000 will enable us to provide a top-notch training program to the young people to ensure they are skilled, confident and, most importantly, able to safely engage in opportunities;
- \$5,000 will enable us to take up interstate opportunities to support the young people to present at conferences and speak at key events;
- \$1,000-5,000 will provide for incidentals (catering, meeting costs, presentation materials etc.) and equipment including laptops and mobile devices to support the program and the work of the young people.

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