

Investing effectively in youth leadership – PNZ conference

Description

How do you invest in youth leadership effectively? Hear case studies and tips from inspirational young leaders who are making a difference for future generations of their community.

Focus

Demonstration of how effective investment can develop emerging leaders and make a difference on topics of real significance – social and environmental

Introduction

Annette Culpan shared about the Vodafone NZ Foundation's World of Difference (WoD) programme and how this often tends to invest in young leaders and wraps strong supports around this group. WoD does this through having a flexible grant (salary and expenses covered, including funds for training and development), mentoring for recipients (mentors are usually members of the Vodafone NZ Foundation Board who walk alongside the recipient) and creation of a WoD alumni network/ whanau eg through regular hui (hui themes include building of strong relationships over years, collaboration, building a peer network, nurturing this community, training and development). For more info email annette.culpan@vodafone.com

Presentations from four inspiring young leaders

- Lani Evans – Regeneration (previously WOD with Volunteer Otago)
- Te Rawhitiroa Bosch (WOD and The Enviroschools Foundation, Programme Manager, Te Aho Tū Roa - Kōtuia!)
- Nick Holmes (WOD Dunedin youth leadership in climate change)
- Amanda Judd (Youth worX and Regeneration)

Key questions and learnings (from breakout groups)

What is the potential role of funders beyond writing a cheque?

- Key themes
 1. Importance of relationship and deepening relationships, following up, partnering and asking 'what else can we do?' eg mentoring, linking in with business skills
 2. Importance of being proactive rather than reactive eg exploring if the organisation requires capacity building support
- Relationships and offering of support eg follow-up, advice, skills development, mentoring
- Identify the people/ organisations that can really deliver
- Involve young people in decision making – authentically
- Raise awareness of community issues
- Funders be aware of what's happening out there and be proactive – link up providers to avoid duplication
- Bay Trust example of what works – information sharing events and networking opportunities
- Be proactive and communicate back
- Important to get the right people on the Board
- Keep in touch/ importance of relationship especially for multi-year grants
- Be more strategic and build organisation capacity eg how can we multiply the impact through for example mentoring or training?
- Link in skills with grantees eg Could community trusts link in with local business to 'share specialised skills' (make a meaningful relevant contribution)

How can funders engage young leaders?

- Many ways of engaging eg input/ opinion, funding needs, respecting/ valuing/ authenticity, korero/ dialogue, involving in governance (invitation is important)
- Promote their existence! If there are opportunities – shoulder tap young people
- More involvement in tertiary level/ pre-career
- Use social media (not just websites)
- Localise opportunities/ support for young people

How can we invest in young leaders effectively?

- Key themes
 1. Programmes like Sir Peter Blake – identification and skills development
 2. Sharing power and decision making – value the contributions of young people
- Role model to inspire young leaders
- How do we keep young leaders here? Support – financially and also celebrate their achievements – encourage and LISTEN
- Tuakana teina model – older sibling supports the younger (metaphorically) and there is mutual learning
- Choose wisely with young leaders – look for influence and the ability to work across silos
- Provide continuity and holistic support, community

What are the strengths of our emerging leaders?

- Key themes
 1. They have no history and they just do it
 2. They have vision
 3. Creativity
 4. Not bound by convention – create their own conventions
- People savvy
- Trained to work cooperatively
- So many women young leaders
- Confidence
- Unique connection between them
- Comfortable in multi cultures
- Passion and enthusiasm
- Worldly
- Tech-savvy
- Work well with adults
- Spontaneous

Is mentoring important? How can funders help?

- Key theme: YES mentoring is important!
- First establish the need (individual/ organisation/ recipient)
- Include 'supervision' and access to 'networks' as part of the package
- Mentoring can transition different spaces
- Create opportunities with support eg Vodafone Foundation and World of Difference
- Mentoring can help a young leader on their journey to reach their destination

Q and A with the panel

Q: The media has the potential to have a negative impact (particularly for young people) and destroying social values, how can we counter this?

A: Traditional media is in decline and people are getting really good at sharing good news stories through social media/ taking control

Q: It can be challenging to get young men engaged in youth work (or that is our experience), how can we get more of a gender balance?

A: This can be achieved through shoulder tapping and modelling what you are after eg if you can get a few male role models in the organisation, usually they will be able to attract more males to join

Q: How can we involve young people more in governance roles eg board make-up?

A: Invite young people to get involved – invitation is important – shoulder tap them. Also think about their support and training requirements. Their role needs to be authentic. Meetings need to be dynamic and facilitated well. The voice of young people needs to be 'actually heard'.