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Centre Profile

The Centre’s research and development is informed by a holistic approach to young people’s lives in a context of social and economic change, including formal and informal learning settings, work, home and leisure. It seeks to understand the interrelationships between these dimensions of life and young people’s learning, participation, health and wellbeing.

Research and development is organised into four programs:

- Youth Transition
- Youth Participation and Citizenship
- Youth Health and Wellbeing
- Equity and Childhood

Projects focus on young people in the middle years of schooling through to young adulthood and on the institutions and organisations that serve their needs, spanning a number of educational phases and working across policy areas. The recent inclusion of a Childhood and Equity Program has extended the Centre’s research into a younger age group. These programs are well-connected to international research collaborations and the Centre undertakes research in international as well as local settings.

The conceptual frame for the Centre’s work is in the field of educational sociology. This provides a basis for inter-disciplinary approaches to research, professional development and teaching, including disciplines such as the arts, health sciences, psychology, education and history. This approach is implemented through partnerships within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education as well as with other faculties and schools at The University of Melbourne and with researchers in other universities in Australia and internationally. The Centre uses innovative methodologies and where possible takes a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) methods approach.

For more information about the Youth Research Centre, visit our website:

http://www.education.unimelb.edu.au/ yrc/
2011 was a very full and rewarding year for the Youth Research Centre. An amalgamation with the School’s Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood (CEIEC) has brought significant new expertise to the Centre. Dr Kylie Smith (Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer), Kate Alexander (Senior Administrator), Prasanna Srinivasan (Research Assistant and PhD student), Anne Farrelly (Research Assistant and Project Officer), Merlyne Cruz (Research Fellow and PhD student); Cassandra Kotsanas (Research Assistant and PhD student) as well as honorary staff Glenda MacNaughton (Professorial Fellow), and Margaret Coady, Dr Karina Davis, Dr Sue Atkinson Lopez, and Audrey D’Souza Juma (Honorary Research Fellows) bring significant new expertise to the Youth Research Centre team. The amalgamation has been welcomed by all involved. It enables the Youth Research Centre to add a fourth research program to its profile: Equity and Childhood, led by Dr Kylie Smith.

With three existing research programs: Citizenship and Participation (led by Dr Ani Wierenga), Transitions (led by Dr Helen Stokes) and Health and Wellbeing (led by Dr Helen Cahill), the amalgamation reinforces the relevance of critical social science perspectives for understanding the lives of children and young people in a changing world. While each of the Centre’s programs focus on children and young people’s learning in formal and informal settings, they recognise the importance of their wellbeing, their capacity to participate and their social context for learning and as a focus for effective, just, social policies. The Centre’s programs are united by a commitment to using participatory research approaches with children and young people where possible, and draw on mixed methods that include quantitative, qualitative and longitudinal research techniques.

The suite of research projects described in this report reveal the depth of this work in 2011. Some notable achievements across the programs include:

- Health and Wellbeing: Helen Cahill led a suite of development projects in the Asia Pacific region that equip local youth leaders and health workers to address HIV/AIDS and sexuality education. An example is the NewGen Asia project, funded by UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNFPA. This project developed a workshop program drawing on participatory principles, to equip local young people to develop skills that enable them to lead change in their region. A pilot program was supported by UNICEF Philippines and the Philippines Council for the Welfare of Children.

- Equity and Childhood: Led by Kylie Smith, the Educational Leadership in Early Childhood Settings program, funded by the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development over a period of four years, equips early childhood professionals to strengthen their leadership skills.

- Citizenship and Participation: Ani Wierenga led the development of a Generic Youth Development Framework as part of a research and development project funded by the Department of Defence. The framework was launched at The University of Melbourne in 2011.

- Transitions: Helen Stokes has played a central role in the development of a research partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The research partnership enables the generation of new data about marginalised and at risk youth through the DEECD’s Youth Partnership program.
In 2011 the Centre launched the first in a Youth Studies Series published by Melbourne University Publishing. Professor Field Rickards, Dean of the MGSE launched, *For we are young and... Young Australians in a time of uncertainty*, edited by Sally Beadle, Roger Holdsworth and Johanna Wyn. This book draws on the Centre’s research to analyse the implications of social change for young people’s lives, for researching young people and for policies and programs that are relevant to their needs. The Centre was also successful in winning an ARC Linkage grant titled, *Building futures for young Australians at risk: a coordinated measurement framework and data archive*. The project will begin in 2012 and will run for three years. Professor Johanna Wyn and Gavan McCarthy (Director of the eScholarship Research Centre at the University of Melbourne) are Chief Investigators, and the partners are Social Ventures Australia, the Foundation for Young Australians, Hands on Learning, Beacon Foundation and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum. In 2011 the first phase of the Life Patterns archiving project was completed.

Congratulations are in order for many outstanding achievements and milestones. Firstly, to Dr. Helen Cahill on her promotion to Associate Professor in late 2011, and effective from January 2012. Secondly, to Dr Herman Cuervo for his achievement in being awarded the “Outstanding Dissertation” in rural education by the American Educational Research Association, Rural Education Special Interest Group, for his dissertation titled, *Social Justice and Education in Rural Australia*. Thirdly, we congratulate Dr Lyn Longaretti and Dr David Farrugia whose PhDs were awarded in 2011. We also recognise Sally Beadle’s achievement in being appointed an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development working with UNICEF’s East Asia Pacific Regional Office. In this position, Sally is supported by the YRC, where she is an Honorary Research Fellow.

The Centre’s work was enhanced by visitors Evelina Landstedt, from Mid Sweden University and Manuela Puricelli, from the University of Milan-Bicocca, as well as by outstanding teamwork from all members of the Centre, including our postgraduate students. We are especially grateful for the ongoing support of our honorary staff, especially Roger Holdsworth who has continued to provide advice and support for a range of projects.

On the basis of an outstanding year of project and program achievements, we go into 2012 with vibrant projects across each of the Centre’s research programs. These research programs strengthen the Centre’s teaching into all areas of the MGSE’s programs. I commend this report to you as a proud record of a year of achievement.

Professor Johanna Wyn
Director
Research & Consultancies

Australian Youth Consultations
PLAN Australia

Capacity Building Courses for Adolescent Development & Participation, and Youth Most at Risk of HIV: Asia-Pacific
UNICEF & UNFPA Asia-Pacific

Connections Curriculum: Gender Rights and Reproductive Health Education for Adolescents and Mothers in the Asia-Pacific
UNICEF & UNFPA Asia-Pacific

Design and Delivery of a Professional Development Program in Educational Leadership for Early Childhood Professionals
Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership & the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Developing Learning and Worker Identities: Young People and TAFE Transitions
Melbourne Research Office

Enhancing Relationships in School Communities (ERIS): Building on the Challenges and Successes of Culturally Diverse Schools
Collier Charitable Fund

Evaluation of the Brimbank Young Men’s Project
Centre for Multicultural Youth

Evaluation of the Koori Youth Alcohol and Drug Spiritual Healing Service
Youth Substance Abuse Service
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<td>School Drug Education Efficacy Trial</td>
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2011

Project Descriptions

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH CONSULTATIONS

Duration: 2011-2012
Funded by: PLAN Australia
Researcher: Ani Wierenga

Plan Australia’s goal in formulating and implementing its Community Engagement Strategy is to address child poverty and children’s rights issues by informing, connecting and engaging with the Australian Community – communities, government and the private sector – to increase support and knowledge of the Australian aid program. It wants the voice of young Australians, through a series of youth consultations, included in developing these strategies.

Dr Ani Wierenga from the YRC was engaged to support the consultations, including partnering in design of the methodologies for facilitation and data collection, co-facilitating a workshop on design methodologies, contributing to facilitator training and developing the framework for data analysis and analysing the findings, reporting in both a youth friendly version and as a formal report. This work is conducted in association with Plan Australia, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition and the Youth Advisory Committee.

CAPACITY BUILDING COURSE FOR ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION, AND YOUTH MOST AT RISK OF HIV: ASIA PACIFIC

Duration: 2010-2011
Funded by: UNICEF & UNFPA Asia-Pacific
Researcher: Helen Cahill

The purpose of the project was to provide training for people working in the area of adolescent health, development and participation in the Asia-Pacific. Two five day courses were developed in collaboration with staff from The Nossal Institute for Global Health, The Burnet Institute and the Centre for Adolescent Health. One course focused on Adolescent Health and Development:
Asia-Pacific. The other addressed Working with Most-at-Risk Young People in Concentrated Epidemics within Asia Pacific. The courses were delivered twice each in Nepal, Laos and Thailand serving a range of staff from UN agencies, NGO’s, and Government Ministries of Youth, Health or Education. Helen Cahill delivered a modified version of the course in Morocco for UNICEF staff from the Middle East and North Africa region.

**CONNECTIONS CURRICULUM: GENDER RIGHTS AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS AND MOTHERS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC**

Duration: 2010 – 2011
Funded by: UNICEF & UNFPA Asia-Pacific
Researchers: Helen Cahill, Sally Beadle & Michelle Pose

The initial Creating Connections Vietnam project with the Women’s Union of Vietnam (2007-9) entailed research and development of a participatory community education program addressing HIV prevention and gender rights for Women’s and Girls’ Clubs. Following a successful pilot in 2008, a Boys’ Club Program was commissioned together with a 6-month extension to the Women’s and Girls’ Programs. In 2010 UNICEF and UNFPA facilitated regional exploratory workshops to support additional countries to take up the Connections program. In 2011 UNESCO funded translations of the materials and a train the trainer program was delivered in Cambodia to support uptake of the program in Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal.

**DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS**

Duration: 2010-2013
Funded by: Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership & the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Researchers: Kate Alexander, Merlyne Cruz, Anne Farrelly, Pat Jewell, Rosemary Jones, Cassandra Kotsanas, Kerry Noad, Jane Page, Kylie Smith & Karen Szydlik, with Dr Susan Krieg from Flinders University & Dr Karina Davis from NMIT.

**DEVELOPING LEARNING AND WORKER IDENTITIES: YOUNG PEOPLE AND TAFE TRANSITIONS**

Duration: 2011
Funded by: Melbourne Graduate School of Education Early Career Research Grant
Researchers: Helen Stokes & Malcolm Turnbull

In the changing landscape of Australia’s expanding post-secondary education sector, the TAFE sector of VET will play an increasingly important role in equipping a new generation of young Australians to enter the workforce. The TAFE sector is acknowledged as being integral to the development of the skills and capacities that are needed in Australia’s globally-competitive economy. The significance of this proposal is its focus on the transition experiences of students in this sector, focusing on the concept of identity. This focus will enable the research to generate much needed knowledge about the ways in which the culturally and socially diverse students in this sector manage their engagement with learning.
and work. It recognises that education is a social and cultural process, in addition to providing students with skills and knowledge. The research responds to the current policy agenda (Bradley 2008, NCVER 2010) and provides an evidence base for policy makers and practitioners in the TAFE and higher education sector.

The research aims to generate new knowledge about the role of identity work for young people's successful transitions through TAFE and into post school pathways and identifies the resources that students need to develop successful learner and worker identities. It will enable a more sophisticated understanding of the role of identities (and in particular learning and worker identities) in supporting young people in their transitions.

**ENHANCING RELATIONSHIPS IN SCHOOL COMMUNITIES (ERIS): BUILDING ON THE CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE SCHOOLS**

Duration: 2011
Funded by: Collier Charitable Fund
Researchers: Kylie Smith, Elizabeth Freeman & Margot Trinder in collaboration with Professor Eleanor Wertheim, Amy Antcliffe & Michael Gurr from La Trobe University

Australia's increasing cultural diversity promises many benefits but also creates significant challenges, including the potential for conflict and reduced social cohesion. Schools can be crucial environments for realising the benefits of diversity. This collaborative project within schools aims to develop tailored and innovative processes and approaches to:

- enhance understanding and respect for cultural diversity; and
- address interpersonal and inter-group differences constructively.

Working closely with school communities will enable us to access the voices and perspectives of children, parents and teachers about what they see as the positive practices schools employ to support respect for cultural diversity as well as the challenges faced. The research was conducted in a cluster of primary schools in the north-west area of Melbourne, an area of significant economic disadvantage and cultural and linguistic diversity offering an excellent opportunity to trial projects that increase whole school respectful processes for addressing interpersonal and cultural differences.

**EVALUATION OF THE BRIMBANK YOUNG MEN’S PROJECT**

Duration: 2009-2012
Funded by: Centre for Multicultural Youth
Researchers: Malcolm Turnbull & Helen Stokes

An outreach initiative of the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), the Brimbank Young Men’s Project (BYMP) commenced as a two year pilot program funded by the Department of Immigration & Citizenship. The program targets young men of African background who are disengaged from education, employment and training, have had contact with police, or are experiencing other difficulties with settlement. The pilot had a pre-Pathways focus, seeking to reconnect the participants to CMY and partners as a preliminary to reconnecting to education, training, counselling or supports. The project examined factors influencing the target group’s disengagement, and assessed program outcomes, strengths and constraints. CMY has been successful in obtaining funding to deliver the BYMP for a third year. With emphasis gradually shifting from pre-Pathways to active re-engagement with family, community, education, training & employment, evaluation will focus on the program model’s transferability and ‘Best Practice’ elements.
EVALUATION OF THE KOORI YOUTH ALCOHOL AND DRUG SPIRITUAL HEALING SERVICE

Duration: 2007-2011
Funded by: The Youth Substance Abuse Service
Researcher: Bernadette Murphy

The Koori Alcohol and Drug Healing Service is a partnership between Ngwala Willumbong Co-operative and the Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS). It is a residential rehabilitation service for Koori people 15 – 20 years of age with alcohol and other drug-related problems. The interim site is located in Bittern on the Mornington Peninsula 120 kilometres south east of Melbourne. The first group of young people started in the program in July 2007. The YRC has been commissioned to work alongside YSAS to support the development of an evaluation framework using an action research approach. The first report provided a program update and outlined the research approach in the implementation phase of the project. During the second phase of the project a DVD was made by the researcher that documented both the development of the service and learning from the workers. The data gathered will be used to inform other services in relation to their programs and document the Healing Track as part of the rehabilitation process for young people. The DVD also outlines the cultural components of the Service. At this stage the evaluation is formative as outcome evaluation will occur as the Service develops.

EVALUATION OF THE WYNDHAM FESTIVAL FOR HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM

Duration: 2009-2011
Funded by: The Festival for Healthy Living
Researchers: Helen Stokes & Malcolm Turnbull

The state wide Festival of Healthy Living (FHL) program at the Royal Children’s Hospital Integrated Mental Health Program, brings together schools, artists, health promoting agencies and communities to work through a process that aims to enhance the understanding and promotion of mental health by students, teachers, artists, health professionals and families. Since 1998, when the Festival for Healthy Living (FHL) began as an initiative to celebrate Mental Health Week, over 10,000 students, and more than 8000 parents from 100 schools across 7 regions in Victoria, have participated through a range of locally based projects in school and communities.

Within the FHL approach, the performing and visual arts combine with mental health education to provide a pathway for developing positive attitudes, a better understanding of issues, and skills that can contribute to children’s and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health. The project evaluated delivery of the Wyndham FHL which was initiated in 2008 under the umbrella of the State Government’s Neighbourhood Renewal Program. This program has successfully partnered artists and health professionals from the district with staff, students and parents of three local schools.

FUTURE BUILDERS: TOWARDS PHASE THREE

Duration: 2010-2011
Funded by: Social Ventures Australia (SVA)
Researchers: Johanna Wyn & Ani Wierenga

This project was a new stage in the ongoing Future Builders’ Program, a program of Social Ventures Australia (SVA). SVA is an independent non-profit organisation which aligns the interests of philanthropists with social entrepreneurs in order to combat some of Australia’s most pressing community challenges. Within the
Future Builders’ Program phases 1 and 2, twelve participating youth organisations (NGOs) from across Australia were supported in their work with young people. These organisations work in the areas of young people’s learning and work, transitions and wellbeing. The objective of the Program is to articulate what works, and why, within the participating organisations in order to inform ongoing program development, delivery and evaluation. This learning has been significant for many of the participating programs and has potential to be for the youth sector more generally. The Youth Research Centre commenced its role as Research Partner to the Future Builders’ Program in October 2007. In this role the Centre supported the development of an Evaluation Toolkit for the program, and provided input into the design of the evaluation framework, ensuring rigour and the best possible fit for the purpose of identifying “what works and why”. A key focus of the Youth Research Centre during the early years of the project was supporting organisational learning for all involved. The evaluation framework was designed and implemented by Regina Hill of Effective Consulting, in partnership with research and evaluation staff within each organisation. In the 2010-11 phase of the project, we have been ‘mining’ the extensive data set to investigate the potential of developing tools for wider sector use.

In 2011 this work became the basis for a successful application to the Australian Research Council for Linkage funding.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARLY YEARS’ LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Duration: 2010-2011
Funded by: Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority
Researchers: Kylie Smith, Jane Page, Cassandra Kotsanas, Merlyne Cruz, Audrey D’Souza Juma & Katherine Wade

The Victorian Early Years’ Learning Development Framework (the Framework) was released in November 2009, describing common goals or outcomes for children. This project aims to engage early years’ educators from a range of settings, including schools, in reflecting upon their present practices in working with the developmental and learning outcomes for children outlined in the Framework. Through an action research project, educators will explore and collect evidence of how they are engaging with and are best supported to align their work with the Framework’s outcomes for children. This project will involve educators exploring and changing their pedagogical and curriculum practices by consulting and working with children and family members to identify perspectives of their own and their child’s learning, in order to describe how children best achieve these outcomes across a range of contexts.

The evidence obtained in this project will be used to further identify and develop practices that are promising and in line with the Framework’s aims. Resources/materials will be developed for supporting understandings and application of the Framework for early years’ practitioners, families and communities. The evidence will also inform educators as to how best they can work with colleagues, children and their families to implement the Framework outcomes.

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Duration: 2000 - current
Funded by: University of Melbourne Vice Chancellor’s Innovation in Learning and Teaching Grant
Researchers: Helen Cahill, Michelle Pose & Bernadette Murphy

The Learning Partnerships project involves collaborations between school students and tertiary students of Medicine and Education. The tertiary students participate in a curriculum of shared drama workshops designed to assist teachers and doctors to communicate effectively with adolescents about social and emotional issues which impact on learning and wellbeing. The school students work as coaches, key informants and actors, assisting the teachers-to-be to explore the impact of social problems on student engagement in learning, and the medical students to develop their skills in talking with young people about social health issues. Local primary and high schools participate with us in this program which is delivered into subjects in the Master of Teaching and the clinical program for fifth year medical students at the University of Melbourne.
LONGITUDINAL QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE SURVEY DATA CAPTURE AND RE-USE

Duration: 2010 - 2011
Funded by: The Australian National Data Service (ANDS)
Researchers: Hernán Cuervo, Johanna Wyn, Chris Petersen & Graeme Smith

This grant enables the Life Patterns project data sets to be preserved and disseminated according to best archiving practice and for data to be stored in the Australian National Data Service (ANDS). It is part of a national project by the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC) project for capture, storage and re-use of research data. The aim is to construct and install systems that identify and describe significant data holdings in the Australian research community, which will make existing and new data readily available for researchers, policy-makers and practitioners to consult and re-use. The project outcomes will be the registering of meta data about the Life Patterns data set, its public access and re-use and the development of more effective data management workflows to ensure that future data will be routinely submitted, preserved and disseminated according to best practice. Partners from the eScholarship Research Centre (University of Melbourne) include Gavan McCarthy, Mike Jones, Owen O’Neill and Melissa Downing.

MAXIMISING INDEPENDENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Duration: 2010-2011
Funded by: Office for Disability (Victoria)
Researchers: Helen Stokes, Chris Peterson, Johanna Wyn & Malcolm Turnbull

This project was a partnership between the YRC and the Office for Disability / Victorian Disability Advisory Committee that aimed to identify:

a) the key demographic characteristics of Victorian young people with a disability and the extent to which they are reaching their optimal level of independence;
b) the important factors at the level of the individual, the family and the community that impact on maximising their opportunities for independence; and
c) low cost policy approaches, at the micro structural level, that will enable individuals to take full advantage of opportunities for independence.

The project comprised a statistical review of existing data sets, a literature review, policy analysis and responses, and the delivery of interim and final reports. Building on the data, literature reviews and policy interviews, the three themes to emerge that provide a basis for exploring effective policy approaches to maximizing opportunities for independence for young people with a disability were identity, family and community.

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY FOR BHUTAN

Duration: 2009-2011
Funded by: UNICEF
Researcher: Helen Stokes

In 2009 UNICEF Bhutan commissioned the YRC and Nossal Institute of Global Health to undertake an assessment of at risk young people in Bhutan and help develop a National Youth Policy. Dr Helen Stokes from the Youth Research Centre was responsible in conjunction with Bhutan’s Dr Tandi Dorji and their Department of Youth and Sports for the development of the National Youth Policy. This process included:

• The development of a draft framework for the policy
• The workshopping of this draft framework with stakeholders through an extensive interview process
• Development of the draft policy, which included providing a policy that integrated the principles of Gross National Happiness to underpin its structure.
• Workshopping of this report with stakeholders
• Finalisation of the policy

Following the finalisation of the policy in early 2010 it was presented to the Secretary of Education in Bhutan. From there and after revisions it was submitted to Parliament. In September 2011 The Parliament of Bhutan endorsed the National Youth Policy and it was officially launched in December 2011.
NEWGEN ASIA-PACIFIC LEADERSHIP COURSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN KEY AFFECTED POPULATIONS FOR HIV

Duration: 2011
Funded by: NewGen Asia is supported by Youth LEAD and 7 Sisters in partnership with The Asia-Pacific Interagency Task Team for HIV and Young Key Affected Populations, with funding from UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNFPA. The Philippines pilot was supported by UNICEF Philippines and the Philippines Council for the Welfare of Children
Researchers: Helen Cahill, Sally Beadle & Michelle Pose

NewGen Asia-Pacific is an intensive 5-day participatory leadership training course which aims to empower young people from HIV key affected populations to develop skills to lead change in their communities. The project is led by YouthLEAD, a regional network of young key affected populations. An estimated half a million young people aged 15-24 are living with HIV in the Asia-Pacific, with a significant number of new infections in amongst young key affected populations including sex workers, men who have sex with men, transgender people and people who inject drugs. The NewGen Asia Leadership Short Course has been developed by Helen Cahill in close working partnership with a team of four YouthLEAD focal points. A 2-day participatory needs analysis and a 4 day writers’ workshop gave opportunity for critical and creative input by young representatives from Pakistan, Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Philippines, Nepal and Myanmar. A 2-day sampler workshop was held in Korea at the 10th International Commission on AIDS in Asia Pacific, August 2011. This gave opportunity for input from an additional 30 young people from the Asia-Pacific region. The first full variant of the 5-day training course was piloted in Philippines in November 2011 with 34 young people. It was co-facilitated by Helen Cahill and 4 youth facilitators from Youth LEAD.

PRACTICES TO SUPPORT A POSITIVE START TO SCHOOL

Duration: 2010-2011
Funded by: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)
Researchers: Kylie Smith, Sue Atkinson Lopez, Merlyne Cruz, Jane Page, Cassandra Kotsanas, Audrey D’Souza Juma, Anne Houghton, Kerry Noad & Anne Farrelly

This project seeks to explore and identify the processes, enablers and challenges in developing practices that support a positive start to school for young children. An action research framework will be adopted to both support and map changes to educators’ practices and evaluate, through interviewing educators, family members and children, the impact of the newly developed transition processes. This project is the continuation of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s (DEECD) Transition: A Positive Start to School initiative. Current theory and research will be explored and three effective promising practices for transition to school will be selected for trial by the research team in consultation with DEECD staff. Early childhood and primary educators and professionals will then participate in an action research process and develop site specific transition projects to implement these practices. Data will be collected on the processes, enablers and challenges of program development and rollout. Program effectiveness will be measured through qualitative data measures mid 2011. This project will provide increased rigour to the Australian and international evidence base for practices to support effective transition into the first year of primary school and has relevance in increasing positive outcomes for children in their transition from early childhood settings to school. This meets key goals outlined in the DEECD’s Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008).
**SCHOOL DRUG EFFICACY STUDY**

Duration: 2009-2012  
Funded by: Australian Research Council (Linkage)  
Researchers: Helen Cahill & Michelle Pose in collaboration with Associate Professor Richard Midford, Edith Cowan University, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

The aim of this randomized control trial involving 22 Victorian schools is to research the impact of a comprehensive, evidence based school drug education prevention program for years eight and nine students in Victorian state high schools. This entails development of a ten-lesson curriculum with supporting manuals, workbooks and trigger videos for years eight and nine classes, provision of training for teachers, and collection of data from teachers and students. The research team includes Associate Professor Richard Midford of Edith Cowan University and members of the DEECD student wellbeing support staff. In 2011 the project involved four days of professional training to support teachers in the trial; the implementation of the Year 9 program; and collection of qualitative and quantitative data in the 22 participating schools. The control schools were provided two days of training in use of the Year 8 program to support their staged access to the program.

**THE CHILD CARE CENTRE AND SCHOOL AS DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE**

Duration: 2009-2011  
Funded by: The Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Netherlands  
Researchers: Kylie Smith, Cassandra Kotsanas & Anne Farrelly with Anke van Keulen from Bureau MUTANT, the Netherlands (Lead Organisation)

This action research project, based in the Netherlands, answered the following:

- Which competencies of professionals contribute to democratic citizenship and the participation of young children?
- Which competencies contribute to the participation of professionals within the school/child-care centre?
- Which conditions/measures contribute to the development of policy in the school/child-care centre to produce them as a space for democratic practice?
- Which instruments and elements in training programmes contribute to strengthening these competencies of professionals?

Staff acted as research mentors for the project.

**THE EDUCATION BENALLA PROJECT**

Duration: 2011-2014  
Funded by: Tomorrow Today Foundation  
Researchers: Helen Stokes & Malcolm Turnbull

The *Education Benalla Project* is a whole-of-community initiative aimed at addressing educational issues associated with disadvantage in the Benalla district of Victoria. A two phase intervention, the project seeks to tackle high rates of early school leaving and educational disengagement, focusing on the key areas of school readiness, student well-being and transition to tertiary education. The YRC has been contracted to evaluate Phase 1 of the initiative, develop a four year evaluation framework and then examine and analyse the sub-program roll-out and evolution over the period 2011-2014.

**TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS: CREATING A HEALTHY AND SAFE LEARNING IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

Duration: 2011-2012  
Funded by: University of Melbourne Research Collaboration Grant  
Researchers: Kylie Smith, Sue Atkinson Lopez & Merlyne Cruz

This project will conduct a multi-layered evaluation to measure the learning outcomes that occur when students and diverse community members engage with *The Storyteller*, a multi-tiered educational resource. In the words of its creator Glenn Shea, it aims to “provide knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people, society and culture from a generic and non-political perspective through alternative active learning pathways.” *The Storyteller* is currently used in diverse settings (schools, universities, neighbourhood houses) to further teaching and learning goals for intercultural understanding. Using an innovative combination of quantitative and qualitative methods the research will investigate:

1. program impact on community, teacher and student attitudes, knowledge, skills and practice;  
2. the process of change over time; and  
3. factors influencing outcomes.
The research will specifically evaluate the learning outcomes of participants related to attitudes and knowledge about Aboriginal heritage, kinship, creation, medicine, foods and art, country, sacred sites and elders. This will inform further development of the resource and contribute to scholarly debate and national policy on how best to support intercultural learning in current times. A tangible post-evaluation outcome of this project will be a research-based resource that supports the implementation of the National Curriculum in Australian schools.

**TRAIN THE TRAINER: SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF TWO SHORT COURSES - THE ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC, AND THE YOUNG KEY AFFECTED POPULATIONS FOR HIV IN THE ASIA PACIFIC**

Funded by: UNICEF, UNESCO & UNFPA.
Duration: 2011
Researchers: Helen Cahill in collaboration with the Nossal Institute for Global Health and the Burnet Institute.

This project entailed development and delivery of an intensive 5-day Train the Trainer course designed to equip facilitators to lead two short courses previously developed for United Nations agencies in the Asia-Pacific Region. One of the short courses addressed programming and policy for adolescent development and participation in the region and the other addressed the issue of working with young people affected by HIV in the region. The course was delivered in Bangkok for 30 trainers from a range of countries in the Asia-Pacific. Helen Cahill was the lead facilitator with support from Mia Urbano from the Nossal Institute for Global Health.

**UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION: ASIA-PACIFIC**

Duration: 2010-2011
Funded by: UNICEF, UNFPA & UNESCO Asia-Pacific
Researchers: Helen Cahill, Sally Beadle & Michelle Pose

This project’s purpose was to develop and deliver two training courses for people in the Asia-Pacific working in the area of adolescent health, development and participation. These courses were developed and provided for a range of staff from NGO’s, Ministries of Youth, Health or Education, or UN agency staff. One course focused on Adolescent Health and Development: Asia-Pacific. The other addressed Working with Most-at-Risk Adolescents: Asia Pacific. The courses have been developed in partnership with the Nossal Institute of Global Health and The Burnet Institute. Courses were delivered in Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

**VICTORIAN FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION: ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT BIRTH TO 8**

Duration: 2011-2012
Funded by: Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority
Researchers: Kylie Smith, Jane Page & Cassandra Kotsanas

The Victorian Early Years’ Learning and Development Framework was released for state wide implementation in November 2009. The Framework describes common goals for children and outlines how early childhood professionals will use this information to improve their practices and outcomes for children. It is aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia - Belonging, Being and Becoming and links to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards in the early years of school (Prep, Year 1 and Year 2).

In 2012 the Assessment for Learning and Development Project will build out of the pilot Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes Project 2010-2011 to inform other implementation resources and support early childhood professionals in their understanding and practice of assessment for learning and development with children, families and early childhood professionals.
YOUNG PEOPLE NEGOTIATING RISK & OPPORTUNITY: A REASSESSMENT OF TRANSITION PATHWAYS

Duration: 2010 - 2014
Funded by: Australian Research Council (Discovery)
Researchers: Johanna Wyn, Hernán Cuervo, Jessica Crofts, David Farrugia, Graeme Smith, Dan Woodman, ANU and the University of Melbourne, & Lesley Andres, the University of British Columbia

The third phase of the Life Patterns longitudinal research program, this five-year grant supports the ongoing collection of data from two cohorts. Cohort 1 left secondary school in 1991 and in 2011 was aged around 37 while cohort 2 left secondary school in 2006 and was aged around 23 in 2011. During 2011 the research focused on maintaining the participation of cohort 2 through a survey to all participants and on interviews with a sub-set of 50 participants. A key event in 2011 was the progression of the curating and archiving of the Life Patterns project data. This project is titled Longitudinal qualitative and quantitative survey data capture and re-use and is funded by the Australian National Data Service (ANDS).

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Duration: 2011-12
Funded by: Department of Defence
Researchers: Johanna Wyn & Ani Wierenga with Michelle Pose, David Farrugia, Chris Peterson, Roger Holdsworth, Anne Hugo & Jessica Crofts

The Youth Research Centre is developing a Youth Development Framework for the Department of Defence. The project involves two stages. The first completed in July 2011, involved the development of a Generic Youth Development Framework for programs working with 12-19 year olds in community-based settings. The framework draws on a review of extensive local and international literature on youth development research and programs, and case studies of leading Australian practice in youth development. It identifies the values, principles, practices and indicators of best practice youth development, with reference to young people, staff working with young people and organisations that promote youth development.

The second stage, from August 2011 to June 2012, involves the development of a Cadet Youth Development Framework which draws on the generic framework to produce a framework that is applicable to the three cadet organisations in the Australian Defence Forces: the Australian Navy Cadets, Australian Army Cadets and Australian Air Force Cadets. Research conducted with cadets, parents and staff in the Cadet organisations in 2011 will inform this new framework. The Cadet Youth Development Framework will recognise the unique contribution made by each of the organisations, as well as their common goals and processes. The Framework aims to enable the Cadet organisations to implement best practice, and to build in a cycle of organisational improvement. The Generic Youth Development Framework was publicly launched by the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence in October 2011. Copies are available in hard copy and PDF.

YOUTH-LED LEARNING: LOCAL CONNECTIONS & GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Duration: 2008-2011
Funded by: Australian Research Council (Linkage) and Plan International Australia
Researchers: Ani Wierenga, Jose Roberto Guevara, Johanna Wyn, Annette Gough, Glenn Bond, Samantha Ratnam, Jeff King, Sally Beadle & Victoria Kahla

Youth-Led Learning was a three year ARC Linkage project being conducted by the YRC in partnership with RMIT University and Plan International Australia. The project built on an ongoing collaboration between Plan and its University partners. In the final year of the project, the team drew on research and data to build a model of sustainable youth-led global education based on Plan’s Global Connections Program. In 2011 the ARC gave an extension to funding as the PhD projects neared completion. The research team and industry partners presented their work at international symposia in UK and Europe.
Teaching

Centre staff make a significant contribution to a wide range of postgraduate studies and teaching within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

Master of Teaching
The Master of Teaching is designed for graduates from any discipline who wish to become teachers. In 2011 YRC Staff contributed to the following subjects:

Complexity and Diversity in Development
Merlyne Cruz – Seminar leader and lecturer

Social and Professional Contexts
Bernadette Murphy – Coordinator
Helen Stokes – Seminar leader
Michelle Pose – Seminar leader

Health Methods Learning Area
Bernadette Murphy – Coordinator

Australian Indigenous Education Elective
Bernadette Murphy - Lecturer

Education, Practice and Place Elective in Arnhem Land
Bernadette Murphy – Seminar leader

Professional Practice
Bernadette Murphy – Clinical Specialist
Helen Stokes - Clinical Specialist

Master of Education
The Master of Education is directed at practising professionals in a broad range of fields related to education - early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and adult. The degree also meets the needs of other professionals whose work has an educational component or some educational responsibility.

Identity, Equity & Change
Hernan Cuervo - Lecturer

Current Approaches to Student Wellbeing
Helen Cahill - Lecturer

Negotiated Project in Student Wellbeing
Helen Cahill - Lecturer

Promoting Student Wellbeing
Helen Cahill - Lecturer

Contemporary Issues and the Young Child
Kylie Smith - Coordinator

Young people and culture
Johanna Wyn – Lecturer

Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
The Bachelor of Early Childhood Education is designed to meet the growing demand for early childhood educators who can work in a range of settings including child-care, kindergarten and the early years of school and provides dual qualification for employment as early childhood educators in preschools and primary schools.

Project Design
Merlyne Cruz - Research Supervisor
Sue Atkinson Lopez - Research Supervisor
Prasanna Srinivasan - Research Supervisor

Project Report
Merlyne Cruz - Research Supervisor
Sue Atkinson Lopez - Research Supervisor
Prasanna Srinivasan - Research Supervisor

Developmental Differences
Merlyne Cruz – Seminar leader

The Integrated Curriculum 4B
Merlyne Cruz – Seminar leader

Undergraduate and Breadth subjects:
In 2011, the Centre coordinated and contributed to a range of undergraduate studies including:

Breadth subjects:

Concepts of Childhood
Kylie Smith - Coordinator

Ethics, Gender and the Family
Kylie Smith - Coordinator

Youth Citizenship and Change
Johanna Wyn – coordinator

Youth and Popular Culture
Johanna Wyn – coordinator

Undergraduate program in Sociology:

The Sociology of Youth
Johanna Wyn - coordinator
The Youth Research Centre has a number of Masters and PhD students who study within the Centre and are supervised by Centre staff. For more information on YRC Student research supervision, please visit our website: www.education.unimelb.edu.au/ycrpgrad/

**PHD STUDENTS**

**Rosalyn Black**

*Working Title*: Making a difference at the sharp end: student participation in low socioeconomic schools  
*Supervisors*: Professor Johanna Wyn & Dr Ani Wierenga

This thesis is a critical study of the democratic participation of young Australians from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Australian educational policy expects that schools will develop all young people’s capacity for democratic participation, yet these young people remain least likely to participate and are most vulnerable to the exclusions that participation seeks to ameliorate. Informed by the work of critical and postmodernist theorists, this thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the tensions between current policy agendas, the capacity of schools in low socioeconomic contexts and the participation experience of young people in these schools.
Julia Coffey

Working Title: Exploring 'body projects': embodiment and experiences of gender
Supervisors: Professor Johanna Wyn and Dr Tim Marjoribanks

In contemporary sociology, the body matters. The body has been contemporarily theorised as being a ‘project’ to be worked on, through everyday maintenance and modification, aligned with consumerist neoliberal imperatives. Although there has been a wealth of theoretical interest in the body and embodiment, there has been little research which deals with the everyday personal bodily experiences of young men and women. Gender is implicated in the ways individuals work on their bodies as projects. Examining this is a way of interrogating the issue of gender inequality, and of uncovering the discourses that reinforce some of the most ubiquitous gender binaries. These considerations provide the impetus for an empirical study of young men and women’s embodied and gendered experiences of ‘body projects’.

Jessica Crofts

Working title: New femininities: young women and education in late modernity
Supervisors: Professor Johanna Wyn and Dr Hernán Cuervo

This thesis examines the discourses within which new femininities are constructed, and the social conditions in which they emerge. The research, based on the Youth Research Centre’s Life Patterns project, will explore how social conditions, namely the move towards neoliberalism, affect young women’s subjectivities within the broader sphere of education and the workplace. This thesis uses the data from 20 interviews with Generation Y women from the Life Patterns project to explore young women’s relationships to feminism today.

Merlyne Cruz

Working Title: “I don’t have a choice. I’m compelled to just keep going.” Early childhood educators’ commitment to cultural diversity
Supervisors: Professor Glenda MacNaughton and Margaret Coady

This thesis explores the perspectives, principles, pedagogical practices and lived experiences of a group of early childhood educators as they honour cultural diversity. Theoretically and methodologically, this work is located within critical theoretical and bricolage approaches. The study is concerned not only with divergent methods of inquiry but with diverse theoretical and philosophical understandings of the various elements encountered in the act of research. In this study, I share my reconstructed understandings of the topic and humbly suggest what I see as possibilities for creating and sustaining commitment to cultural diversity. These are critical consciousness, spirituality and activism.

Audrey D’Souza Juma

Working Title: Gender Construction in Children’s Literature: Pakistani Early Years Teachers’ Facilitation of Children’s Critical Reading Skills
Supervisors: Professor Glenda MacNaughton and Dr Karina Davis

This thesis aims at reconceptualising teachers’ roles in promoting gender equity in early childhood classrooms in Pakistan with a focus on unearthing gender discourses circulating in classrooms. Entrenched within all discourses is the notion of ‘equity’ based on tenants of Islam. Discourses of gender in Islam are varied and often contesting in nature, with different interpretations as to how gender is understood. The study uses an action research model to provide spaces where women teachers can voice the ‘truths’ they hold regarding what is ‘gender equity’ to them and how they translate this in their classrooms and promote alternative discourses of gender equity.
David Farrugia (Awarded 2011)
Title: Youth Homelessness and Subjectivity
Supervisors: Professor Johanna Wyn and Dr Ani Wierenga

This thesis explores the subjectivities available to young people experiencing homelessness in contemporary modern societies such as Australia. Youth homelessness and subjectivity is theorised in terms of the relationship between biographies and social structures described by theorists of social change. Drawing on interviews with twenty young people conducted in Melbourne, I map the process of subjectivity across three conceptual domains: identity, embodiment, and intersubjectivity. Across these three areas I describe the power of an ethic of moralised personal responsibility which constitutes homeless young people as failed self managers and abject subjects.

This creates a profound form of affective suffering that can be seen across many aspects of young people's lives. I also theorise the process whereby young people leave homelessness to make homes of their own. In the movement from homelessness to home, a form of reflexivity emerges which makes new forms of subjectivity possible for young people, whilst often rearticulating the meaning of homelessness as a form of abject subjectivity.

Above: David Farrugia at his PhD graduation ceremony

Sangay Jamtsho
Working title: Student Well-Being: Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing a Whole School Approach
Supervisors: Professor Johanna Wyn and Dr Helen Cahill

While there is a growing recognition that wellbeing needs to be an integral part of school education deserving a place in its policies, curriculum, structures, and practices, it is not as widely held and practised. This study aims to gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in implementing a whole school approach to student wellbeing through the perspectives of student wellbeing leaders in secondary schools. Understanding what they view as key drivers, barriers, and facilitators of student wellbeing based on their practice, it is hoped, will lead to useful insights that can help shape a more wholesome approach to the promotion of student wellbeing.

Cassandra Kotsanas
Working Title: Children's participation in theory and practice: (re)theorising the everyday enactment of children's participatory rights with early childhood educators
Supervisor: Dr Kylie Smith and Margaret Coady

This research seeks to promote critical early childhood theories and practices for children's participation that are created and owned by early childhood educators. It is framed around the question of how engaging early childhood educators in the (re)theorisation of children's participation in curriculum might address the theory/practice divide and in doing so support critical practices for both educators and children in early childhood contexts. It uses a poststructural action research methodology to explore the theories and practices that educators currently draw upon to enact children's participation in curriculum, to critically address the problematic aspects of these, and to collaboratively generate new possibilities.
Lynnette Longaretti (Awarded 2011)
Title: Rethinking Resilience
Supervisor: Professor Johanna Wyn

Resilience, classically considered a psychological or medical phenomenon, is heavily grounded in the risk discourse. This is problematic especially in the educational context where the legacy of risk prevails. Using an educational paradigm this longitudinal qualitative study explores the resilience of young people in the context of schooling. Focussing specifically on the transition from primary to secondary school (Years 6-7) it offers a constructivist perspective - bringing the voices of young people to the fore, – a methodological approach that is atypical in resilience research. The findings from this research extend the discourse of educational resilience and have significant implications for current practices in the Middle Years of Schooling.

Lisa McKay-Brown
Title: Violence prevention : but on whose terms? : a study of the implementation of a violence prevention program in an Australian primary school
Supervisors: Margaret Coady and Professor Glenda MacNaughton

Programs that aim to reduce and prevent violence are being increasingly introduced into schools. This three-year mixed-methods research project in an Australian primary school examined the implementation of a violence prevention program that focused on increasing pro-social and decreasing anti-social interactions. The study explored the views and experiences of participants and used discourses of critical pedagogy to investigate how dynamics of power were implicated in the implementation of this program. While levels of anti-social interactions decreased, the knowledge imparted through the program was not owned by, nor did it benefit all teachers and students. This led to individuals being marginalised and silenced by the process. I suggest that future research into violence prevention could be undertaken using critical pedagogy as a guiding theoretical perspective. I also recommend that research explores the ways that gender, age, bystander responses and bullying by friends impact on the efficacy of these programs.

Samantha Ratnam
Working title: Global Citizenship Education: An exploratory study of constructions of global citizenship and civic identity
Supervisors: Dr Ani Wierenga, Professor Johanna Wyn and Associate Professor Julie McLeod

This research project seeks to explore and understand how young people engage with formal global civic education. Using qualitative interview data, it will explore the experiences of young people engaged in formal citizenship education programs in an Australian school context. The findings of this research are intended to inform conceptual understandings of civic education processes and support the development of relevant and effective global education programs.

Prasanna Srinivasan
Working Title: Contesting identities: in 'othered' voices
Supervisors: Professor Glenda MacNaughton and Margaret Coady

This study tries to inquire the interactions between national and migrant identities through participatory action research methodology (Kemmis, 1999) in two early childhood settings in Victoria, Australia. The Australian population is diverse in its ethno-cultural make up, and authors have stressed on the criticality of early childhood in developing understandings about the 'race', ethnic and cultural identities of 'self' and 'other' (Connolly, 2008; Wenger, 2008; Epstein, 2009). Therefore, this study, specifically concentrates on how discourses of nationalism and multiculturalism influence and complexify children’s and adults’ daily cultural identity enactments in early childhood settings.
Juliet Watson

Working Title: Young Women, Homelessness and Intimate Relationships
Supervisors: Professor Johanna Wyn and Dr Ani Wierenga

This research is an examination of how young women who are homeless negotiate and experience their intimate relationships within a context of survival. Intimate relationships offer a point of contact between the current effects of neoliberalism on marginalised young women and the creation of identity. Qualitative interviews with fifteen young women explore the intersection of neoliberalism, feminism and intimate relationships which, for many young women, may be the only resource they have to negotiate survival.

Master of Education

Hind Hammad Alotabi

Working Title: Early childhood researchers in Saudi Arabia understandings of children’s consent or assent in research
Supervisor: Dr Kylie Smith

Bruce Hurst

Working Title: How do children aged 9 to 12 years experience Outside School Hours Care in Australia and what are the social, cultural and pedagogical influences that impact upon their experiences?
Supervisor: Dr Kylie Smith

Claudine Lam

Working Title: How does the preschool transition statement support children’s positive start to school?
Supervisor: Dr Kylie Smith

Sharon Saitta

Working Title: Children’s rights in the early childhood curriculum
Supervisor: Margaret Coady

Doreen Kumar (awarded 2011)

Title: Graduate teacher wellbeing
Supervisor: Dr Helen Stokes
The Youth Research Centre publishes a series of Research Reports. Staff also contribute to a range of academic journals of interest to the field. During 2010, the Centre produced the following publications:

**BOOKS:**


**BOOK CHAPTERS:**


Farrugia, D. & Watson, J. (2011) ‘If anyone helps you then you’re a failure’: Youth homelessness, identity and relationships in late modernity’, in S. Beadle, R. Holdsworth & J. Wyn (eds.), *For we are young and... Young people in a time of uncertainty*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.


JOURNAL ARTICLES:


RESEARCH REPORTS:


Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne: Parkville.


BRIEFING PAPERS:


Srinivasan, P. (2011) My (in)action research: reflections on re-actions, Equity and Childhood Program: Members’ Briefing Paper, 10(1).

PEER REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:


CO-EDITORSHIP OF SPECIAL ISSUES OF PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS:

POLICIES:

PRODUCTS, RESOURCES, KITS:
MacNaughton, G. (contributing author) South Australia Teaching for Effective Learning Resource (CD-Rom) distributed by Government of South Australia, Department of Education and Children’s Services.

The YRC organises a range of presentations and seminars throughout the year and also supports staff to make presentations at a range of conferences and workshops.

INVITED ADDRESSES:

Johanna Wyn


September 2011. Invited presentation on *Youth Research in Australia and the Youth Research Centre, The University of South Africa*.


Sue Atkinson Lopez  

Helen Cahill  


Glenda MacNaughton  


and National Children’s Nurseries Association (NCNA), Dublin, Ireland. Title: Dignity of Listening.

April 2011. Invited seminar, Department of Humanities Institute of Technology Carlow, Carlow, Ireland. Title: Troubling truths and critical reflection for early childhood educators.


Kylie Smith  

 Conveyor Papers, Presentations & Seminars:

Helen Cahill  


Cassandra Kotsanas  


November 2011. Workshop presented at the Honoring the Child, Honoring Equity 11 Inspiring change(s): insights, challenges, hopes and actions conference, Melbourne, Australia. Title: Childcare centres and schools as spaces for democratic practice – think big, act small!

Kylie Smith  

Prasanna Srinivasan

November 2011. Paper presented at the Honoring the Child, Honoring Equity 11 Inspiring change(s): insights, challenges, hopes and actions conference, Melbourne. Title: To act or to ‘act’: the performance of and in action research.

Hernan Cuervo


October 2011. Paper presented for the Addressing Disadvantage Inequalities in Education and Health Research Group, University of Ballarat. Title: The role of schooling in rural Australia: Conflicts between youth and community interests.

Ani Wierenga


July 2011. Symposium presentation with Jose Roberto Guevara (RMIT), Victoria Kahla (Plan International Australia) & Sam Mejias (Institute of Education, University of London/Amnesty International) at the Global / Local Youth – New Civic Cultures, Rights and Responsibilities: Nordic Youth Research Symposium 11 conference, Turku, Finland. Title: Young People and Education for Global Citizenship

November 2011. Plenary address for the Third International Conference on Enhancing Competencies of Adolescents and Youth: A Life Skills Approach, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) in collaboration with Research Committee on Sociology of Youth (RC34) of International Sociology Association (ISA), Chennai, India. Title: Young people making a life.

December 2011. Presentation for the Yarra Youth Providers Network Forum, Richmond Town Hall. Title: Youth Development.

Helen Stokes

March 2011. Invited presentation to the Globalisation, Work and Identity Conference at Bremen University, Germany. Title: Constructing identities and making careers: young people’s perspectives of work and learning.

June 2011. Presentation for Tomorrow Today Foundation, Benalla. Title: The Education Benalla Project (Stage 1).

November 2011. Plenary address for the Third International Conference on Enhancing Competencies of Adolescents and Youth: A Life Skills Approach, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) in collaboration with Research Committee on Sociology of Youth (RC34) of International Sociology Association (ISA), Chennai, India. Title: Rethinking Youth Development.


November 2011. Cruz, M., Farrelly, A., Kotsanas, C. & Smith, K. Workshop presented at the Honoring the Child, Honoring Equity 11 Inspiring change(s): insights, challenges, hopes and actions conference, Melbourne, Australia. Title: Building partnerships and collaboration between early childhood services and schools for a successful transition to school.


EVENTS:

Diversity Dolls Training: Dolls with a difference to make a difference 8 July, 2011 at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Honoring the Child, Honoring Equity 11 Inspiring change(s): insights, challenges, hopes and actions 18-19 November, 2011 at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

WORKSHOPS:

Cahill, H. Incorporating evidence based approaches into drama for health promotion, Singapore Drama Educators Theatre Arts Conference 2011, Singapore.

Cahill, H. Killing them Softly in the Classroom, 6th International Conference on Drugs and Young People, May 2011, Melbourne.

MacNaughton, G. ‘Troubling truths and critical reflection for early childhood professionals’, The Early Learning Resource Unit, June 2001, Cape Town, South Africa.
Networks & Partnerships

Australian Partnerships:

Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC)
Ani Wierenga represents the YRC on the Policy Council for AYAC. This committee includes State peak bodies for youth, national youth organisations, youth led organizations and young people. In 2011 the Centre (through Ani Wierenga) coordinated the youth research stream at the first AYAC National Conference, Sydney, May 2011, offered Project Steering Group support for AYAC’s research report: Future focussed: Youth Work in Australia: Reflections and Aspirations, released July 2011.

Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies
In 2011, the YRC hosted and Collaborated on ACYS Forum / Workshop at Youth Research Centre

Cooperative Research Network (CRN)
The Youth Research Centre is part of a Cooperative Research Network funded by the Australian Government which involves a partnership between the University of Ballarat, the University of Melbourne, Deakin University and Monash University. The Centre’s role in the partnership involves collaboration with a research team lead by Professor John Smyth at the University of Ballarat, researching “regional social and educational connectedness and health innovation” in the region.

Griffith Centre for Cultural Studies (GCCS)
The partnership between the GCCS with Professor Andy Bennett and the YRC was reflected in a joint seminar at the Youth Research Centre on the concept of belonging and in Johanna Wyn’s participation in the postgraduate conference at Griffith University.

Onemda Koori Health, School of Population Health, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences
In 2011, the YRC supported the creation of a successful application to the University’s learning and teaching fund for a project (in collaboration with Wurundjeri Council) which is developing an indigenous interpretive tour for students on the University site.

RMIT University, Plan International Australia
The Centre continues its ongoing collaboration with colleagues at RMIT and Plan Australia, through presenting the findings of the recent Youth-led learning ARC linkage project at symposiums in the UK and Europe, and through the preparation of a joint book manuscript.

Victorian Department of Human Services & McCaughey Centre
Through the ongoing ‘NEAR’ collaboration, the Centre has continued to work closely with staff at Department of Human Services, North and West Metropolitan Region, and the McCaughey Centre, VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, Melbourne School of Population Health, Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences, University of Melbourne.

Youth Studies Australia
Staff continued to support the national youth affairs journal by participating on the journal’s Consulting Editorial Group.

International Partnerships

Youth Studies Ireland
Staff continued to support the journal from the Irish Youth Work Centre by participating on the journal’s International Editorial Board.

International Sociological Association
In 2011, Ani Wierenga continued her role for a second term as Vice President (Australia, New Zealand and Oceania) of the youth research strand of the International Sociological Association.

Institute of Education, the University of London
The IOE, University of London collaborated with the YRC, RMIT University and Plan International Australia on a seminar at the IOE and a symposium on Young People and Global Citizenship in Finland at the NYRIS11 Conference in June 2011.
Johanna Wyn is director of the YRC. She is an experienced researcher with expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods. She has a strong track record of research through her success with competitive research grants as well as with consultancies and tenders from a range of stakeholders, including government departments, foundations and the private sector. Johanna is engaged in multi-disciplinary research on young people’s lives, using a mixed methods approach to research the ways in which young people navigate their changing worlds. She takes a holistic approach which includes researching gender, well-being, transitions and inequality, with a broad focus on the ways in which disadvantage, health and well-being impact on young people’s transitions through education and employment. In 2011 she was involved in several research projects, including Life Patterns which she leads, and the Youth Development Framework project for the Department of Defence.
Helen Cahill is Deputy Director of the YRC. She teaches in the Master of Education and the Master of Teaching, specializing in subjects which address prevention approaches to promoting youth wellbeing. She has a special interest in the use of drama as a tool in participatory research and education. She leads a number of HIV prevention projects with women and youth in the Asia-Pacific region, specialising in the use of participatory methods in research, education and community development projects. She is the lead education researcher in a number of school health promotion projects, including the School Drug Efficacy Trial, and randomised control trial which investigates the impact of drug education.

Kate Alexander is a Senior Administrator within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne and has worked in an administration role since 2008. This role involves supporting academic staff members in the Youth Research Centre’s Equity and Childhood Program in the areas of research, teaching and knowledge engagement as well as providing administrative support in areas such as finance, human resources, publications, event support, project support and website development. Prior to this, Kate worked as a research assistant supporting various projects within the Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood.

In 2011, Sally Beadle was a Research Fellow at the YRC involved in a diverse range of research and consultancy projects across the Centre. She continued her role as Project Manager of the Youth-led Learning project and continued to work with the Adolescent Health Team led by Dr Helen Cahill, assisting with the Year 7 Drug Curriculum project and various health, gender rights and participation projects based in the Asia-Pacific Region. In April 2011, Sally left the YRC for a position as Project Officer with the Adolescent Development and Participation Asia-Pacific Shared Services Centre (APSSC) UNICEF in Thailand.

Rhonda Christopher is a Senior Administrator within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Her role is split between Centre administration and providing support to the Educational Psychology, Inclusion and Student Wellbeing groups. She provides financial and administrative support to both research and teaching activities.
Julia Coffey is a Research Assistant working with Helen Cahill. Julia’s work primarily involves producing literature reviews and co-authoring papers for corporate and academic audiences on a range of areas around youth, gender and sexual and reproductive health and education programs. Julia is also a PhD candidate at the Centre, and is working towards the completion of her thesis which explores the ways young people conceptualise and work on their bodies in the context of discourses on gender and health.

Jessica Crofts began working in her role as Research Assistant on the Life Patterns project in 2010 and continued this role throughout 2011. She also assisted with the Youth Development Framework project for the Department of Defence. Jessica is also a full-time PhD student. Her PhD is based on data from the Life Patterns project and explores the discourses surrounding “new femininities” particularly in relation to education and work.

Merlyne Cruz is a Research Fellow with the Equity and Childhood Program in the Youth Research Centre. She has worked in the field of education for almost 20 years covering a range of roles as an early childhood educator, primary school teacher, international education consultant and as researcher and lecturer in the higher education sector. Merlyne is currently involved in several early childhood research projects that investigate the practices and processes of creating pedagogical change in educational settings. Merlyne’s research interests are in anti-colonial thought, Indigenous knowledges, critical spirituality and diasporic identities. Her current PhD study explores early childhood educators’ commitment to cultural diversity.

Dr Hernán Cuervo is a Research Fellow at the YRC. His research interests focus on rural education, teacher education, youth studies and the theory of justice. Hernán teaches in the Master of Education and the Master of Teaching at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. He is regularly a guest lecturer in the Faculty of Arts. Hernán works on the Life Patterns project and leads the project of curating and archiving the data of the Life Patterns project, Longitudinal qualitative and quantitative survey data capture and re-use”. This project is funded by the Australian National Data Service (ANDS). In 2011 Hernán was awarded the first place award for the “Outstanding Dissertation” in rural education by the American Educational Research Association, Rural Education Special Interest Group.
Anne Farrelly is a Research Assistant and Project Officer in Equity and Childhood Program within the YRC. Since 2007 she has worked on the Enhancing Relationships in Schools (ERIS) Project looking in detail at how racial diversity is understood and enacted by students, teachers and families in primary schools. She is also working in the Professional Learning Program in Educational Leadership in Early Childhood Settings. She teaches in the breadth subjects, Concepts of Childhood and Ethics, Gender and the Family.

Dr David Farrugia worked part-time as a research assistant on the Life Patterns team and assisted with the Youth Development Framework project for the Department of Defence. In 2011 David completed his PhD, an examination of young people’s experiences of homelessness, and has accepted a post doctorate position with the University of Ballarat, commencing early in 2012.

Ruth Forster joined the YRC investigating the role of professional training in teacher uptake of collaborative teaching strategies through the ARC funded School Drug Efficacy Trial. She collected data from teachers and students and assisted with analysis and writing. Ruth has extensive prior experience working in secondary schools and in tertiary education courses.

Cassie Kotsanas has been working as a Research Assistant across a range of projects in the Equity and Childhood Program since 2009. Cassie’s main roles are data analysis and managing data collection and ethics processes. Cassie has a background as a preschool teacher and an interest in children’s rights. Cassie is currently undertaking a PhD exploring how early childhood educators can be supported to theorise and practice in ways that support young children’s participatory rights in the everyday.
Bern Murphy has a background in teaching and lectures in the Master of Teaching program in Social Policy, Australian Indigenous Education, and Health Issues for Young People. She teaches in both Primary and Secondary courses and works with Teacher Candidates in schools. Her research is centered mainly around marginalized young people whose access to education is limited; in particular, the opportunities for Aboriginal young people. For many years Bern has conducted research around drug treatment and rehabilitation for young people and is currently involved in a program that takes teacher candidates to Arnhem Land.

Dr Chris Peterson worked on a project for the Office of Disability involving a quantitative analysis of disability reported in a number of different data sets (e.g. ABS and HILDA). Chris also worked with the Life Patterns team on the Longitudinal Qualitative and Quantitative Survey Data Capture project, involving preparing data for archival preservation. He provided data analysis of three surveys for the Defence Department project, and assisted with a team researching and evaluating the DEECD Youth Partnership program. He combines his work at the YRC with part-time teaching in the School of Social Sciences at La Trobe University.

Michelle Pose, a Research Fellow at the Youth Research Centre, worked in 2011 on a number of major projects focusing on areas such as school based drug education; youth leadership and advocacy; and youth health and development. She also played a central role in the coordination, training and facilitation of the Learning Partnerships project which brings training doctors and training teachers together with school students to look at effective communication strategies surrounding sensitive health related issues. In addition, Michelle taught in the subject Social and Professional Contexts as part of the Masters of Teaching.

Dr Graeme Smith has continued to work part time at the Centre in 2011 as the Statistical Analyst for Centre projects. He has analysed the data on the Life Patterns project and worked on other Centre projects. Graeme is also a lecturer in Musicology and Popular Music Studies at Monash University.
KYLIE SMITH  
RESEARCH FELLOW & SENIOR LECTURER

Kylie Smith is a Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer at the YRC. She has been active in early years education and policy development for the past 20 years, and for the past 15 years has focused on researching how theory and practice can challenge the operation of equity for young children in classrooms, community spaces and government policy. In 2011 she led the Educational Leadership for Early Childhood Professionals: Research into practices to support a positive start to school, and Victorian Framework Implementation: Assessment for Learning and Development Birth to 8 projects, and was a co-researcher on the Enhancing Relationships in School Communities (ERIS). Kylie coordinates and teachers two breadth subjects, Concepts of Childhood, and Ethics Gender and the Family, and two Master of Education subjects, Contemporary Issues and the Young Child and New thinking in Early Childhood Pedagogy.

PRASANNA SRINIVASAN  
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

In 2011, Prasanna was involved in supervising undergraduate student research projects in the subjects Project Design and Project Report. Prasanna is currently undertaking her PhD aiming to explore the interaction of cultures within early childhood settings in Australia (Victoria) using participatory action research methodology. She hopes to bring to the surface the complexities of engaging with juxtaposed discourses of multiculturalism and nationalism using critical theories. Prasanna has worked in varied research projects such as RESPECT and ERIS, focusing on culturally respectful relationships between families, staff and children in educational settings.

HELEN STOKES  
LECTURER & RESEARCH FELLOW

Dr Helen Stokes is a Lecturer and Research Fellow at the YRC. Helen has particular interests in early school leaving, juvenile justice, vocational education and training, curriculum and pedagogy in and out of school settings. She is also interested in partnership building between agencies to develop program approaches when working with young people and children and in international youth policy development. In 2011, Helen worked on a number of projects including the development of the National Youth Policy for Bhutan.

MALCOLM TURNBULL  
RESEARCH FELLOW

Dr Malcolm Turnbull is a Research Fellow at the YRC. A former State Special School teacher and administrator and ACFE program co-ordinator, he also works as a freelance historian. He has contributed casually to a number of Centre projects since 1997 (including Evaluation of the JOY FM Training Program and the Young Visions project), and since the start of 2008 has partnered Dr Helen Stokes on a sequence of projects, including a suite of program evaluations for the Foundation for Young Australians; development of a Model of Education for Berry Street; and evaluations of the Assertive Youth Outreach Service (for the City of Greater Dandenong and YSAS) and the Frankston Police-Mission Australia Youth Assist Program. Current activities include a longitudinal evaluation of the whole-of-community Education Benalla Project; and evaluations of the Girlspace and Brimbank Young Men’s Projects (for CMY).
Dr Ani Wierenga is Senior Research Fellow, based at the YRC. As a youth worker and then sociologist, Ani has been active in the youth sector for 24 years. For the past 10 years Ani’s focus has been on research and teaching which supports effective policy and practice with young people, in their wellbeing, learning and active social participation. She continues to explore these areas through research projects with young people, communities, governments, departments, and non-government organizations, and also through post-graduate supervision.

HONORARY FELLOWS

**Dr Sue Atkinson Lopez**  
**Fellow**

**Sally Beadle**  
**Fellow**

**Margaret Coady**  
**Fellow**

**Professor Bronwyn Davies**  
**Professorial Fellow**

**Audrey D’Souza Juma**  
**Fellow**

**Dr Jose (Robbie) Guevara**  
**Fellow**

**Roger Holdsworth**  
**Fellow**

**Professor Glenda MacNaughton**  
**Professorial Fellow**

**Dr Ian Roos**  
**Senior Fellow**

**Dr Karina Davis**  
**Research Fellow**

VISITORS

The Youth Research Centre welcomes visitors from around the world for brief or extended stays. Where possible, opportunities are provided for visitors to share their work formally through seminar presentations, and informally through ongoing discussions. Visitors in 2011 included:

**Lisa Coulson**  
National Executive Member, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC); Director, Tasmanian Aboriginal Child Care Association, Mowbray, TAS

**Dr Evelina Landstedt**  
Post doctoral studies, from Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden

**Manuela Puricelli**  
Masters student, University of Milano Bicocca, Italy

**Professor Jeanette Rhedding-Jones**  
Oslo and Bergen University Colleges, Norway

**Dr Jonathan Silin**  
University of Toronto, Canada
**AWARDS**

In 2011 Dr Helen Cahill, conjointly with MSGE colleagues Desma Strong and Liz Freeman, received the Melbourne Graduate School of Education Engagement Award, for excellence in provision of the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) to over 700 of their teachers in a ten year partnership with Catholic Education Office, Melbourne.

![Image: Hernan Cuervo receiving an award for “Outstanding Dissertation”](image-url)

In 2011 Hernan Cuervo was awarded the first place award for the “Outstanding Dissertation” in rural education by the American Educational Research Association, Rural Education Special Interest Group for his dissertation titled *Social justice and Education in Rural Australia*. 