# YZUP EDUTAINMENT

### DRINKING & DRUGS RISK TAKING BEHAVIOUR AND PEER PRESSURE

## EVALUATION

Interviewed people and Evaluation Hui Attendees

Ngarui Pasene (Youth Worker)

George Masina (School Principal)

Tupe Masina (Prison)

Merekiri Clark (youth)

Zena Masina (teacher trainee)

Karina Williams (Youth)

Pona Pasene (youth worker)

Terry Kinross (participant writer)

Daniel Nordermeer (participant / writer)

Tina Nikoia (participant / writer)

# *Background*

The YZUP! (wise-up) project emerged from community concerns around youth access to alcohol and drugs, intergenerational alcohol abuse and its effects on families. The project is based in Waitakere City, which has a population of approximately 34 000 youths between the age of 10 and 24 years.

The project was initiated by Sjimmy Fransen and developed with the support of Auckland Council CAYAD, NGO’s and earlier the ADHB through Warren Lindberg. It has been very careful to remain community driven.

A needs analysis was undertaken to access what would be an appropriate means of reaching youth, with the ultimate aim of influencing the drinking culture with something more robust than a pamphlet or radio commercial. A range of pre-existing resources were examined by focus groups and the need for a more intelligent resource was identified; something that focused on wisdom rather than simply on information. From this needs analysis, YZUP! developed, aiming to bring about a culture shift utilising a multi-media approach, that challenged the normalisation of alcohol within our communities.

Using existing community networks, the project sought out youth leaders and others to be involved in the programme.

YZUP! Is an attempt to reach the youth population; their families; the wider community and politicians using comic strips, electronic cartoons and web based artwork. Young people write the scripts, develop the cartoons and state the direction of the project; mentored and co-ordinated by a health promoter. The medium is up-to-date and appropriate to the target audience and involvement in the programme equips youth with skills they can carry into the workforce.

YZUP! Consists, of 5-6 cartoon characters, which represent a range of cultures and sub-cultures in an attempt to gain empathy from a broad cross-section of society. The characters are used to raise and discuss issues of importance to youth surrounding alcohol and drug taking. The focus is on thinking about the broader issues that surround some of the alcohol-related harm in our communities, rather than band-aiding the symptoms; an approach that works with the media-savvy youth of today

YZUP is an edutainment project in which young people tell their stories, which are then animated or developed into comic strip resources by talented young people. The resources are then developed into e-toonz and webisodes available on the net, emailable to be viewed by teens, used at schools as discussion topics and as form of edutainment.

Process

* young people were 'buddied up' with others who had different strengths
* the young people developed personal stories relating to experiences of drugs, alcohol, family life etc
* these stories were developed into written scripts and then visual scripts
* the young people were given a number of choices of how to develop their work, through tutoring from a variety of graphic artists, who then worked with them in developing this style and refining their scripts.

# *Evaluation*

# *Discuss the kaupapa and process*

All supported the kaupapa and the way the project was delivered. It was viewed as a special and exciting project. It was a difficult concept to understand for some but as it unfolded people saw and understood the vision.

It was agreed that this type of resource creation and its process was better than that of other resources around including Television adverts because it was developed by those who are also the target audience.

“Most of the stuff you see on walls (posters) and at school nobody takes notice of, they are just fooling themselves if they thing it works!”

# *Discuss scripts written and animation*

Participants were excited to be able to write in their own time as a group, in pairs or alone as they wished. They were happy that they could re write their stories without pressure and that the received guidance and support when needed.

“I wasn’t confident about writing these stories, but over time and with help I did it!” “ I wanted to draw properly the stories that were written out for me to draw, it took a long time to do it”, “getting help from professional people was choice awesome, they were bad!”

The participants were pleased with their efforts but were generally not very confident in their skill level and were happy that the professional animators were able to use their work and see potential in their work.

# *Discuss finished YZUP characters*

Participants were very pleased with the characters which were developed as they were perceived to be representative of youth populations and interest base.

“We like the mix of cultures”, “I think its cool how the Asian chick is a surfer babe”, “There are many people who are of mixed cultures, I am half Maori, half Nuie, I can see me in these characters”. “ It doesn’t matter how old you are you’ll like the characters”

They were viewed as being world class quality animation. The animation had cultural and youth credibility and were seen to have the ability to be used as positive communication tools.

# *Other points raised*

Participants were hopeful that the resource would one day be seen on Television.

Some wanted resource done in various languages

Liked the use of various styles on music tastes, and dress/fashions.

Liked the mix of ethnicity’s including a strong NZ Pakeha representation

Participants were asked to rate the project: in terms of their involvement

Inspiring 20%

Awesome 65%

Really good 10%

Great 5%

Not so bad 0%

To hard 0%

Not a good experience 0%

Participants were asked to rate the project: in terms of the resources developed to date.

Excellent 20%

Really Good 75%

Not bad 5%

Ineffective 0%

#### *Developing the YZUP story(s) content*

##### Keynote Speaker

Ngahuia (A youth advocate) was the keynote speaker. She drew on her own personal experiences and spoke about the steps she took to take control of her life. Ngahuia was in a serious crash, which killed a friend. Speeding alcohol and peer pressure were primary factors through introspection and recollection of her own dreams and goals in life she committed herself to a lifestyle that would realise these. The short goal-setting exercise she conducted with the participants solidified her keynote address whilst simultaneously providing them with a practical tool in their decision making process about the focus or style of their own resource development.

##### The Young Peoples General Life Goals

A range of life goals was identified through a goal-setting exercise. The immediate goal for student participants was to succeed in school and this encompassed completion of school and passing exams.

Long-term career aspirations were primarily in the area of sports, such as rugby, netball, league and basketball, and in the entertainment industry such as musicians and dancers. Professional careers in law, medicine and accountancy ranked next.

Personal goals were predominantly to ‘live life to the fullest’ and this included being successful, ‘be all that I can be’ and to live ‘a long and happy life’.

The next most popular goal was to get a ‘good job’ and to stop smoking and/or never to start drugs and drink less alcohol.

Participants were given a life map, which stated life choices, and key life events, which change your ability to reach your goals.

Three key areas were identified.

* Alcohol and also drugs
* Becoming a young parent
* Taking unplanned risks which cause grief or harm

##### Theme discussions

Young people summarised their discussions on the specific theme they were allocated and discussed strategies for resolving problems or issues. For instance, “remember to control yourself when you’re getting involved with drugs and alcohol don’t loose control of your ability to make good choices. If you can’t handle it then don’t start”, “don’t turn to alcohol and drugs when you get stressed” and “there is hope, there is a way out together.” Don’t drink and drive and help your peers who drink and want to drive.

##### Young Peoples responses

# Their response to the Edutainment programme was overwhelmingly positive. All aspects of the programmes topics, themes, speakers, food, music, facilitators, meeting other young people and talking about youth issues were largely positively commented on.

# “*It really got me thinking*”, “*being able to express yourself*”, and “*everything was the bomb!*” were a few remarks expressed from the young people.

# The programme was also considered useful for two reasons

# Increasing their level of alcohol and drugs knowledge, particularly learning skills and tools for behaviour change or readiness. *“Its one thing to know but another thing to not do, life throws you stink challenges which males it hard to do the thing which you know is right.”*

# Interacting/communicating with other peers about common issues, “*lots of helpful information*”, “because I got to meet a lot of cool people which I can really relate to” and “it brought the youth together as brothers and sisters” captured the general sense of the programmes usefulness.

### Future directions

Future directions focused on establishing a youth forum/committee that would represent young peoples at a number of levels, such as local government, education and churches. Initiating, developing and appropriate delivery of programmes focused on risk taking behaviours and alcohol and drugs educational programmes for both parents and young peoples was identified as a significant public health mechanism to increase young people's current knowledge base. Holding more programmes to include church input and involvement was also identified for future planning of youth activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

A firm recommendation was made that the use of entertainment both visual i.e. comic strips, cultural and musical should be used as a vehicle for behaviour change. Secondly it was firmly stated that young people should not be the primary target of behaviour change campaigns as industry/needs to accept its share of responsibility.

It was felt by youth and whanau that the style and type of resource being developed is both relevant and appropriate to the type of audience and in particular the audiences savvy technological knowledge base and its integration into their lives. It was expressed that this type of resource creation communicates Drug and Alcohol messages effectively in two major ways

It involves young people in every level of development integrating their own and their peer’s stories.

It uses high-end technology complemented with “storying” to hold attention, relate to and involve its audience.

*The programme was an opportunity for acknowledging achievements and to focus on pertinent and real issues that face our communities by bringing people together to develop resources.*

Their participation in community activities and motivation to help their fellow peers and family members were primary reasons for their involvement. This programme allowed them to discuss issues and solutions more in-depth with like-minded people in a supportive and safe environment and through this process create edutainment resources. This group through their involvement in this and other positive programmes and influences will have a lasting effect on behaviour change be it within their schools, youth groups, sports clubs or extended families