

MULTICULTURAL YOUTH (MY) STEP INTO WORK

Sally Thompson and Jal David, Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania

The Multicultural Youth Tasmania MY Step into Work program supports young people to develop skills in their chosen career through pathway planning and work experience placements with local businesses.



BACKGROUND

Securing employment is a crucial step in the settlement journey for newly arrived refugees and migrants. Young people born outside of Australia have higher unemployment rates (9.1%) compared to those born in Australia (7%) (CMY, 2014).

Young people settling in regional locations like Tasmania face unique challenges in relation to workforce participation such as:

- High unemployment rates
- Lack of culturally diverse employers
- Engagement in mainstream employment services
- Limited social capital, including social and professional networks
- Racism and discrimination

In 2018 MYT received funding from the Scanlon Foundation for the MY Step into Work pilot program. After the success of the pilot MYT received a further 2 years funding to December 2020.

AIMS

1. Build the skills and confidence of young people engaging in the job market
2. Increase understanding of pathway options for chosen career
3. Connect young people to local employers
4. Promote the benefits of a diverse workforce to local businesses



APPROACH

Participant Engagement

MY Step into Work uses a strength-based approach to engage young people who are looking for work and are motivated to improve their understanding of pathway and employment options.

MYT Youth Workers conducted individual intake assessments with young people to establish:

- Participant goals
- Level of employment support required
- Factors that may impact on participation e.g. (housing, family circumstance, mental health)

Young people received individual support in one or more program activities:

- Employment skills workshops
- External work experience placement
- Internal work experience placement with MRC TAS
- Job search and application support

MY Step into Work delivered:

- 26 work experience placements
- Employment skills and pathway planning workshops
- Individual support for 50 young people



LOCAL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

MY Step into Work has worked with 12 local businesses over 2 years offering a range of work experience placements. Businesses such as; MONA, Nandos, Just Roofing, Discovery Child Care and Par Avion signed up to the program.

MY Step into Work recruited businesses via MRC Tas networks and promotion on local radio and social media platforms. MYT promoted the program aims and encouraged businesses to sign up to provide two weeks of work experience for participants.

Local Businesses hosting work experience placements completed cultural awareness training and individual consultations with MYT to promote the benefits of a diverse work force and ensure participants felt welcomed and supported during their placement.

OUTCOMES

MY Step into Work participant outcomes were measured by post program evaluations, participant self-evaluation and post-program interviews. Evaluations over two years of program delivery showed:

- 83% of participants reported increased confidence in engaging with job market (Aim 1)
- 80% of participants reported increased pathways planning knowledge (Aim 2)
- 41% of participants gained accredited certification in building and construction (White Card) (Aim 2)

In addition, all providers who participated in cultural awareness training reported increased capacity to work with multicultural youth (Aim 4).

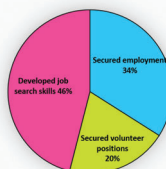
"He (participant) was an injection of vibrancy to our team and some much needed cultural diversity to our work landscape.... Our workers appreciated that we, as a business, were helping his transition into work"

- (Resource Work Cooperative, placement provider)

ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES

MY Step into Work resulted in ongoing employment and volunteering outcomes for participants. Young people secured employment either directly from placement providers or through individual support provided in the program. Some participants secured formal volunteer positions to further their pathway goals and increased job search skills overall.

Employment and Volunteer Outcomes



FUTURE PLANS

MYT plans to broaden and increase local business involvement and continue to promote the benefits of a culturally diverse workforce. MYT will use MY Step into Work as a case study to promote an effective approach to address barriers faced by multicultural youth looking for work in regional areas.