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Defining Youth Work

AraTaiohi
Peak Body for Youth Development

EDITED BY ROD BAXTER, JANE ZINTL AND NIKKI HURST

Kaiparahuarahi

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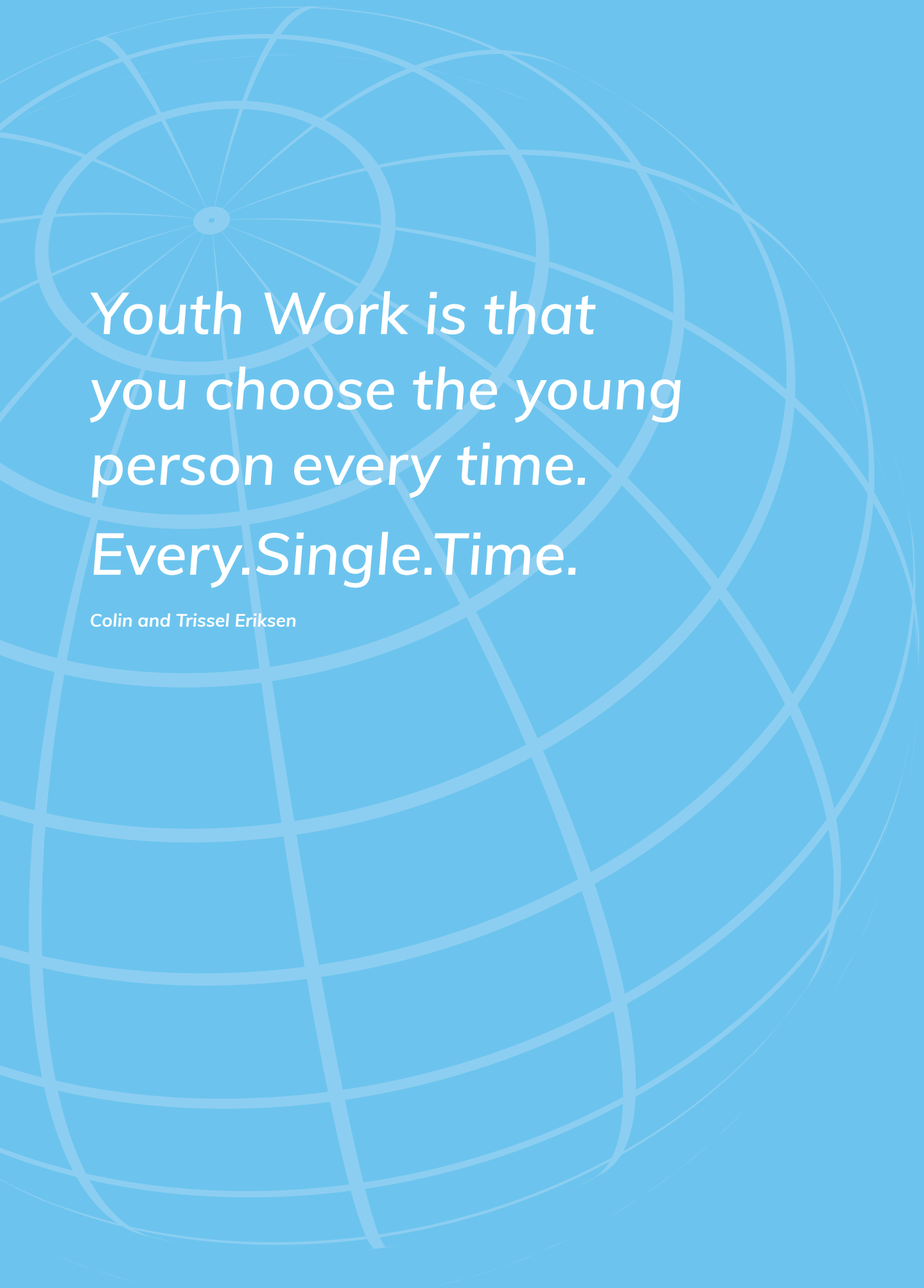


Youth Work is that you choose the young person every time. Every.Single.Time.

Colin and Trissel Eriksen

Editorial

Many of us have been asked the question '*What is Youth Work?*'

Sometimes the question is low stakes, from a friend or family member or someone to whom we've found ourselves chatting to. But sometimes the answers are crucial - in the context of a role description, applying for funding, educational spaces or in hui with government departments or the media.

For a range of reasons this can be a hard question to answer. The hesitation from the sector for any one person to define Youth Work is understandable. But a flow on effect is that many of us don't have the language to define what we do, and we don't know where to find a good solid answer when we do need it.

This issue of Kaiparahuarahi is a part of the solution. It doesn't seek to answer the question once and for all, rather it offers a range of answers to the question and leaves you, reader, to take up the wero from there. Youth Work is dynamic and evolving. And as such, your answer to the question 'What is Youth Work - to me?' may be slightly different from other answers to that question.

What does come through very clearly in this edition of Kaiparahuarahi is that Youth Work is first and foremost about the relationship between a young person and a youth worker. We could argue that this is the key, defining feature of Youth Work for us all. It's there as the first clause of our Code of Ethics, and for many of us why we find ourselves working alongside young people in the first place.

The contributors to this edition of Kaiparahuarahi are a cross-section of our sector and of our society. We have been blessed with the thoughts from a range of perspectives, interests and approaches to the question posed.

Interestingly, as the contributors sent their articles through, it became apparent that this issue of Kaiparahuarahi would be deeply reflective. Being asked 'What is Youth Work?' seems to have cemented the point made by many youth workers that Youth Work is something that you feel. In particular the brief but perfectly formed thoughts of Anaru Te Rangiwhakaewa, Anne Russell and Ielua Junior Taula will leave you thinking about yourself in relation to your practice.

Other themes emerged, Fiona Beals and Steph Brooks share the power and strength that can be found in intergenerational youth work, and the impact of society on us all. Lloyd Martin talks about the role of developmental needs and Sakhr Munassar highlights how connection and community can provide these.

Christoph Teschers shares the journey of both Youth Work and a Youth Worker from Germany to Aotearoa, some similarities, differences, opportunities and challenging changes. The insights shared by Morgan Butler and Jono Selu in their co-authored article highlights both rainbow spaces, intersectionality and the power of leadership through opportunity and relationship.

Rod Baxter and Jane Zintl have leapt to the challenge to collate existing and international definitions from the literature, through the lens of what we are experiencing in the youth sector in Aotearoa today. Nikki Hurst has taken some commonly heard and held myths around Youth Work and shared her thoughts on these.

And in a wonderfully direct piece, Colin and Trissel Eriksen have summed it up for all of us - **'Youth Work is that you choose the young person every time. Every. Single.Time.'**

Enjoy this edition of Kaiparahuarahi. Enjoy familiarising yourself with others' thoughts around how they define Youth Work. And then have a go at defining Youth Work for yourself. You never know when you will be asked.

Kaiparahuarahi is fueled by coffee, cake and breakfasts at Floridita's. But mostly by the passion that we share in seeing the thoughts of those in the youth sector captured in useful and accessible ways. Each edition has grown from a need or celebration in our sector. We look forward to seeing where our next issue might take us in 2022.

Nikki, Rod and Jane
August 2020

Defining Youth Work in Aotearoa

Rod Baxter and Jane Zintl

The symbiotic resistance and desire to define Youth Work has persisted for decades. This article has been a long time coming. 'How to define Youth Work?' is one of those questions that results in those of us with more grey hairs (or less hair!) rolling our eyes. It feels like an age-old question that for some reason that no one can fully articulate an answer to, that we've struggled to reach a consensus on, or we've avoided because we've been busy working with young people!

In many ways Youth Work is something we feel and do, rather than something we define. Youth Workers are intuitive; we know in our hearts what we do and why, even if we do not yet have a crisp language to articulate the distinct features of our practice. We also, understandably, are somewhat reluctant to define ourselves in contrast to any other profession that works with young people. As Peter Block (2008, p44) says, we don't often describe ourselves by what we're not. Youth Work is *who we are*, perhaps rather than *what we do*. However, we do know this is an important question: one that youth workers are passionate about, and one that requires many voices, deep reflection and kōrerorero for us to engage with.

Decades of discussion resulted in the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa releasing a consultation document titled 'What is Youth Work?' (NYWNA, 2008). Any momentum that was generated in this initial kōrero died with the demise of the NYWNA. Or perhaps it's been in a chrysalis within Ara Taiohi, waiting for the right moment. This article revives this kōrero, collates the many definitions that have been proposed from Aotearoa and beyond, and explores the consistent themes.

While this article has been a long time coming, it has never been more important. Recent media coverage has unfairly portrayed youth workers as 'uneducated', 'unskilled', and 'cheap alternatives' to social workers (Broughton, 2021; Reid, Mason & Sumner, 2020; Reid & Sumner, 2021).

Korowai Tupu was established primarily to recognise the mana of Youth Work and youth workers.

While formal qualifications are not essential for membership, education and skill are. Compulsory registration for Social Workers and the scope of practice that has been released by the Social Work Registration Board (SWRB) further strengthens Social Work, at least structurally. In this context Youth Work must stand strong in our identity. Both the intersection and the lines between Social Work and Youth Work must be explored and clarified.

This was emphasised in the 2019 case taken by the SWRB against a Korowai Tupu Accredited Youth Worker. In this case, the youth worker attained a Social Work qualification in the late 1990s because no equivalent Youth Work qualifications were available. The youth worker was briefly employed in a social work role some years ago, briefly been registered and had failed to renew annually after shifting back into Youth Work organisations. Despite evidence that the youth worker was practising as a youth worker and was not advertising themselves as a practicing social worker, the SWRB Disciplinary Tribunal found that the youth worker was "using social work skills and knowledge" (SWRB, 2019). Ultimately, the youth worker and their charitable organisation were ordered to pay fines in excess of $25,000.

A key informant in the SWRB hearing declared "youth work as one of the specialist fields of practice within social work, rather than as a 'standalone entity'" (SWRB, 2019). Ironically, a recent text book was cited as supporting evidence, but it actually acknowledges a social worker and a youth worker working collaboratively, and distinctively, in a youth-focused agency (Hay, Dale & Cooper, 2016). The tension between social work and youth work is unnecessary, not least because professional posturing or false hierarchies certainly don't improve outcomes for young people. It makes much more sense for social workers and youth workers to celebrate and respect each other, and this requires us to be clear about our respective identities.

The journey of defining Youth Work sits in the context of the development of Youth Work as a profession. This journey has woven together over decades. It started with the development of a Code of Ethics (initially in Canterbury in 1997), and emerging qualifications. We now have qualifications at Certificate, Diploma and Degree levels, and a good number of post graduate options. In 2014, the Pathways to Professionalisation Working Group started exploring what a professional body might look like. A number of reports resulted in gathering representatives of the sector together at the Starfish Hui in 2017. The intent of this hui was to provide information to representatives from a variety of contexts and regions so they could help facilitate feedback on the possible structure for a professional association. This feedback was essential in determining the structure for Korowai Tupu, the professional association for Youth Work in Aotearoa, launched at a PD Festival in May 2018. At this same festival, the first issue of *Kaiparahuarahi* was launched, with the expectation that the journal would be released at least annually.

The return of Involve, the national youth development conference, provided the platform to explore the principles of youth development previously expressed in an out-of-date government strategy, the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002).

The consensus of 800+ Involve delegates was that the YDSA principles were still sound but needed to be updated to reflect the reality of 2019, and to reflect the rich cultural heritage of Aotearoa.

To achieve this the Kete Kupenga framework was developed by Whaea Elizabeth Kerekere to inform the review (Deane, Dutton & Kerekere, 2019). The resulting principles are not a Kaupapa Māori framework, but are informed by Te Ao Māori as is the responsibility of Ara Taiohi as a Te Tiriti based organisation.

With this backdrop Youth Work occurs in many diverse contexts (Korowai Tupu, 2020, p17) and there are several enduring structural issues facing our professional community. We know that Youth Work struggles in a statutory setting that is often not set up to allow for great Youth Work. We acknowledge the importance of volunteers and rural contexts. Many youth workers have managers who do not understand or appreciate the uniqueness of Youth Work. Korowai Tupu membership is voluntary, and many youth workers are not yet members of the professional association. We also know that many young people in Aotearoa are not thriving, and that Youth Work and youth development approaches are essential in all these contexts if we want to shift these statistics.

Despite all this, there have been a handful of milestones in the evolution of Youth Work in Aotearoa where we have come close to a coherent and common definition. In 2008, the NYWNA were in full swing, launching a short-lived but powerful newsletter called *Te Hā o te Aroaro*, and the first issue was devoted to Defining Youth Work. The aforementioned discussion paper on the topic was also disseminated, capturing perspectives from various Youth Work contexts across the country. John Harrington and Rod Baxter facilitated a series of consultative Defining Youth Work workshops, and the goal was to publish a working definition in 2009. This ambition was paused as Ara Taiohi emerged in 2010, and now is the right time to return to the challenge.

Interestingly, we are not alone with this tension, as it appears our Youth Work cousins across the world have also struggled to settle on a definition. It may also be near impossible to ascertain how many definitions have been proposed, and this article does not claim to present the exhaustive list. As we unpack various propositions, we will explore themes that are consistent, as well as unique contributions that enhance our understanding of what Youth Work is. Any 'conclusions' exist in this context of the journey of who we are, as youth workers and as professionals.

Here are more than 21 relevant ideas we've gathered to inform the development of our thinking here in Aotearoa, clustered in the following five categories:

21 DEFINITIONS FOR YOUTH WORK

Matauranga Māori with explicit whakaaro related to Youth Work kaupapa:

Hei Tikitiki (Te Ora Hou Aotearoa, 2011)	**Traditional Indigenous Approaches (TIA!)** (Baxter, Caddie & Cameron, 2016)	**E Tipu E Rea** (Dr Teorongonui Josie Keelan and taiohi Māori, for Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002)	**Nga Reanga** (Dr Teorongonui Josie Keelan, Ngāti Porou/Ngāti Awa/Tuhoe, 2014)

Notable publications in **Aotearoa New Zealand** including a definition:

Youth in Perspective (National Youth Council, 1980)	**The Invisible Table** (Lloyd Martin, 2002)	**Real Work** (Lloyd Martin and NYWNA, 2005)	**Code of Ethics,** evolved in each edition (NYWNA, 2008; Ara Taiohi, 2011; Korowai Tupu, 2020)

Contemporary documents from the United Kingdom:

A Manifesto For Our Times (Bernard Davies, 2005; 2010; 2015; 2019)	**Good Youth Work:** What Youth Workers Do, Why and How (NYA, 2007)	**Location of Youth Work** (National Youth Agency [UK] Strategic Framework 2006-2009)	**Nature and Purpose of Youth Work** (YouthLink Scotland, c2004)

Relevant text books for an international audience:

Youth Work Practice (edited by Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith, 2010)	**An Ideal Type of Youth Work** (edited by Sarah Banks, 2010, 2nd edition)	**The Art of Youth Work** (Kerry Young, 2006, 2nd edition)	**Essential Skills for Youth Work Practice** (Kate Sapin, 2013, 2nd edition)

Selected Global perspectives and resources:

The Seven Roles of the Youth Worker (Cassandra Mack, 2007 - USA)	**Code of Ethics for Pacific Nations Youth Workers** (Ola Fou / Praxis Pacific, 2009)	**Youth Work as a Profession** (Howard Sercombe, 2010 - Australia)	**Youth Work in the Commonwealth** (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017)

Transnational perspective:

Exploring the Boundaries, Continuity and Diversity of Youth Work Practice

Transnational review by Trudi Cooper (2018).

Matauranga Māori with explicit whakaaro related to Youth Work kaupapa:			
Hei Tikitiki (Te Ora Hou Aotearoa, 2011)	**Traditional Indigenous Approaches (TIA!)** (Baxter, Caddie & Cameron, 2016)	**E Tipu E Rea** (Dr Teorongonui Josie Keelan and taiohi Māori, for Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002)	**Nga Reanga** (Dr Teorongonui Josie Keelan, Ngāti Porou/Ngāti Awa/Tuhoe, 2014)

Matauranga Māori with explicit whakaaro related to Youth Work kaupapa

Hei Tikitiki:

The first edition of our *Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand* (NYWNA, 2008) included Taonga Pūmau, a summary of Māori youth development practices, benefitting from longserving Board member Manu Caddie's research with Te Ora Hou Aotearoa: *Hei Tikitiki.*

This community based research engaged Māori youth workers interviewing pakeke, kaumātua and kuia, and distilled themes related to their own childhood and adolescent journeys. The exploration centres around cultural rites of passage, explicitly for the community (not individual) wellbeing. There is an evident educative theme through intergenerational transmission: maramatanga (including manaakitanga), mātauranga and mahitanga. It is difficult not to be reductive and overly simplistic in a summary like this, so we urge you to download the full report from the Te Ora Hou website, and follow the source materials referenced. This is an essential resource for all youth workers.

Hei Tikitiki

- Maramatanga
- Mātauranga
- Rites of passage
- Educative
- Manaakitanga
- Mahitanga
- Collective wellbeing
- Intergenerational.

Source: Caddie (2010)

Traditional Indigenous Approaches (TIA!)

The ethnographic exploration of traditional indigenous practices - pre-colonisation - continued to discover evidence of what we would now call 'Youth Work'.

There are three methods recalled by tangata whenua that appeared in Hei Tikitiki, the Code of Ethics and other sources, that were considered an inter-related package known as TIA! (Baxter, Caddie & Cameron, 2015, p156):

TIA!	Key elements	Parallels in modern practice
Pukengatanga	An elder feeds student knowledge Link between generations	Relationship-centric Mentoring / Tuakana-Teina
Whare Wānanga	Formal group structures Skill and talent development	Associational / youth groups Facilitation and education
Urungatanga	Education through exposure Responsibility	Youth participation / Whai wāhitanga Leadership

Source: Baxter, Caddie & Cameron (2015)

E Tipu E Rea

Based on Tā Apirana Ngata's whakataukī, *E Tipu E Rea* was released at the same time at the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (YDSA) by the then Ministry of Youth Affairs (Keelan, 2002).

We believe this is an undervalued taonga, and one of the many legacies of this work is the expressed distinction between '*rangatahi*' and '*taiohi / taiohinga*'. This is also significant because taiohi Māori were actively involved in the creation of the resource, determining what they would like Youth Work to look like.

E Tipu E Rea	Ngā Whāinga / Objectives
1	To involve taiohi Māori in activities that are important to them
2	To integrate contemporary issues into any development project for taiohi Māori
3	To provide opportunities for taiohi Māori to integrate tikanga of their ancestors into their activities
4	To ensure the soul of taiohi Māori is nurtured in all activities

Source: Teorongonui Josie Keelan (2002), *E Tipu E Rea*

Nga Reanga

Dr Teorongonui Josie Keelan developed the thinking from *E Tipu E Rea* and her other taiohinga Māori models into the first published book about youth development from a Kaupapa Māori perspective: *Nga Reanga Youth Development: Māori Styles* (2014).

The book is freely available online thanks to Unitec ePress and is another essential addition to all Youth Workers' libraries. The tales of the ancestor hero Māui are woven throughout, and each chapter resonates with the aforementioned whakaaro. In many ways, Keelan pioneered the explicit focus on mana and mauri that have become central to the Mana Taiohi framework (Ara Taiohi, 2020).

Youth Work practice themes of participation, leadership and education are evident in Nga Reanga.

For the purposes of this article, we have focused on the expanded E Tipu E Rea guidelines with associated whakataukī.

Whakataukī	Element
E tipu e rea mo ngā rā o tou ao Grow up oh tender youth in your own time	**Time and Place**
Ko to ringa ki ngā rākau o te Pākeha hei ara mō tō tīnana Your hands to the tools of the Pākeha for your material wellbeing	**Resourcing**
Ko tō ngākau ki ngā tāonga ā o tīpuna Māori hei tikitiki mō tō mahuna Your heart to the customs of your ancestors to wear as a plume upon your head	**Cultural integrity**
Ko tō wairua ki tō Ātua, nāna nei ngā mea katoa Your soul to your God, the maker of all things	**Spiritual integrity**

Source: Teorongonui Josie Keelan (2014), *Nga Reanga*

Notable publications in **Aotearoa New Zealand** including a definition:			
Youth in Perspective (National Youth Council, 1980)	**The Invisible Table** (Lloyd Martin, 2002)	**Real Work** (Lloyd Martin and NYWNA, 2005)	**Code of Ethics,** evolved in each edition (NYWNA, 2008; Ara Taiohi, 2011; Korowai Tupu, 2020)

Notable publications in **Aotearoa New Zealand** including a definition

1980: Youth in Perspective

Long before Ara Taiohi, the National Youth Council was the equivalent peak body for youth services in the 1970s.

Similarly, before the Ministry of Youth Affairs/Development was established, youth services sat within the Ministry of Recreation and Sport. In 1980, a collaboration between these national organisations published the first substantial study into young people and their support structures, called Youth in Perspective: A study of youth services in New Zealand (Woolford & Law, 1980).

There's a whole chapter devoted to Youth Workers that celebrates volunteers, refers to the emerging term 'at-risk youth', expresses concern about funding, and acknowledges a growing gap between statutory/private and community-based salaries. Interestingly, the primary authors, Geoff Woolford and Michael Law, declare an opposition to professionalization, but are interested in training for full-time youth workers, and ultimately welcome ongoing discussion. It's a fascinating read to note how far we've come, and also see issues that persist today, more than 40 years later! The chapter begins with this definition, which is borrowed from Australia. We've retained the gender bias in this original text because it's uncomfortable and our growth in this area is one of the many things to celebrate!

We use the term "Youth Worker" to mean any person who performs as his major task one or more of the following functions:

- Administration pertaining to work with young people (which, for any purposes, can include any person between the ages of 6 and 30);
- Direct involvement with young people in recreational activities;
- Direct involvement with young people in a counselling, advisory or supportive role;
- Direct involvement with young people through community work;
- Recruitment, training and supervision of voluntary workers who in turn may perform any of the above tasks.

Source: Elery Hamilton-Smith and Donna Brownell (1973), Youth Workers and Their Education, Youth Workers Association of Victoria, cited in National Youth Council (1980).

2002: The Invisible Table

This is arguably the most well-known definition for Youth Work in Aotearoa.

"It is the place of relationships that defines youth work. Other professionals will build a relationship in order to effectively deliver a service. **A youth worker will offer a service in order to build a relationship.**"

Source: Lloyd Martin (2002), The Invisible Table, pp14-15.

It was a game-changer when Lloyd Martin published *The Invisible Table* in 2002; the same year as the YDSA, *E Tipu E Rea* and the first Involve conference. We vividly recall discussion about this definition amongst Youth Workers in cafés at the time. Next year marks the 20th anniversary of this seminal text, and we're quietly hoping for a republished edition. Here's an excerpt from the Introduction:

"If defining 'youth' is so difficult, it is little wonder that 'youth work' also suffers a similar definition problem. New Zealand has not placed a high value on youth work. As a result, there are relatively few training options and career paths in youth work. What youth work is, its importance and what it is trying to achieve, is little understood by those who have never done it, and sometimes only vaguely by youth workers themselves!

"It is not very helpful to define a youth worker as someone 'who works with youth'. From social workers and teachers, to counsellors, outdoors instructors, and employment training providers, many other professional groups and occupations include youth as part (or all) of their focus. Why should youth work be considered a distinct occupation when it does not even have a clear skill or service associated with it? [...] There is no single skill area associated with youth work, primarily because the activities of youth work can overlap into a wide range of other areas. A youth worker may operate in an educational or an outdoors context, may use a social work approach, may facilitate outdoors experiences, or even operate as a counsellor.

2005: Real Work

The momentum following *The Invisible Table* and the turn of the millennium continued as the NYWNA commissioned Lloyd in 2003 to conduct a two-year study on the state of Youth Work in Aotearoa, capturing the perspectives of more than 1000 volunteer and paid youth workers.

By this point, we witnessed a notable shift away from the deficit-driven discourse of 'at-risk' youth in the 1980 book to a consistent strengths-based approach embedded in the identity of Youth Work.

The definition proposed below suggests that across a range of contexts, styles and ideologies, all youth work will have three things in common. **Youth workers enter the worlds of young people aged 10-24 and contribute to their development by:**

Providing services and meeting needs

Youth workers find entry points into the worlds of young people through running activities, providing services or simply being present in those worlds. Therefore, youth work is not defined by any particular activity; kapa haka, employment training, the arts, sports, youth clubs, political action, church services, language programmes, outdoors and educational programmes are all examples of valid activities with (or services) to youth, which a youth worker may facilitate. Two key issues are whether the activity is being facilitated in a safe manner, and whether it is actually meeting the needs of those involved (often indicated by whether they are involved!).

Building relationships

It is the place of relationships that distinguishes youth work from other professions which also include young people in their scope. Most other professions build relationships in order to deliver a service (e.g. social work or education). Youth workers provide a service in order to build a relationship. Connecting with young people in their worlds, in ethical and holistic relationships, is at the heart of youth work practice. Research suggests that significant connection with adults in the context of meaningful activities is central to the development of young people.

Building connection to and participation in communities

If adolescence describes a period of transition between childhood and adulthood, the end goal of youth work is the integration of the young person into various expressions of community. These expressions could include: whanau, iwi, employment, further education, culturally focused groups, church, the arts, sports, and a range of less formal connections. In the realities of our society we all exist within a collection of communities. A key role of youth work is helping young people, and especially those that have become alienated or isolated, to discover healthy communities, build connections and develop skills for participation in them as an adult.

Source: National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa (2005), Real Work, p11.

2020: Code of Ethics

Each of the editions of the Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand (2008, 2011 and 2020), have included a definition that has slightly evolved each time.

The first edition in 2008 copied the Real Work definition and acknowledged the upcoming workshops and discussion paper disseminated throughout 2009.

This definition was prefaced by four core values:

The second edition in 2011 was influenced by a submission process. The core values were retained and the definition was refined substantially by the NYWNA Board after the 2009 consultation. The third edition published in 2020 refined the kupu used with the core values (see table) and slightly evolved the definition with closer alignment to the Mana Taiohi framework which was infused into the updated Code:

Ngā Uara (2008)	Core Values of Youth Work	Ngā Uara Tiaki Taiohi (2020)
Āhuatanga Rangatahi	Young Person Centred	Aronga-Taiohi
Āhua Whānaunga	Relationship Focused	Aro Ki Ngā Hononga
Tikanga me te Horopaki	Culture and Context	Ahurea me te Horopaki
Iwi Whānui	Community Contributors	Te Koha a te Iwi

Source: Code of Ethics 1st Edition (2008), pXV; 3rd edition (2020), p15.

Te Whakamāramatanga o te Tiaki Tamariki	Definition of Youth Work (2020)
Youth work is the development of a mana enhancing relationship between a youth worker and a young person, **where:** young people actively participate, discover their power, and choose to engage for as long as agreed; and **that:** supports their holistic, positive development as young people that contribute to themselves, their whānau, community and world.	

Source: Code of Ethics 3rd Edition (2020), p16

Contemporary documents from the United Kingdom:			
A Manifesto For Our Times (Bernard Davies, 2005; 2010; 2015; 2019)	**Good Youth Work:** What Youth Workers Do, Why and How (NYA, 2007)	**Location of Youth Work** (National Youth Agency [UK] Strategic Framework 2006-2009)	**Nature and Purpose of Youth Work** (YouthLink Scotland, c2004)

Contemporary documents from the United Kingdom:

A Manifesto for Our Times

In 2005, Bernard Davies wrote a special feature for the UK's National Youth Agency (NYA) *Youth & Policy* journal. It rapidly attracted international acclaim and certainly influenced our thinking in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Well worth reading, and easily accessible online, we consider this another key document for any discerning youth worker's library. The Manifesto was refreshed a decade later in 2015 in response to the changing climate in the UK. We've reproduced the original questions, to which the answers need to be affirmative:

Youth Work: A Manifesto For Our Times – defining characteristics

- Have young people chosen to become involved – is their engagement voluntary?
- Is the practice proactively seeking to tip balances of power in young people's favour?
- Are young people perceived and received as young people rather than, as a requirement, through the filter of a range of adult-imposed labels?
- Is the practice starting where young people are starting – particularly with their expectation that they will be able to relax, meet friends and have fun?
- Is a key focus of the practice on the young person as an individual?
- Is the practice respectful of and actively responsive to young people's peer networks?
- Is the practice respectful of and actively responsive to young people's wider community and cultural identities and, where young people choose, is it seeking to help them strengthen these?
- Is the practice seeking to go beyond where young people start, in particular by encouraging them to be outward looking, critical and creative in their responses to their experience and the world around them?
- Is the practice concerned with how young people feel and as well as with what they know and can do?

Source: Bernard Davies, (2005), p7.

Davies edited *What is Youth Work* with Janet Batsleer in 2010, contributing the first chapter, which infused quotes from young people, youth workers and the literature, alongside the themes from the manifesto:

Youth Work: disciplined improvisation

A number of the core features of youth work, which in combination define it as a distinctive form of practice with young people:

- Young people choose to be involved
- Starting where young people are starting – and then seeking to go beyond
- Developing trusting relationships
- Tipping balances of power and control in young people's favour
- Working with the diversity of young people and for equity
- Promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in your area of responsibility
- Working with and through young people's friendship groups
- Youth work as process
- Reflective practice.

Source: Bernard Davies, (2005), p7.

Davies also co-authored a connected chapter in the recent text *Youth Work: Global Futures* (edited by Graham Bright and Carole Pugh, 2019). Whilst this is ostensibly emerging from a Eurocentric context, there are undoubtedly some claims that resonate with us in Aotearoa. You may like to consider other professions that exist globally, such as doctors, teachers, plumbers and pilots; they all have a common and distinct set of defining skills, tools and approaches that are tailored wherever, and with whom, they may be working.

Four interrelated questions

- Should youth work be educative or protective/ preventative?
- Should practice be rooted in a voluntary relationship, free from compulsion or can youth work be imposed?
- Should the practice be individual or collective in its emphasis or intent?
- Should youth work be a vehicle of social conformity or social change?

Source: Bernard Davies and Tony Taylor, (2019), in Youth Work: Global Futures edited by Bright & Pugh, p1.

Good Youth Work

In 2007, Bryan Merton wrote *Good Youth Work: An explanation of what youth workers do, why and how* for the NYA.

Good Youth Work: The 3 (or 4) Rs

There is a symmetry running through youth work that is sometimes missed by those who practise and preach about it. The very qualities and characteristics that the processes of personal and social development are intended to generate in young people are the same as those that youth workers aspire to and require if they are to be effective.

- **Resourcefulness** – digging deep inside and outside one's self to find and use resources that help to respond to life's opportunities and risks;
- **Resilience** – bouncing back from disappointment and setbacks in the pursuit of aspirations; and
- **Resolve** – sticking at things, sometimes in adversity, to achieve goals.

In youth work, these three Rs are secured through developing a fourth. **Relationships** of trust and mutual respect are the currency of youth work through which young people receive the support and challenge needed to acquire the 3 Rs. These qualities and characteristics are essential if opportunities and risks are to be recognised, assessed and taken.

Source: Bryan Merton, (2007), p3.

Location of Youth Work

When John Harrington was the Director of the NYWNA, he embarked on a research trip to the UK. He returned with several resources of value, including the NYA's Strategic Framework 2006-2009., which features a unique diagram representing the relationship of Youth Work to other services provided for young people.

Location of Youth Work

The main purpose of youth work is the personal and social development of young people and their social inclusion. Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society through non-formal educational activities that combine enjoyment, challenge, learning and achievement. Young people engage with youth work on a voluntary basis and youth work methods include support for individuals, work with small groups and learning through experience. It provides for young people's wellbeing and development in all its various forms – including intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual.

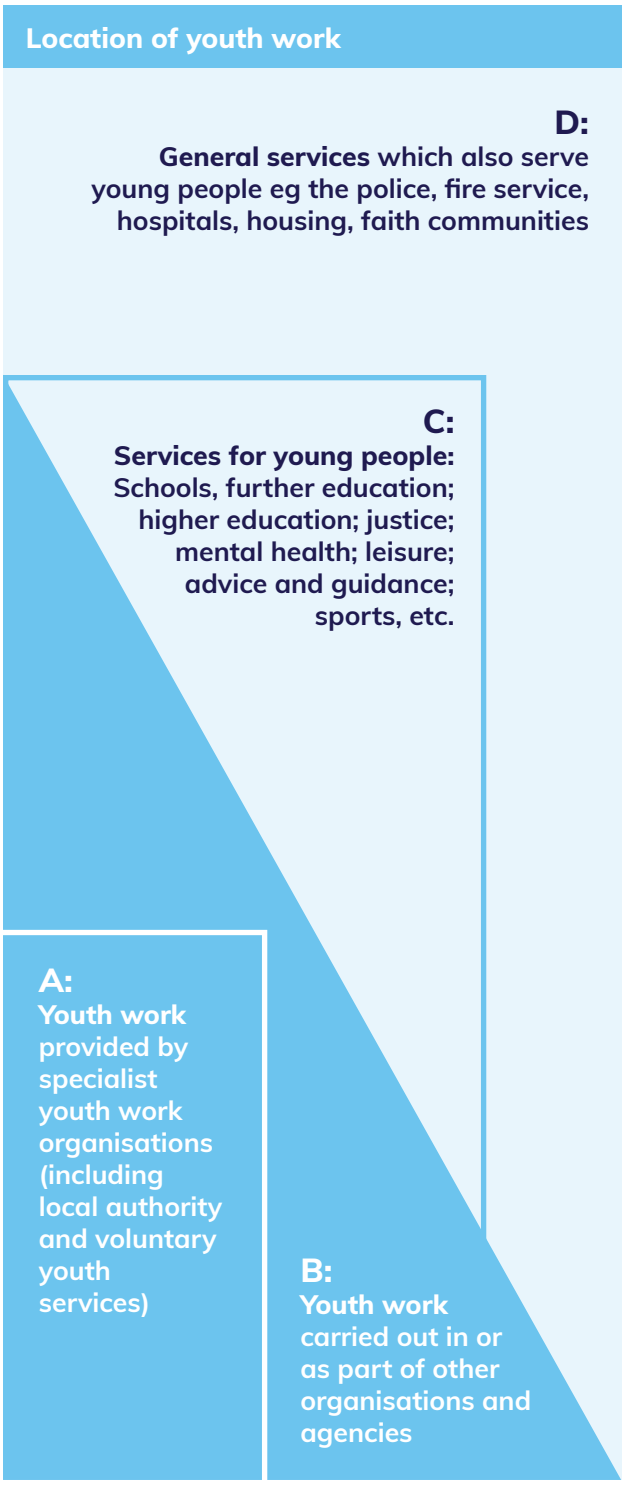
Source: Teorongonui Josie Keelan (2014), *Nga Reanga*

The NYA website offers this current definition for youth work:

Youth work takes a holistic approach with young people. It starts where they are at in terms of **developmental** or physical location (open access or detached/street work) – the relationship between young people at youth worker is entirely **voluntary** – youth work often only works because of the voluntary relationship. Many professionals work with young people, but principally, only in youth work is it the choice of the young person to engage with the professional.

Youth workers usually work with young people aged between 11 and 25 years, although with adolescence starting younger in the modern age, the NYA recognised youth work from ages 8-25. Their work seeks to promote young people's personal and social development and enable them to have a **voice**, influence **and place in their communities** and society as a whole. It builds resilience and character and gives young people the confidence and life skills they need to live, learn, work and achieve. This approach is at the heart of all of our work. Youth work offers young people safe spaces to explore their identity, experience decision-making, increase their confidence, develop inter-personal skills and think through the consequences of their actions. This leads to better informed choices, changes in activity and improved outcomes for young people.

Source: https://nya.org.uk/youth-work/



Nature and Purpose of Youth Work

Another useful document that John Harrington obtained via his trip was the Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work published by YouthLink Scotland (2005). We note that this content reappears in the most recent National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019, available on youthlinkscotland.org.

Statement on the Nature and Purpose Of Youth Work *(Youthlink Scotland)*

Context

Youth work plays a key role in delivering the principles outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12, the right of the young person to voice their opinion, have their views listened to and be taken seriously. By engaging young people in social activism, youth work builds citizenship, respect for human rights and a sense of mutual responsibility.

Introduction

Youth work is an educational practice contributing to young people's learning and development.

Youth work engages with young people within their communities; it acknowledges the wider networks of peers, community and culture; it supports the young person to realise their potential and to address life's challenges critically and creatively; it takes account of all strands of diversity.

Youth work takes place in a variety of settings including community venues, uniformed groups, schools, youth cafés and on the street, whilst using numerous approaches such as outdoor pursuits, drama workshops, health initiatives, peer education and single issue and single gender work to engage with young people.

The effectiveness of youth work methods has led to an increasing number of organisations developing youth work approaches, for example those working in youth justice and health improvement programmes. This demonstrates the range of ways youth work can be applied, enabling young people who might otherwise be alienated from support to get the services they need. The youth work sector welcomes these developments and seeks to co-operate with those who contribute to young people's social and personal development.

However, there remains a fundamental need for community based youth work which has been eroded as a service in recent years, at a time when young people are under greater pressure than ever, especially the most disadvantaged.

Purpose of Youth Work

The purpose of youth work was well defined in Step it Up, following extensive discussion and consultation with the youth work sector, and is as follows:

- Build self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships.
- Create learning and develop new skills.
- Encourage positive group atmospheres.
- Build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- Develop a 'world view' which widens horizons and invites social commitment.

Age Range

The decisive pre-requisite for a young person's participation in youth work remains their youth. Youth work's focus is on the 11-25 year age group with particular emphasis on 11-18 year olds. It acknowledges the need to connect effectively with early intervention programmes and provision which focuses on children under 11 years.

YOUTH WORK HAS THREE ESSENTIAL AND DEFINITIVE FEATURES:

Young people choose to participate

The young person takes part voluntarily. She/he chooses to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun. The young person decides whether to engage or to walk away.

The work must build from where young people are

Youth Work operates on young people's own personal and recreational territory – within both their geographic and interest communities. The young person's life experience is respected and forms the basis for shaping the agenda in negotiation with peers and youth workers.

Youth Work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process

The young person is recognised as an active partner who can, and should, have opportunities and resources to shape their lives. The relationship and dialogue between the young person and youth worker is central to the learning process.

Conclusion

The characteristics and purpose detailed in this leaflet define youth work. Youth work is an empowering process. Youth work is thus one of the very few practices whose remit provides for young people to exercise genuine power – to take decisions, follow them through and take responsibility for their consequences. Youth work seeks to tip the balance of power in young people's favour.

References: 1. Step it Up... The Report of the National Development Project entitled "Defining the Purpose of Youth Work and Measuring Performance". University of Strathclyde and The Prince's Trust Scotland (May 2003). **2.** National Occupational Standards for Youth Work. PAULO NTO (Jan 2002). **3.** Do young people still need Youth Work? Bernard Davies from "Conceptualising Youth Work: Back to the Future" Ed. Murphy and Shaw (1999)

Relevant text books for an international audience:			
Youth Work Practice (edited by Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith, 2010)	**An Ideal Type of Youth Work** (edited by Sarah Banks, 2010, 2nd edition)	**The Art of Youth Work** (Kerry Young, 2006, 2nd edition)	**Essential Skills for Youth Work Practice** (Kate Sapin, 2013, 2nd edition)

Relevant text books for an international audience:

The largest collection of published literature about youth work has arisen from Europe. This is partially reflected in the traditionally large number of youth work qualifications (requiring textbooks for students) and the longevity of large youth-serving organisations (such as the YMCA).

It is worth noting that in recent years, politically driven austerity measures have dramatically reduced the resourcing of youth work in the UK and forced the closure of one of most reputable youth worker qualifications. In the coming decade it will be interesting to watch how international influences contribute to the diversification of our practice, however we digress!

We could have included dozens of references to books that describe youth work, however we have chosen four with stronger definitions and resonant themes. Most books acknowledge the skills and knowledge youth workers require, and the vast range of contexts. Working with Young People (Harrison & Wise, 2005) is an undergraduate collection of readings that begins with an illustrative section defining the field. In the Introduction the editors acknowledge "what good youth work so often comes back to: the quality of the relationship between worker and young person. It is on this the potency of youth work depends" (Harrison & Wise, 2005, p3). The first chapter may not offer a conclusive definition but does name some of the struggles we face:

- "Few people actually know what youth workers do and youth workers are bad at explaining this.
- When asked to describe their job, youth workers often rely on words and phrases that mean little to the general public.
- Although the delivery of youth work is very highly skilled, youth workers are not always aware of the skills they are using.
- "Well, I just do it: I don't really know why it works, it just does."

(Ingram & Harris, 2005, pp11-15).

Youth Work Practice

Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith are widely published youth work scholars and archivists who edit the online youth work encyclopaedia infed.org. They edited Youth Work Practice in 2010 and offer a succinct definition in the opening chapter, distinguishing between the unique elements of youth work. It's also accessible at: https://infed.org/mobi/what-is-youth-work-exploring-the-history-theory-and-practice-of-work-with-young-people/

Five elements to delineate youth work	
1	*Focusing on young people*, their needs, experiences and contribution.
2	*Voluntary participation*, young people choose to become involved in the work.
3	*Fostering association, relationship and community*, encouraging all to join in friendship, to organize and take part in groups and activities and deepen and develop relationships and that allow them to grow and flourish.
4	*Being friendly, accessible and responsive while acting with integrity*. Youth work has come to be characterized by a belief that workers should not only be approachable and friendly; but also that they should have faith in people; and be trying, themselves, to live good lives.
5	*Looking to the education* and, more broadly, the welfare of young people.

Source: Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith (2010), Youth Work Practice, pp1-7.

An Ideal Type of Youth Work

In 1997, at the same time as the Canterbury Youth Workers Collective were drafting the first Code of Ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand, Sarah Banks was coordinating the first edition of *Ethical Issues in Youth Work*. Updated in 2010, Banks identifies three "senses of youth work" (2010, p5):

1	**Youth work as an activity** (work with young people, including school teaching, social work and sports coaching)
2	**Youth work as a specialist occupation** (informal educational and/or developmental; carried out by qualified youth workers or by those who consciously adopt the identity of 'youth worker' within an organisational setting, including volunteers)
3	**Youth work as a discipline** (theory and practice that can be studied).

Banks prefers a spectrum of youth work that overlaps with a range of practices. She describes the demarcations proposed by the likes of Davies (2005) as an essentialist view, which creates a very narrow definition; "such a definition either excludes much of what is currently labelled 'youth work' from being regarded as 'true youth work' (ignoring the overlaps in the concentric circles) or magnifies the disjunction between 'ideal youth work' and 'youth work in reality'. This gap between ideal and reality may be viewed as indicative of youth work's immaturity and inconsistency, and as providing evidence of an identity crisis" (Banks, 2010, p7).

The solution proposed is an 'ideal type' of youth worker:

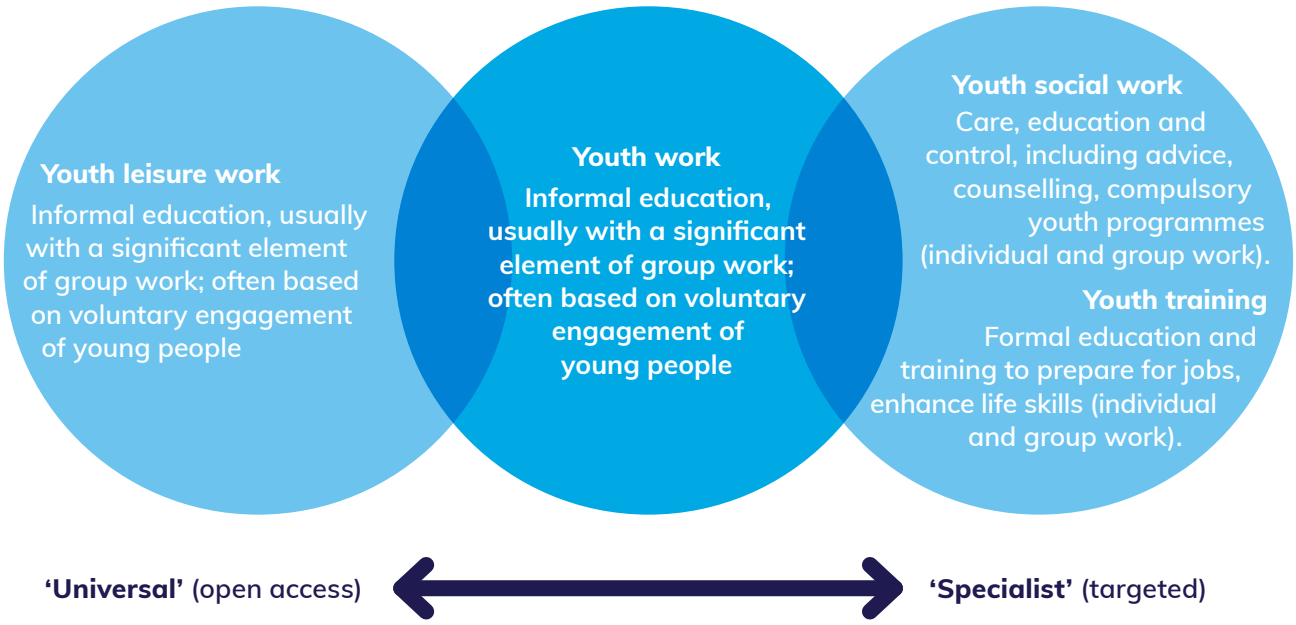
An Ideal Type of Youth Work

The key purpose of youth work is to: Enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential.

Youth work has the following characteristics and values:

- A voluntary relationship with young people, who are free to choose whether or not to be involved.
- An informal educational process that starts where young people are starting, and seeks to go beyond where young people start by encouraging them to be outward-looking, critical and creative in their responses to their experiences and the world around them.
- The value of association, which involves young people working together in groups, fostering supportive relationships and sharing a common life.
- The value of young people participating democratically and as fully as possible in making decisions about issues that affect them in youth work contexts and in life generally.

Source: Sarah Banks, (2010), p10.



The Art of Youth Work

Kerry Young (2006) built upon the thinking of Bernard Davies, Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith, and offered an additional philosophical foundation. Young states, "*whilst such 'key dimensions' and 'defining features' are helpful in offering a comprehensive set of defining characteristics for practice, they do not explain the purpose of youth work, and therefore, the particular contribution that youth work makes to young people's lives. That unique and distinctive contribution, I maintain, can only be understood through careful discernment of youth work's core purpose and underlying philosophy.*" (2006, p109).

The Art of Youth Work

The core purpose of youth work is to engage young people in moral philosophising through which they make sense of themselves, their experiences and their world.

This is based on *voluntary relationships* with young people that involve accepting and valuing young people, honesty, trust, respect and reciprocity. Through such relationships youth workers support, enable and inspire young people to:

- Engage in philosophical inquiry through 'conversation'
- Learn from their experience
- Cultivate virtuous expression through practise.

This process of reflection and self-examination supports young people to increasingly integrate their values, actions and identity, and take charge of themselves as empowered and authentic human beings.

Source: Kerry Young, (2006), pp 109-110.

Essential Skills for Youth Work Practice

Kate Sapin (2013) has written a comprehensive manual for youth workers, capturing familiar frameworks and presenting them in understandable and practical ways. A fresh perspective on identifying and understanding Youth Work is visualised:

A framework for professional youth work practice

Understanding Youth Work

Youth work is professional practice with young people based on certain core values and principles requiring the establishment of voluntary relationships with young people, links with communities and other relevant organisations, and professional supervision from experienced practitioners. Respect for young people is at the heart of youth work values in a profession that works 'where young people are' with a positive, participative and anti-oppressive approach.

Source: Kate Sapin, (2013), p.

Selected Global perspectives and resources:			
The Seven Roles of the Youth Worker (Cassandra Mack, 2007 - USA)	**Code of Ethics for Pacific Nations Youth Workers** (Ola Fou / Praxis Pacific, 2009)	**Youth Work as a Profession** (Howard Sercombe, 2010 - Australia)	**Youth Work in the Commonwealth** (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017)

Selected Global perspectives and resources:

We can only wonder what a comprehensive global collection of Youth Work definitions and models would look like, considering the scale of indigenous practices, and the diversity of Youth Work around the world.

We have selected a handful of relevant sources to illustrate the diversity, and have concluded this with an incredibly clear analysis by the inimitable Trudi Cooper (2018).

The Seven Roles of the Youth Worker

In Smart Moves *That Successful Youth Workers Make*, Cassandra Mack (2007) flips the strengths-based approach youth workers explore with young people back onto ourselves as youth workers. This is a North American perspective that is programme-centric and locates youth workers clearly within youth development and positive psychology. We made a conscious decision in this article not to include a definition of 'youth development' because of the inherent duality of it meaning both a) a stage of human development, and b) an approach to working with young people, and we felt there simply wasn't room to do those perspectives justice. Despite the absence of a precise definition, Mack has a chapter that illuminates various facets of our role:

The Seven Roles of the Youth Worker	
1	Youth Worker as **Educator**
2	Youth Worker as **Counsellor**
3	Youth Worker as **Coach**
4	Youth Worker as **Mentor**
5	Youth Worker as **Disciplinarian**
6	Youth Worker as **Advocate**
7	Youth Worker as **Resource Developer**

Source: Cassandra Mack, (2017), pp63-90.

Ola Fou's Pacific Perspective

Ola Fou is a network of educators, supported by Praxis, operating in several Pacific Nations. In 2009, Ola Fou released a Code of Ethics for Pacific Nations Youth Workers (version 2), based on consultation with youth workers in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau and Samoa. Whist the Code does not include a specific definition, it does make a few points that align with other global definitions:

Ola Fou's Code of Ethics for Pacific Nations Youth Workers

- **Vision:** Youth workers, youth leaders and youth pastors contribute to the development of young people in their communities and do not harm in the process
- Youth work involves a relationship between youth workers and young people whether it is with one young person or a group
- Used in a variety of contexts for the welfare of young people
- Recognises rights-based obligations
- Sets out 17 ethical clauses.

Source: Summarised from Ola Fou / Praxis Pacific, (2009).

Youth Work as a Profession

After decades of articles and chapters, and a career spanning Australia and Europe, the prolific Howard Sercombe published *Youth Work Ethics* in 2010. Howard is a long-time friend and colleague who was influential with the development of our Code of Ethics in Aotearoa. He contributed a piece to the first issue of Kaiparahuarahi that is worth revisiting.

This is by far the shortest and most succinct definition – and that's intentional! It's also the definition that may prompt you to reflect for a longer period of time. Sercombe dissects the meaning of each word used and our summary here will not do this justice, so we urge you to find this book too! One particular point that is worth extracting, however, is his expansion of the word 'professional'. Sercombe declares a "*professional is someone who professes*", who makes a vow, pledge or commitment of some kind. It's a relational concept that forces us to reconsider what we're promising the young people we work with.

A definition – by Sercombe

Youth work is a professional relationship in which the young person is engaged as the primary client in their social context.

Source: Howard Sercombe, (2010), p27.

Youth Work in the Commonwealth

Are you aware that Ara Taiohi and Korowai Tupu are part of the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations (CAYWA)? With input from 23 associations, a collection of definitions from many countries is available (https://www.caywa.global/post/global-definitions-document and on page 66 of this journal), however there is no analysis or comparisons of the similarities and differences. We recognise this is an ambitious task that we are not even prepared for in this lengthy article – we're even impressed you're still reading!

One significant achievement of CAYWA has been the publication of *Youth Work in the Commonwealth: A Growth Profession* (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017), which includes this definition, and a set of key tenets:

Commonwealth definition

Youth work is defined by the Commonwealth Secretariat as:

All forms of rights-based youth engagement approaches that build personal awareness and support the social, political and economic empowerment of young people, delivered through non-formal learning within a matrix of care.

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, (2017), p1.

Key tenets of youth work

Transnational perspective:

Exploring the Boundaries, Continuity and Diversity of Youth Work Practice

Transnational review by Trudi Cooper (2018).

Transnational perspective:

Exploring the Boundaries, Continuity and Diversity of Youth Work Practice

Trudi Cooper's (2018) contribution to the recent Sage *Handbook of Youth Work Practice*, 'Defining Youth Work: Exploring the Boundaries, Continuity and Diversity of Youth Work Practice' is a must read for anyone interested in this issue.

Firstly, Cooper acknowledges the limited public understanding and appreciation for Youth Work, and the murkiness makes it difficult to reject dubious practice that might be called 'youth work'. This is a form of professional colonisation, and the loaded nature of that term suggests how serious this really is.

The chapter features several refreshingly bold comparisons to other professions, including teaching:

"People understand what teachers do because schools and teaching are part of the social fabric of contemporary societies. Teachers are employed by particular types of ***institutions*** *(schools); work in a single* ***context*** *(the classroom); perform a particular socially recognised* ***role*** *(teach pupils/students in a particular age-range); and are referred to uniformly as* ***teachers****. [...] By contrast, for youth work there is no similar* ***institutional or contextual coherence****, and no universally shared social familiarity with youth work practice"*
(Cooper, 2018, pp3-4).

Cooper notes the situation is complex on an international level because of the variation between countries. Nonetheless, she summarises and contrasts the diverse global orient-ations: in the British setting the focus is informal education with critical pedagogy underpinnings, Australian youth workers are rights-based with social justice and political roots, the USA produced therapeutic and developmental models (such as the Circle of Courage) with socioecological and psychology foundations, and Ireland explores the interplay between structural and personal change with sociology at the centre (Cooper, 2018). Aotearoa New Zealand is described with strengths in indigenous Youth Work and a commitment to Positive Youth Development (PYD). In many ways we've picked the best bits from our cousins in the UK, USA and Australia, whilst staying true to the longstanding aspirations of tangata whenua, as evidenced in our new(ish) Mana Taiohi framework.

Cooper offers a pair of Australian definitions and a sociological scale:

Australian perspectives

The practice of engaging with young people in a professional relationship in which:

the young person(s) are the primary constituency, and the mandate given by them has the priority;

the young person(s) are understood as social beings who lives are shaped in negotiation with their social context;

the young person is dealt with holistically.

Source: Bessant, Sercombe & Watts (1998) – note this predates Sercombe's aforementioned definition.

Youth work is a practice that places young people and their interests first;

Youth work is a relational practice, where the youth worker operates alongside the young person in their context;

Youth work is an empowering practice that advocates for and facilitates a young person's independence, participation in society, connectedness and realisation of their rights.

Source: Australian Youth Affairs Council (2013) cited in Cooper (2018, p7).

Sociology of Youth Work

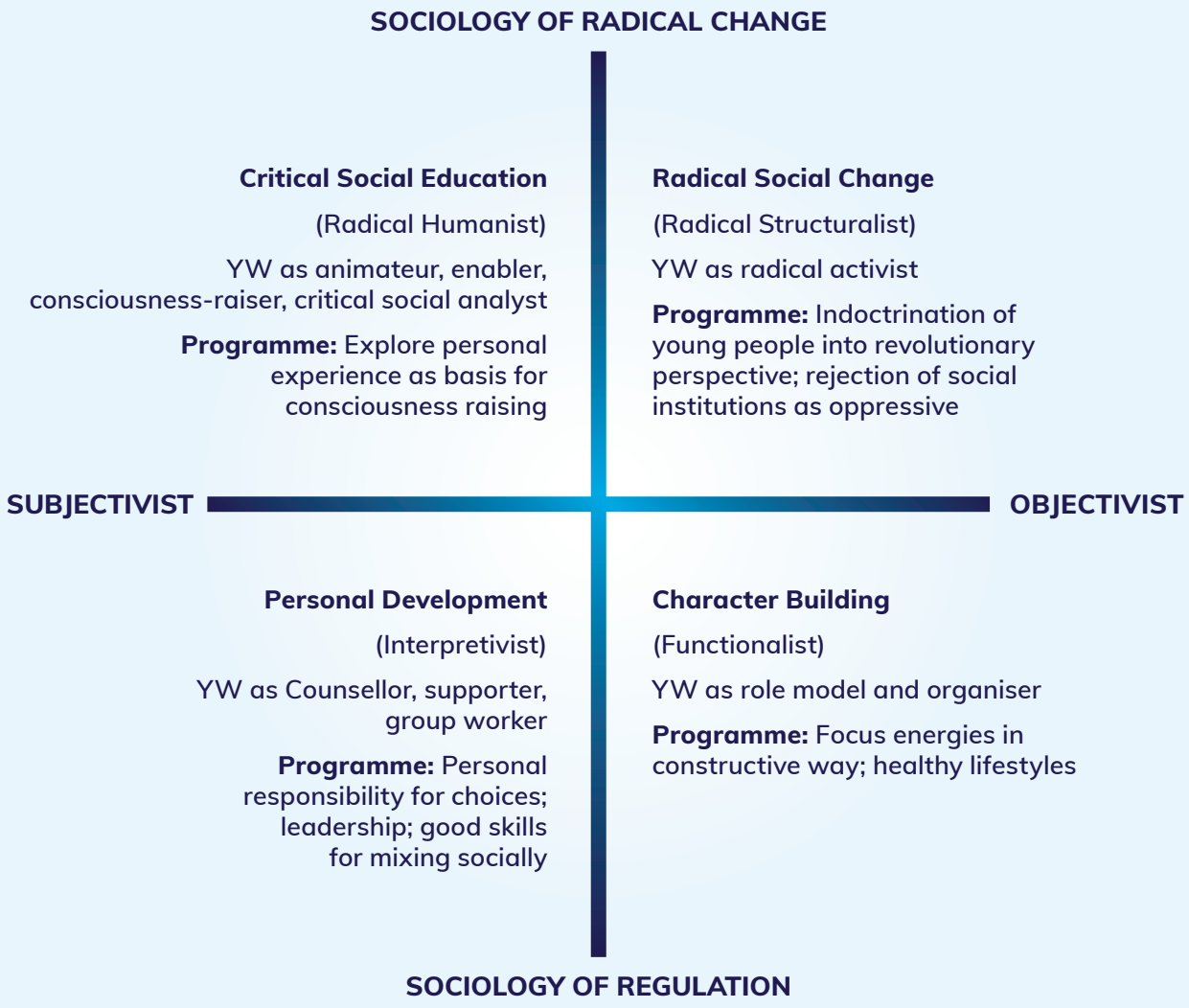


Figure 1.2. Sociology model of youth work (adapted from Hurley & Treacy, 1993).

Cooper also dissects some of the common themes you've surely noticed in most of the definitions we've included in this article:

- **Relationships:**

  "Histories of youth work demonstrate there has been continuity in some methods, especially the emphasis on positive supportive relationships between youth workers and young people. Discontinuities can be found in the purposes of youth work relationships, and the extent to which the relationship was intended to encourage conformity to social norms and engagement in wholesome leisure activities, to support religious conversion or to bring about political, social and personal change" (Cooper, 2018, p5).

- **Voluntary participation:**

  "Even in traditions that emphasise the importance of voluntary participation and the primacy of the young person's mandate, contextual factors, legal responsibilities, and collaboration agreements may limit realisation of these principles. [...] Is a young person who is referred to the service by a social worker or the police voluntarily interacting with the youth worker? The young person can technically refuse, but a lack of alternatives limits their choice" (Cooper, 2018, p11).

- **Mandate:**

  "[Another] area of contention is whether taking a mandate from the young person is a defining feature of youth work. Certainly, it is a guiding principle in many contexts. However, other factors limit the capacity of youth workers to respond only to the mandate of young people. For example, legislation often requires youth workers to report sexual abuse, even when it is against the young person's wishes. In some circumstances youth workers' duty of care for the young person or for other people, means that they cannot accept the young person's mandate of confidentiality, if, for example, a young person plans to hurt themselves or others, or is too intoxicated to care for themselves. More contentiously, information-sharing policies are often a feature of interagency work with young people" (Cooper, 2018, p12).

Trudi Cooper concludes her chapter with a carefully constructed and cohesive definition, with a personalised message to all of us grappling with this process contained in the table below.

Cooper's Definition

Despite differences of language and theorisation, I believe there is benefit in synthesising diverse models and this uncovers a core of values and practices. In plain language I have suggested these include:

1. **A focus on young people's lives and their concerns;**
2. **Attending to the social connection and the context of young people's lives;**
3. **Positive regard and processes for working through supportive and friendly relationships;**
4. **A holistic approach to young people that includes commitment to:**
   - i. **informal education;**
   - ii. **an ethic of care and concern for the flourishing of young people;**
   - iii. **facilitation of youth participation, rights and social justice;**
5. **Acting with integrity.**

Because of the acknowledged difference of opinion on this issue, these two commitments are more contentious and may not be accepted by all youth workers:

1. Maximise the possibility for voluntary participation, but be aware of how a lack of alternatives may limit young people's real choice;
2. Respond to a mandate from the young person, but be explicit with young people about any limitations to their mandate imposed by particular youth work contexts.

My hope in writing this chapter is that as people consider alternative ways of thinking about youth work, this will spark curiosity rather than defensiveness, and encourage dialogue that will enrich practice.

Source: Trudi Cooper (2018, pp14-15).

Reflection

On reflecting on these 21 definitions, we have completed an intuitive, non-scientific, thematic analysis. We note the CAYWA definitions were not included in this analysis, but we've included a map for your own reflection at the end of this issue.

The strongest themes that come through the definitions discussed are 1) that Youth Work is **relational**, and 2) with a young person in their **social context**. This is closely followed by 3) the **educative/developmental** nature of that relationship, and 4) the importance of young people **choosing to engage** in voluntary, not mandatory, relationships. At a slightly lower level, we note 5) the presence of **participatory** practices, including youth voice, was evident. There was also some notable exploration of 6) how youth workers prioritise being **fun and friendly** with young people, whilst maintaining **integrity** and **ethical** behaviour.

We'd like to emphasise the **intergenerational** nature of youth work was strongest in the mātauranga Māori definitions only. Similarly, a rights-based focus came through loudest in Australian definitions. We were surprised that **strengths-based** and/or **mana enhancing** approaches did not come through overtly as a theme. This has been of particular importance in Aotearoa, especially with the influence of Positive Youth Development for the wider youth sector. In many ways this theme is implicit in other themes, especially the developmental nature of Youth Work.

Synthetisation of these definitions leads us to suggest that the definition of Youth Work for Aotearoa would include an emphasis on:

1	**The relationship between the youth worker and the young person that is both voluntary and developmental in nature**
2	**Recognition of social context, including family, whānau, hapū, iwi, peers, the wider community and a long-term intergenerational awareness**
3	**Actively supporting the participation of young people**
4	**Prioritising being friendly and fun, maintaining ethical behaviour**
5	**Unique Aotearoa-specific cultural approaches, such as mana-enhancing practice.**

The context of this article noted the challenges facing Youth Work in 2021. Reaching consensus on the definition of Youth Work will both strengthen us in our identity, and support others to understand our unique and essential contribution to young people and their whānau.

We are often asked what the difference is between Youth Work and Social Work.

In many ways it is like explaining to non-rugby fans the difference between rugby union and rugby league. From the outside they all run forward, pass backwards and put the ball over a line to score. However, the closer you get to the game the more you realise how different they are. Most players will stick to one or the other, and only extraordinary players are able to 'cross codes'.

When they do so they need to be intentional to ensure their primary focus and role is clear.

As mentioned earlier, Lloyd Martin's (2002) suggestion in *The Invisible Table* is the place of relationship is one key distinction. Youth workers do not enter into a young person's life because they have a problem, and leave because this has been 'fixed'. Youth workers build relationships with young people that exist prior to and beyond any particular challenge in the young person's life. As a result young people often trust and invite youth workers into their challenges. For many youth workers this becomes the point where working collaboratively with other professionals is key.

One challenge in determining our definition is how to ensure it sufficiently differentiates us from other professions, including Social Work. Many would look at our list above and say that is what social workers or counsellors do (hence the rugby union/league metaphor). We're often viewed in the same family of 'helping professions', and therefore would expect to see some overlap, especially with core ethical requirements relating to the power imbalance inherent in our relationships. In light of this it is essential that we look at the different emphasis between professions, in this case Youth Work and Social Work.

The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW, 2020) explains Social Work as being qualified registered professionals who:

- Undertake psychosocial assessments, analysis and interventions
- Apply in-depth relational skills to work with a range of complex factors
- Identify and address danger and harm factors
- Restore and strengthen emotional and social wellbeing
- Influence persistent issues of poverty, inequality, violence, discrimination and ongoing failures of social systems

Youth Workers would at times complete some or all of the above with young people, but we do not define our practice with any of the above. Similarly social workers would complete some or all of the emphases in our synthesisation, but they would not define their practice by them.

The ANZASW explanation starts with defining social workers as qualified, registered professionals. As noted earlier, Youth Work has recently been negatively portrayed by the media as uneducated, unqualified, unprofessional, and unskilled, thereby putting young people at risk. Youth Work has been on a professionalisation journey over the last four decades, at least. The establishment of Korowai Tupu in 2018, a voluntary professional association, was a significant step for Youth Work in both defining what it is to be a professional youth worker, and taking responsibility for our practice.

Much like the emphasis on the voluntary engagement of young people in a Youth Work relationship, Korowai Tupu membership is currently completely voluntary. This is consistent with our kaupapa and the essence of Youth Work. It also leaves us vulnerable to challenges from others, including the media. In Aotearoa anyone can employ anyone with the title 'youth worker' and there are no mandatory professional requirements around what support should entail. Youth workers who choose to become members of Korowai Tupu prove their knowledge and practice against our core competencies. This is easiest when the youth worker holds an endorsed qualification, however both experience and formal qualification are valued. Members are externally accountable to the Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa, and commit to ongoing professional development (transforming their practice).

We encourage those who identify as youth workers to consider Korowai Tupu membership. Our association is one place where we can continue this conversation and have confidence in a nationally agreed definition for Youth Work. Our hope is that this article would be a catalyst for that agreement. We have attempted to be inclusive and expansive, knowing we could not possibly ever attempt to define everyone's practice. So, we close with a question and an invitation: what have we missed and what are you going to do next to help this kaupapa?

Rod Baxter was recently appointed CEO of The Prince's Trust New Zealand. He's been an accredited member of Koruwai Tupu since the start and has collected nerdy stuff like youth work books forever.

Jane Zintl leads the team at Ara Taiohi. She is passionate about the mana of Youth Work and youth workers, and ensuring there is support for this mana to be enhanced.

Korowai Tupu

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The youth sector is a 'Forest', which holds the potential for life to thrive. The rakau that stand tall, their roots grounded within Papatūānuku are the kaumatua, kuia and Rangatira who have shaped the Mauri of the sector.

Anaru Te Rangiwhakaewa

Ko Te Pū, Te More, Te Weu, Te Aka, Te Rea, Ko Te Wao-

Nui, Te Kune, Te Whe, Te Kore, Te Pō,

Ki Ngā Tāngata Māori, Ko Rangi Raua Ko Papa!

Anaru Te Rangiwhakaewa

As I reflect on my journey in the youth sector, I have to acknowledge the past, It's within this space where this deep whakaaro and matauranga has shaped the way I view, and work with Rangatahi.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge the value of experience, and the overcoming of adversity and challenge. Without this process, I wouldn't be carrying the seeds I hold today.

And secondly, I need to acknowledge greatly, the many hands that nurtured these seeds. The lens in which I see 'youth work' is an extension of all the matauranga, korero and purakau that has been gifted to me. So as I write this piece, I feel all your mauri here with me - and I am grateful.

The definition of youth work is shaped by the journey and experience of the individual, each person brings with them value, and a unique perspective. What gives Mana to youth work is weaving these views together, so we can better connect and inter weave to the well being of Rangatahi.

One key aspect, that can inform this process is relationship. Not just relationship within the youth sector, or with Rangatahi, but relationship with your environment, and relationship with yourself.

I continue to place this whakaaro at the forefront of my mahi, and when upheld by Tikanga these relationships not only strengthen, but become reciprocal. This is when the saying, "Tangohia o hu, me whakarongo - take of your shoes and listen" becomes important.

What is the environment trying to tell me? How can I utilize these teachings? And what do I learn about myself through this process?

One of those teachings, which was gifted to me while I was cleansing on my maunga Tararua - would inform the way I view youth work in Aotearoa and help to identify my role as a youth worker.

The youth sector is a 'Forest', which holds the potential for life to thrive. The rakau that stand tall, their roots grounded within Papatūānuku are the kaumatua, kuia and Rangatira who have shaped the Mauri of the sector.

The smaller rakau nurtured under the branches of the taller rakau are our Rangatahi, their seeds return life back into Papatūānuku and so forth. Finally, the many threads of flax, vines, and trailing plants are the Rangatahi Kaimahi, they are the connection, and are inter woven between Kaumatua and Rangatahi - allowing a process of Ako. Thus creating Te Ngahere O Te Ora - The forest of life!

Life only exists within the Ngahere because of relationship, the Ngahere only thrives because each component has a valued and equal role - none is greater than the other!

"Whakarongo, Whakaarongo, whakarongo"

This is what youth work means to me.

Āio

Anaru Te Rangiwhakaewa
No reira, he uri tenei o Rangitāne, me Te Aitanga-A-Mahaki
Kaitiaki Kaupapa project lead - Ara Taiohi
Kaiarahi - Rangatahi Tu Rangatira

Our own connections, engagements, networks and reaching out to fellow Youth Workers are so important for our mahi to support our Taiohi to reach up high and to stand tall on their own.

Anne Russell

How Do I Define Youth Work?

Anne Russell – Youth Worker

Yes, Youth Work is all about following the guidelines of the Principles, Aims and goals of many strategies of youth development and a whole raft of work that provide us with the tools to do our Youth Work alongside of.

But for me, I feel one needs to have PASSION, passion to awhi and help our Taiohi achieve their goals and aspirations and, be that one person who never gives/gave up on them, regardless.

The realisation that not one way of working fits all, because each person is unique in who they are and what their needs are:

Ko te ahurei o te Taiohi arahia o Taatou Maahi

(Let the uniqueness of the Youth guide our work)

It is not about what we think they need but listening and following their pathway of need.

We also need to be aware that we cannot do all the work alone, Youth Work is about Whanau and being the village that supports our Taiohi to gain empowerment to making positive decisions in making life their own their way.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engarie, he toa takitini

(Success is not the work of one, but the work of many)

Our own connections, engagements, networks and reaching out to fellow Youth Workers are so important for our mahi to support our Taiohi to reach up high and to stand tall on their own.

He Karakia:

E te whanau
Whaaia te maatauranga kia maarama
Kia whai take nagaa mahi katoa
Tuu Maaia, Tuu Kaha
Aroha atu, Aroha mai
Taatou i a Taataou katoa

(For the family
Seek knowledge for understanding
Have purpose in all that you do
Stand Tall, Be Strong
Let us show respect for each other).

Ma te atua Koutou e manaaki.
Nga mihi ki a Koutou katoa.

Although young people are at the centre point of social pedagogy, it is not limited to this group alone. Social pedagogues have traditionally worked with all age groups from a human development perspective.

Dr Christoph Teschers

An attempt to define Youth Work through an international lens

Dr Christoph Teschers

Kia ora dear reader,

When Jane approached me to consider writing an article about how I would define youth work considering my somewhat international perspective, having grown up in Germany and having worked as a youth worker both in Germany and New Zealand, I was quite intrigued. However, I wondered if I could define what 'Youth Work' is in any sensical way, considering the complexity of Youth Work in practice. So here is my attempt at a definition through a reflection on my experience and understanding of Youth Work in Germany and Aotearoa New Zealand.

To start with, a very basic definition could be that Youth Work means 'working with young people'. However, although it captures the vast range of settings in which youth workers engage with young people, it seems too broad and unspecific. What about the purpose of what we do, the why? The significance for the young person and their community? What about the complexity of engaging with young people in meaningful ways that ultimately lead toward positive outcomes for all involved, not just some? – Considering the complexity mentioned here, while youth workers will mostly engage directly with young people, they may also engage with a young person's parents, guardians, whānau, as well as their teachers, principals, local community members or even local (or national) politics to advocate on behalf of their charges. Therefore, as the basic definition above seems lacking, we need to dive a bit deeper.

What might help is to look into how youth work is situated in a different national context, to then reflect back on what this might mean for Youth Work here in Aotearoa. So let us look at how Youth Work is positioned in the German context and what parallels we can draw. The tradition of Youth Work in Germany is somewhat different to the New Zealand context in so far that it is situated as part of a wider profession that is called Sozialpädagogik and could be translated as 'social pedagogy' or 'social education'. This indicates that the roots of Youth Work in Germany lie squarely within the field of education, pedagogy and human development. In the German context, 'pedagogy' (somewhat synonymous to education) also relates to human development across the life-span, not just childhood or early years, and includes all aspects of life. Therefore, it is generally conceived to be much broader than the often narrower conception of education as the (compulsory) education system here in New Zealand. Although young people are at the centre point of social pedagogy, it is not limited to this group alone. Social pedagogues have traditionally worked with all age groups from a human development perspective. They have therefore bridged what in Aotearoa is often seen as the divide between Youth Work and social work.

This said, the term 'social work' has only really taken root in Germany since 2001 as part of the internationalisation of academic qualifications during the Bologna process. During this time, Youth Work, social pedagogy and the role that social workers often perform in New Zealand have been all subsumed under the umbrella of 'social work'.

This move, unfortunately, created a challenge for the tradition of social pedagogy and youth work in Germany, which is not unlike the often referred to distinction between Youth Work and social work here in Aotearoa. Social pedagogy in Germany, as mentioned above, is based on a human developmental tradition that aims to support each (young) person to develop the skills necessary to live an independent and self-directed life. Recognising the uniqueness of each person's Lebenswirklichkeit (experienced life reality, or perception and experience of life in context), Youth Work and social pedagogues aim to empower each individual to take personal responsibility for their life and develop the ability to live an autonomous life as part of a social group, community and society. They also traditionally work towards reducing barriers of social inequalities and support (young) people to overcome challenges of daily life and strengthening their abilities to successfully navigate social situations and society. The challenge that arose in 2001 with merging this tradition under the umbrella of 'social work' is the tension between two conflicting mandates in the context of social work: (1) to support the person; and (2) to enact the mandate given by the government in form of compliance. The conflict is now between supporting each (young) person and controlling each person to conform to the rules set by the state. And this, I would argue, is the point where we leave what can be considered 'Youth Work', both in Germany and in Aotearoa New Zealand.

So circling back to our opening question, what can we learn from this excurse for a possible sensible definition of youth work? I would argue that, in line with the tradition of social pedagogy in Germany, Youth Work focuses on supporting young people in their personal and social development. It aims to empower young people to successfully overcome personal and social challenges and navigate social complexities and societal demands. Youth workers also provide a 'safe space' of a caring and supportive environment in which young people can be themselves and engage with peers and well-meaning adults in a constructive manner, test boundaries and learn new strategies of interaction with others. Obviously, these spaces have to be safe for everyone sharing them, so rules still apply and are indeed important for a healthy and positive development. However, Youth Work will focus on setting boundaries that allow young people to flourish and develop rather than to enforce governmental rules and enact control and oversight. In contrast, youth workers might act as advocates on matters relevant to young people and support them where they encounter barriers or situations that present them with a strong power imbalance that might disadvantage them. Youth Work, therefore, is a space and practice that provides young people with an environment that supports their positive development into successful (whatever that means for them), independent and autonomous human beings who can manage themselves, navigate social situations, and can find their place in society. Youth Work acts as a social pou that supports the whare of young people's lives besides parents, whānau, school and peers.

While this conclusion above is based on a reflection on Youth Work practice in Germany, I believe that parallels can be found to the Aotearoa New Zealand context, the Mana Taiohi principles, and the Core Values of the Code of Ethics for Youth workers. As such, the above might be a suitable response to the initial question, but it is only one response in terms of what youth workers do. Youth Work is also fast and multifaceted and can be characterised by a range of aspects, such as being complex; mentally, emotionally and physically challenging; relational; ethically complicated; flexible and adaptable; young person focused; affirmative; mana enhancing; and many more. But one thing that it also is, and certainly needs to be, as youth workers engage with some of the most vulnerable members of our society during a formative time of their life: professional. Which is why, I would argue, youth workers in Aotearoa (and many other countries) need to be given the recognition that their work with and care for our young people, and subsequently the care for our society as a whole, requires.

I would like to close with a whakatauki that was gifted to our Youth and Community Leadership programme and that much better encapsulate what Youth Work essentially is about:

Mātātahi tū, hapori ora

When young people are strong, the community thrives.

Ngā mihi nui,
Christoph

Dr Christoph Teschers is Senior Lecturer at Te Kura Ārahi Ako | the School of Educational Studies and Leadership at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury and coordinates the Youth and Community Leadership Programme, which includes a Youth work and development pathway developed in conjunction with Ara Taiohi, Korowai Tupu, Rerenga Awa and other sector voices.

Define Youth Work

What does this look like in your practice?

It is a slow-cook (slow pour) mana restorative offer, set on a with-ness approach that repairs fractures in life, enables young people to defrost hardened places; to begin reabsorbing newness of life.

Ielua Junior Taula

What is Youth Work?

Ielua Junior Taula

We work to restore the mana of young people whose mana have been stained, stripped, or diminished. We strive to help young people find belonging and recapture purpose to live a good life.

How do I define Youth Work?

"It is a slow-cook (slow pour) mana restorative offer, set on a with-ness approach that repairs fractures in life, enables young people to defrost hardened places; to begin reabsorbing newness of life".

Slow cook is a concept that recognises a lowered heat (approach) that feels like humility and togetherness. You're not coming in HOT! As some would say. It is also valuing an unset timeframe to build a relationship.

Slow pour is the ability to understand the quantity and pace of your life-deposits. Ensuring you are not over pouring and creating wastage or rushing readiness.

With-ness is key in any journey with someone. It is the ability to crawl, walk, run, or sit together, respecting pace, peaks and falls.

Defrosting is a simple concept that recognises hardened souls need warmth and time to soften.

Ielua Junior Taula. *Known as dad, hun, uncle J, my youth worker, and the youngest child of Iosefa and Tali Taula from Samoa.*

Born 1981 in Christchurch, raised in Aranui. On numerous occasions was recognised and acknowledged for his potential, but failed to see or embrace it until December 2019.

I hope young people don't wait as long as I did to be woke. Believe and Live. Jeremiah 29:11

If you ask me to define Youth Work, I can talk about concepts, ideas, skills and things. But for me a society that is functioning well understands one thing – Youth Work is generational work. Youth Work is about connecting generations.

Dr Fiona Beals

How do you define Youth Work?

Dr Phi (Fiona Beals)

Imagine the ultimate Youth Worker.

They don't look at the rubbish in your life; but they look for the treasure, the taonga inside of you.

Just imagine the ultimate Youth Worker.

Instead of working in the confines and the boundaries of your life, they push beyond these and provide you with a choice to experience something different, something that just ignites a fire in you to be your person.

Really, just imagine the ultimate Youth Worker.

Where some see loss, they see hope; where others see darkness, they don't just see the light, they turn it on.

I was fortunate to have the ultimate Youth Worker. They never did volunteer Youth Work and if they did they would never have called it Youth Work. They also never did paid 'professional' Youth Work. They didn't do any course on Youth Work. But they did do one thing and that was life.

The ultimate Youth Worker in my life was my grandfather. He never saw me as a broken kid when I was very very broken, but he saw potential in me. Instead of seeing me confined to the State Housing Block of Westport, he would take me on adventures – gold panning, white baiting and most of all storytelling the history of the whenua. He turned on a light in my life and lit a fire. He opened a door through his storytelling which gave me a pen to write.

I am guessing that the editors of Kaiparahuarahi thought asking me, a former tutor on the Bachelor of Youth Development to write some thoughts on the definition of Youth Work, they would get an answer that was somewhat like "a profession where people are trained either formally or informally to work with young people utilising positive youth development frameworks and enabling young people to reach their potential." And, Youth Work can be defined in that way.

However, I am a sociologist in the heart of my Youth Work. This means I want to see a bigger picture than developmental theorists. It means I want a picture that tells me the why of something. Why do we have this concept of youth, why is it that words like rangahau and taohi are contemporary in their definition of youth in Aotearoa? Why is it that the whole concept of adolescence arose in the 1890s? Why is it that the idea of teenager comes from the 1950s?

And the why questions are deeper – why do we have so many of our most vulnerable youth living in poverty? Why is it that we have the highest per capita indigenous youth suicide rate in the world? Why is it that we have one of the highest per capita elderly suicide rates in the world? Why is it that we are so busy talking about why we are not talking about youth suicide that our eyes, ears, mouths and hearts are closed to the loss of our elderly through suicide.

And I am going to say something very controversial for Kaiparahuarahi. Something that may be worth reflecting on as a sector. If you ask me to define Youth Work, I can talk about concepts, ideas, skills and things. But for me a society that is functioning well understands one thing – Youth Work is generational work. Youth Work is about connecting generations.

You see, this is where it is at for me, and maybe it is because I am getting older and I don't want to lose the label of Youth Worker. When I reflect deeply on my why questions, on the why of the issues questions, on the why of suicide and the why we don't talk about the loss of our elderly through suicide I can only think of two things; one being loneliness and the other being purpose.

We all want purpose and we all crave connection. The drivers of youth suicide are the same drivers of the suicide of our older members of society. When we lose a young person, it cuts deep because we know that they have lost their future. We don't have the same reflection on our elderly. In truth, we have forgotten an ancient truth which is over most, if not all, cultures, our elderly are there to guide and share their wisdom to the coming generations. When they have that role, and it is respected as such a role, the village, the community are healthy. When they don't, then a break occurs in our social structure.

So, if you ask me to define Youth Work. My first fallback answer is Youth Work is generational. It is about the grey and the balding journeying with the young and the pimpled. But then if you ask me, what does that mean for the Sector; the Sector here in Aotearoa New Zealand where we have people with the job title "Youth Worker", I would say, it is okay to define Youth Work through concepts like relationship, choice, participation, citizenship. It is also okay to see contexts as formal and informal.

But I dare you, just as I have many of my students, shift your eyes at times and reframe your role and position. If you agree that maybe I have a point, Youth Work is, or should be, generational, then to be given the role of a Youth Worker, whether it be volunteer or professional, is to be given a great mantle. It is to be given the social role of a leader. For the young people you journey with, you are their kaumatua. You've got to take this seriously.

My grandfather had 80 years of experience. He was damaged by the war and his own children experienced that damage; but what he failed at as a father he triumphed at as a grandfather and Youth Worker. Most of you reading this won't have equal the experience or knowledge he had – but you have some, so use it well.

And I am going to dare you further. Reframe your position. Do not be afraid to see yourself as the Youth Worker who builds bridges between generations. Just as we encourage each other to allow young people to plan, deliver, evaluate and engage in their own activities. Those skills you have doing that can go so much further if you take your mahi into the community and expand your reach.

You see at the end of the day, this thing called youth has a beginning but has no determined end. We all start the period called youth because our bodies start to physically change. The completion of this period is not determined by our bodies, or even our maturity, it really is determined by social conditions and policies. So if you take it seriously, there is no reason why Youth Work can be generational work; our elderly are still young at heart.

The ultimate Youth Worker is a treasure hunter, adventurer, boundary pusher, fire lighter and light seeker. The ultimate Youth Worker does not limit this set of gifts but uses them in their communities of influence to make a difference.

Rocking from the mighty West Coast, ***Dr Phi (Fiona Beals)*** *has been around for simply ages. She has always had a foot in the faith-based sector as a volunteer in local church ministries. But has also taught in the Bachelor of Youth Work at WelTec. Dr Phi believes in shaking the foundations of our practice to see if that practice is both solid and transformative in addressing systemic inequities.*

Define Youth Work

What does this look like in your practice?

Over a lifetime of involvement in the sector I have observed stupid programmes being run very successfully by people who got the active ingredient right, and the best designed programmes fail when they were led by people who didn't 'get it'.

Lloyd Martin

It's the people stupid!
– how youth development works

Lloyd Martin

The term youth development describes a process of change. The beginning point, and main driver of change is a crisis -a social situation in which things are not working out. The crisis usually looks like a gap in development between where a person is at, and where they want or need to be. A developmental gap is not just about skills, fundamentally it is about psychological functions such as; confidence, motivation, purpose, an ability to focus, and an awareness of self and other people.

Lev Vygotsky (1997) used the term *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD for short) to describe the gap as a space where a child or young person can achieve with the support of others, what they can't manage to do on their own. An everyday example of the ZPD is the young person who will cheerfully offer to help out with the dishes at a youth programme, but who wouldn't do them at home without an argument.

Vygotsky (1998) suggested that at key points during childhood and adolescence, each person hits a wall of developmental change, and progress is paused as they dismantle and re-organise their relationship with the world around them. Temper tantrums, rudeness, withdrawal, risk taking and (sometimes) substance abuse are common mechanisms for coping with the crisis of developmental change. Youth work happens in the ZPD, and that's why it is sometimes a messy process that doesn't always feel like forward movement. It is important to remember that programmes don't change young people, a person is changed by the social situation they are in and the helpful people who accompany them in the process of change. The support that a person receives during their crisis will often determine whether their coping behaviours are a temporary phase or become an ongoing trait. Vygotsky (1998) was critical of psychological approaches that simply label coping behaviours in scientific sounding terms and ignore the unresolved developmental issues that are giving rise to them. This comment was echoed more recently in Bessel Van Der Kolk's research (2014) into the impact of trauma on development.

Funders, managers and policy makers generally focus on designing programmes that will deliver measurable changes for young people. However, when those programmes are limited to the contractual delivery of a social service (such as transition to work, anger management etc.) and overlook developmental processes, they are much less effective. In fact, in their study of programme focused interventions in the United States, Li and Julian (2012) found that 80% of promising pilot programmes had failed to achieve their intended results when they were scaled up.

Connection and earned trust are at the heart of any youth development approach in the ZPD. Li and Julian (2012) compare this to the 'active ingredient' -the thing that the old adverts for toothpaste on TV claimed made all the difference. Without connection and trust, it is just the delivery of a social service, and as the authors point out, most social services and interventions fail to deliver their intended results if the active ingredient is missing. Over a lifetime of involvement in the sector I have observed stupid programmes being run very successfully by people who got the active ingredient right, and the best designed programmes fail when they were led by people who didn't 'get it'.

Effective youth work in the ZPD looks beyond behaviours to focus on developmental needs. The Circle of Courage was introduced in the 1990's by Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2019) as a model of development based on traditional child rearing practices among the Lakota people in the United States. The model suggests that all young people experience four developmental needs; the need to belong (Attachment), to become competent (Achievement), to exercise choice (Autonomy) and to find purpose through generosity towards others (Altruism). These principles represent a consilience between the traditional values found in many indigenous cultures, and recent research into bio-social needs, resilience and positive psychology (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2019, p.8-10). While all young people will face a series of developmental crises as they transition into new stages in their lives, those whose Circle is intact are better prepared to navigate them. However, when their Circle is broken through unmet needs in one or more areas, a young person will experience pain (Anglin, 2003) and filter their experience of life through that pain. Many are motivated to try and resolve unmet needs, even if their actions result in behaviours that are destructive of themselves or others.

Figure 1. The Circle of Mana

In 2019 Praxis approached Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern and sought their permission to re-develop the Circle of Courage model in the context of Aotearoa. In line with other work being done at the time by Te Ora Hou and Ara Taiohi, we placed the mana of the young person at the centre (see Figure 1 above), to suggest that each of these principles make more sense when they are considered in the context of the mana of the young person.

The authors generously gave their permission, and Martin Brokenleg, a Lakota elder commented:

Mana is the right term to use as I reflect on the outcomes of the Circle of Courage in Hawaii and Aotearoa. As indigenous populations continue to decolonize around the Pacific and the world, we know from history that true and sound ideas carry on and transform in new settings. Thank you for your work and dedication to the Circle. I hope it emerges as a new fern that brings life and nourishment to the people of Aotearoa.

(Martin Brokenleg, 2019)

The Circle is a lens through which whānau, youth workers and educators can interpret behaviour and identify developmental needs. Working out where a young person's Circle is broken enables those working alongside them to identify what sort of interactions and activities will be helpful. For example if their Circle is broken around influence, giving choice in interactions and responsibility in shared activities becomes important.

After many years in the sector I still don't know how to stop a young person taking drugs, wagging school, or self-harming. However, I have noticed that these behaviours that cause alarm will either fade into the background once a young person's developmental needs are being met, or often continue as lifelong patterns if they aren't. Youth work is not therapy, but good youth work is therapeutic.

Lloyd Martin is an Educator with Praxis, a learning community of practitioners who are supporting the next generation of leadership in our communities.

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Define Youth Work

What does this look like in your practice?

My definition of Youth Work goes back to what is best for young people. I believe that if we can't recreate the reality of a closely connected community that supports young people in all aspects, the least we can do is train, support and resource Youth Workers.

Sakhr Munassar

What is Youth Work?

Sakhr Munassar

Youth work is based on specific principles, ethical boundaries, and a youth development approach and although it is much needed in our society, I can't help but reflect back on my time growing up in Yemen and how my support system was different. Where I grew up in Yemen, we didn't have Youth Workers per se, instead we had a strong community, one that naturally contributed to everyone's growth. Having teachers, shop owners, police officers, friends all living in the same area meant that everyone was connected. I knew every young person in my neighbourhood and family connections transcended many generations.

These connections created a network of support not just for young people but for everyone, adding to the wellbeing of society. While reflecting on these connections I can't help reflecting upon how existing in one place was a choice that was taken away from Māori, and from many other marginalized groups here in Aotearoa today due to forced displacements, gentrification, and the constant struggle in dealing with a vicious cycle of violence that is a result of the adaptation and camouflage of colonization that hasn't been fully addressed yet.

A collective, wrap-around community approach allows us to give young people second chances where they will be supported to reflect and grow. This is in contrast to systematic checks and rules that are a result of a colonized system that clearly favours the privileged and harms indigenous, black and people of colour by design. In the absence of uplifting communities, neighbourhoods and connections, Youth Work and Youth Workers have become a crucial part of providing support to young people. Young people in Aotearoa today are experiencing shocking rates of isolation and discrimination, in addition to feeling that their voices are not heard and don't matter (Red Cross, 2020). In my mind, Youth Work should collectively embody all the work needed to ensure that young people are heard, included, valued, protected, and encouraged to grow personally and professionally in any capacity that is of interest to them.

The edge that Youth Workers have over many other social and government services in my opinion is in their personal commitment to young people. This is evident by the countless strong relationships formed between Youth Workers and young people in the face of challenges and minimal resource allocation. A western approach to successful projects, funding, grants etc... almost always demands reports and numbers, in this case of how many young people entered and exited a certain program, rather than a holistic approach that sees value in having regular interactions and connections with the community and young people. The former approach makes it almost impossible for a Youth Worker or any agency to have the capacity to genuinely create a positive change in a young person's life. In a way we understand that communities are no longer the same and we claim to see value in Youth Work, but have built a system that continues to judge progress similarly to how one evaluates business modules and projects, rather than through meaningful change in a young person's life.

My definition of Youth Work goes back to what is best for young people. I believe that if we can't recreate the reality of a closely connected community that supports young people in all aspects, the least we can do is train, support and resource Youth Workers. This will encourage a network of connections to be formed in the community and allow holistic evaluation measures to be developed that will ultimately look after the wellbeing of young people. This is important, because ultimately, Youth Work revolves around meaningful, personalised connections leading to a network of brighter futures and healthier communities.

Sakhr Munassar is originally from Yemen and been living in Aotearoa since 2016. He completed a Master's in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago. For the past few years, Sakhr has worked as a Youth worker and is currently a member of the Korowai Tupu.

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Youth work for me means I get to listen and talk with young people, but I can also be invited into their parents' journeys, always with the aim of helping each understand the other, without breaking the confidences of either.

Steph Brooks

How I define Youth Work

Steph Brooks

Hi

My name is Steph Brook, I am a married mum of two adult children and grandma of two (probably three by the time this article is published!) grandsons. I was born in Montreal, Canada to English parents. We moved to the USA when I was six months old, to Wellington when I was 6 and Auckland when I was 9.

I am an only child and have grown up and navigated life through periods of massive change economically, socially and individually.

I am a white, pakeha woman of faith who has loved, served and served with young people for the past 18 or so years, mostly in the church, the 'mainstream' church. That is to say denominations that have been around for a couple of hundred years at least.

I remember great debates when we, as a society, moved to Saturday and then 7 day a week trading. I remember being ostracised for having a father who was out of work in a time of full employment. I don't remember learning anything about our bi-cultural society until I went to university at the tender age of 45 and joined the student loan gang.

Over the years I have been a part of a season which has seen the rise of $2.00 shops, op-shops, stagnant wages, homelessness, horrible suicide rates, domestic violence rates, increasing awareness of the divisions of community along lines of race, gender, age, sexuality etc. I have witnessed and joined the internet, social media, and the mobile phone age. I am part of the generation that stands between needing to care for older, ailing parents and support the younger generations, as well as a deep awareness that retirement is looming and I am not a high earner.

Over this fairly long passage of time, I've also been part of a season which has learnt a lot! We understand lots of the reasons why people do what they do, we understand the need to look at the bigger picture in addition to what is going on for a person. We are having difficult conversations about diversity, acceptance, compassion and kindness. We get that stress is a thing, and mental health is significant. Not all of us of course, otherwise wouldn't our communities look different!

All this is to say, young people are growing up in an incredibly complex world, far more complex than generations gone by, and they are learning how to do that from the cradle, they truly are the experts.

Those of us who have been around for a while are learning how to navigate complex discussions one way or another, sometimes by shouting and being judgy, other times by listening and caring, still others by feeling rather overwhelmed by the myriad of voices, opinions and stances. This isn't to say young people have it all together, rather that they have plenty to offer the community.

I am a Youth, Kids and Families Pastor, and a Youth Enabler in the Anglican Church. What that means is I work for a local church and I work for the Diocese, those two jobs together create full time work for me. I have the incredible privilege of walking with my fellow youth pastors providing a listening ear and stories and get to help out with some of the wider Diocese youth events and connect with others across the motu. While in my parish I walk with a lovely group of young people, their families, their siblings and the wider church. We have youth group twice a week, on Fridays and Sundays, Kids church on Sundays, I preach in the wider church services occasionally, I listen to people's hearts and facilitate, run or help out with various other events. I teach, I organise, I listen, I advocate, I create & I pray a lot! That's the very basic outline of course!

I rather fell into Youth Work. My local family church had undergone some changes in leadership, people had come and gone and I was asked if I would consider being the Children, Youth and Families Coordinator a part time role that worked with my family. I had been helping out with the youth group as my eldest was entering it a year early, and it was being run by an ex-school teacher, an older gentleman that loved the kids and was a man of his generation. They were re-starting the youth group after an absence of some years after a church split. I was not convinced, not the least because I was terrified of teenagers en masse, but I really had a heart for older teens and young adults. So in the end I gave it a go, and I found a profession which I love.

So much so, after seven years, when it was time for me to leave that role I headed (terrified) into full time study/part time work to do a Bachelor of Youth Development at Weltec. I worked part time for a youth mentoring organisation which was challenging, but I learnt a huge amount, and then moved back into church-based work.

During my time studying, I learnt a heap about the depth and breadth of Youth Work across the motu, which I love being able to continue to do through my voluntary work with Korowai Tupu as part of the membership committee. We had some great conversations at Weltec about the way Youth Work affected us as people. As a faith-based

youth pastor, my faith informs who I am. I want to be more like Jesus every day and love, as God loves us. It's a big call, one I attempt every day with varying degrees of success of course. Others might describe that as being a good person, being kind, gentle etc. That call to be like Jesus is the very, very, very pared down call of the Christian faith, it's why there are churches big and small throughout the world.

Youth work in churches is seen as one of the best forms of Youth Work (which surprised and encouraged me when I found that little nugget!) I think the reasons behind that, for me anyway, is that it is holistic. My Youth Work is done within their community. I tend to get to know my young people's parents and siblings, I know their heartaches and their joys. I tend to walk with my young people for a long time, we journey together. I get to walk with them as they grow, discover their gifts and passions, I get to encourage them to step out and try things within a relatively safe environment.

I am hugely passionate about being intergenerational, and believe intergenerational relationships, done well, support young people's resilience, identity development and participation in community. It requires the older generation to accept that things are different, even if things might have been 'better' in their day, but it also requires young people to step out of their silos too and that can be incredibly hard for many. Both need advocates helping build trust and understanding as new ways of being are negotiated. Relationships built on mutual respect and building trust transform the lives of all involved.

Youth work for me means I get to listen and talk with young people, but I can also be invited into their parents' journeys, always with the aim of helping each understand the other, without breaking the confidences of either. Youth work for me can mean siblings together in the same social space and helping them navigate what that looks like and ensure space for all. Youth work for me looks like camps, fundraisers, Christmas pageants, week in week out teaching and chatting, crazy stuff and the mundane. It looks like aggravation, frustration and exhaustion, joy, laughter, challenge and fun.

Within the church we are navigating hard conversations. In some churches, and the minds of some church attendees women don't have a place in leadership, that's fun as a woman leader! But in other churches, some of my lovely colleagues would not be welcome due to their sexual orientation. Still others hold counter-cultural views on family, divorce, marriage and on it goes. There are still so many things that divide and create those who are 'in' and those who are 'out'.

Young people are often questioning and challenging these divisions, having someone like me to walk with them in this journey and advocate and sometimes translate seems to help conversations along in a positive way. I certainly have learnt so much from my young people and they have transformed the way I think too.

Theology (the study of the nature of God) is also shifting and changing as we understand more about the contexts in which the Bible was written, the differing weights put to various things, and our own experiences with God. For instance, God has waaay more to say about justice throughout the scriptures than about marriage. The church has had its own journey of accessibility, the Bible was not accessible to anyone except priests for many hundreds of years. Christianity has been, in its time, as much a culture as spirituality, and suffers from the wounds, scars and sometimes arrogance of those perceptions. Church was a thing you did on Sunday for many people, rather than a place of community, transformation and compassion.

Youth work in the church often operates on a high trust model. Which is great in some things - with people who are motivated to ensure good supervision and good communication. But can be catastrophic when boundaries are broken, ethics are marginal and people of all ages are caught in the cross-fire as we are seeing in the current Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

The Anglican church is growing in it's bi-cultural awareness. some years ago it decided that in order to honour the different culture and worshipping styles of Māori, Pacifica and Pakeha that we would form three strands of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa NZ, called Tikanga Māori, Tikanga Pasifika and Tikanga Pakeha. Our prayer book has Māori and Pasifika translations within the one book and churches are engaging in large and small ways across the Tikanga.

It is certainly not perfect, but it is something - the bi-cultural journey is a difficult one. Attempts to build positive, life-giving relationships within the backdrops of generations of mistrust, abuse and anger is a challenge.

My own journey is essentially in its infancy, challenged and nurtured by my connections to the wider youth development sector and Korowai Tupu in particular. Even in just the last 18 months we have seen significant shifts and changes in our part of the Diocese and just goes to show we continue to learn, develop and be transformed.

When I look at things like our 9 Core Competencies of Youth Work, and as we move into the new Mana Taiohi, I see these as natural outworkings of a faith-driven life. The Christian faith encourages both personal growth and development but also invites the awareness of 'other' and outside of self, vital for good growth in resilience and mental health in young people.

Holding the balance of care for self, and living for others is a challenge, too much either way and ill-health ensues. Spiritual practices that encourage time to creatively rest, reflect and listen help to hold that balance, lift us out of our own cycles of thinking, and come to terms with the difficulties of life. Being part of a vibrant, safe community encourages accountability, good relationships and provides space for challenging conversations and new thinking. While also providing opportunities for participation, leadership development and implementation of learning.

I think paring it all down, I am a person of faith, who loves young people and for me Youth Work is long term, it is holistic, it is gentle, it is intergenerational, it is beautiful, it is educated, it is boundaried, it is advocacy, hard work and joyous.

Steph Brook *She/her. Of English descent and Aotearoa New Zealand heart, living in Tamaki Makaurau.*

Children, Youth and Families Pastor for St Georges, Epsom & Assistant Youth Facilitator for Diocese of Auckland.

Define Youth Work

What does this look like in your practice?

Youth work is about longevity, commitment, being reliable, predictable, persistent, trustworthy, kind, being a role model, solution focused, being an advocate, being hopeful and optimistic, attending celebrations, sports events and court cases.

Colin and Trissel Eriksen

A definition of Youth Work – Colin styles

Colin and Trissel Eriksen

Youth work is that you choose the young person every time. Every.Single. Time. That you make the situation for the young person and not make the young person fit the situation. It is about whanaungatanga – your relationship – with a young person and their whānau and partnering with them through their journey to adulthood. It's not about six sessions but rather about how long a young person or group of young people choose to engage, over time, with you as a significant other adult in their life.

Youth work is about longevity, commitment, being reliable, predictable, persistent, trustworthy, kind, being a role model, solution focused, being an advocate, being hopeful and optimistic, attending celebrations, sports events and court cases. It is about going the extra mile and working safely outside of the boundaries (not 9.00am-5.00pm). Youth work is about manaakitanga and loving young people.

Youth work is a context, it exists in an environment or system that supports a values base of loving young people. It connects to training, supervision and a code of ethics as pillars or pou that support and enables practitioners to choose young people (every single time). Youth work is informed from an evidence base including resilience, human development, youth development and Mātauranga Māori and a bit of life and lived experiences.

Youth work is about mana – the mana of young people, the mana of whānau and hapū, the mana of the youth worker and the gift that is reciprocated when these are willingly shared to enable young people and whānau to be happy, healthy, safe and successful right now and also into their futures. They are deserving of the best that we have – as youth workers, as kaupapa whānau and organisations.

Youth work is a bridge of collaboration that supports and connects young people to resources, pathways, information and access to specialised care. Youth workers have always been amazing listeners, cheerleaders, navigators, advocates, coaches and super hero's. Youth work is me, it is us – for life. It is a passion and a whole identity (not just a professional identity), a way of being in the world all of the time. Always noticing that young person walking down the road in the middle of the night and checking that they are safe rather than driving past and thinking it's none of your business. Young people are always your business.

Youth work, to me, is loving and choosing young people – every.single.time.

Colin Eriksen is one of Aotearoa's longest serving youth workers, and has worked at Palmerston North's Youth One Stop Shop (YOSS) since 1994. His Korowai Tupu application is regularly celebrated by the membership committee.

Trissel Eriksen is the manager of YOSS and leads a multidisciplinary team of practitioners who love young people. Trissel's two dogs are Insta-famous. (Yes: Trissel married a youth worker).

Youth Development in Rainbow Spaces: A Reflective Journey

Morgan Butler and Jono Selu

In recent years, there has been a much stronger focus on cultural responsiveness and intersectional practice. A common question that we hear is "How do you work with Rainbow young people?" While there is no single right answer, this article explores how we have both navigated the space of youth work so we can best serve our Rainbow young people.

This article has been co-authored by Morgan Butler and Jono Selu. The italicised parts are Morgan's personal story of development from a rainbow young person into a rainbow youth worker.

Their story has been amplified with analyses and reflections of how youth work plays out in Rainbow spaces.

Morgan's Story

In 2011 I was a 14 year old Mormon kid who came to the realisation they were queer. This realisation came with complicated feelings and some complicated reactions from my whānau. I realised that I needed to understand this part of myself more and I was lucky enough to find a service called Waikato Queer Youth, or as we fondly called it: 'WaQuY'[1].

At the time, I saw attending WaQuY groups after school as both a way to make friends and get support, but looking back I can see I was looking for a whānau dynamic that I'd grown up with. A lot of queer and trans people call this 'found family', which rings so true for me. WaQuY helped me find all this and more. I made amazing friends, and started to thrive socially in a way that I hadn't before.

Some of the youth leaders noticed my big personality and ability to speak publicly with no stress; so I was asked to become a youth member on the board. Little did I know that it would be the beginning of a passion for youth development and grass-roots community building.

Youth development as a practice often focuses on the experiences of young people in the context of their lived environments[2]. It's no secret that Rainbow-identified young people often face stigma and discrimination related to our identities[3] and there are often a raft of complex relationship dynamics within our personal, familial, communal, and social ecologies.

It's important to note that when Rainbow young people are able to find spaces where they are loved, accepted and embraced, they are more able to flourish. Whilst there are some specific points of knowledge relating to Rainbow identities and experiences in Aotearoa, there is no one right way for doing Rainbow youth work. In essence, it's about fostering a healthy whānau environment, and allowing space for self-determination and autonomy.

Through WaQuY, I got to connect with other queer and trans youth organisations around Aotearoa. This is where I met Jono, who at the time was a facilitator at a service called Rainbow Youth (now RainbowYOUTH) in Auckland. After a WaQuY meeting in the Starbucks down the road, Jono and I talked for the first time like old friends. We clicked instantly, our cultural instincts aligned with him being Samoan and me Māori. He also understood the complexity that came with being queer and from a religious background.

There is much to be said for being connected with other Rainbow folks that have relatable experiences to your own. Having a Rainbow identity is one thing, but when you have multiple marginalised identities, it can be hard to have all your needs met through any single community. Finding 'your people' can be an absolute game changer. Research suggests that Rainbow Young People of Colour find a greater sense of whānau/community in spaces that are more intersectional in nature, where they can fully bring both their Rainbow and Cultural identities[4].

However, due to the under-resourcing of Rainbow-specific services, there are often many peer-led organisations or informal support systems, and most volunteers in these environments are only a little further on in their journey than those accessing the service.

These volunteers can be given a lot of responsibilities with not much time to process and sometimes this results in stress and burnout.

It is key that we, as youth workers, recognise this tension and ensure that we are able to offer support and guidance for our Rainbow young people stepping up into roles of leadership, especially when it intersects at multiple points of their marginalised identities.

It wasn't till two years later I would see Jono again at an annual event called Big Gay Out. Back in the day, and still now, queer and trans people from WaQuY would jump in a van and road trip to the big smoke of Auckland to be amongst our wider rainbow whānau. I met Jono again at the RainbowYOUTH stall, and told him of my plans to move to Auckland. A month or so later, I was helping Jono out to run a RainbowYOUTH group in West Auckland called 'QWest'.

My first day on the 'job', Jono gave me the rundown of the place, who comes, what activities they do and put his trust in me. We quickly developed a great working relationship based on our mutual values and outlook on youth development.

We both put young people first, and believed in a young person's own self-knowledge as the key to their development.

At QWest, the reins were loose but that was important because people needed to feel like they could come as they were, no matter what stage of their journey they were at.

When we centre the lived-experiences of our young people, we can serve them better. Many Rainbow young people can feel they have to look/sound/be a certain way to be taken seriously by the world as a queer or trans person. These messages can come from media, whānau, friends, or society, and can prevent growth and development for our young people. As a youth worker in a Rainbow space, it is vital that you show up for our young people in the ways that they need you to show up. Listen to them and their needs, and offer to walk alongside them in their identity journey.

As I volunteered more at RainbowYOUTH and did more training, I ended up in a role as a youth worker. Jono was somebody I could always call if I needed help or advice and his pep talks really are second to none. He challenges me when he senses even a whiff of self-doubt. To this day Jono is like a brother to me, always there if I need him. He's the perfect example of a mentor turned colleague turned 'found' whānau.

As has been mentioned, often our Rainbow young people can end up feeling pushed into leadership positions much earlier than they may have been expecting. Mostly, this is because leaders have noticed some unique abilities in a young person and aim to build their capacity. However, in many cases, there aren't enough services or social support groups around to adequately provide for our communities, and so our Rainbow young people end up needing to start something brand new in order to create something they want for themselves and their peers. While this may seem like development from deficit, it is also part of an organically growing ecosystem of social change.

The difficulties arise when those young people aren't adequately supported to do the doing of social change. In Rainbow spaces, this often happens through the formation of Tuakana-Teina relationships. Unlike mentoring, Tuakana-Teina relationships highlight the responsibilities of each, and offers space for both support and reciprocity on personal, professional and cultural levels.[5] In this, the tuakana is not framed as an expert, but rather a practitioner with more experience.

This is particularly important in Rainbow spaces because age does not supersede experience. Interestingly, unlike many youth spaces, rainbow spaces have a unique feature: chronological age can be less relevant because people 'come out' at different points in their life.

Thus, a tuakana may be chronologically younger than a teina due to the breadth of experiences that they've had or the amount of time that they've been 'out'.

Tuakana-Teina relationships are also important for Rainbow spaces because they assist in passing down cultural knowledge such as history, practices, relationships, etc. that are specific to Rainbow communities. As such, they help to ground young people in a lineage of Rainbow communities, whilst opening space for critical reflection and learning from mistakes from the past. They can also be fundamental for succession and legacy planning, allowing space for a teina to eventually step up into a tuakana position.

In rainbow youth spaces particularly, it's the tuakana-teina relationships like ours that helps lessen the potential impact of stress and burnout on us. They are quite unique to the youth work sector. We believe it is the role of youth workers to hold a safe space for rangatahi to learn from one another, grow together and find their place in the wider work of building stronger communities and thriving mokopuna.

Morgan Butler *is Māori (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Tainui and Te Rarawa), Australian and Lithuanian heritage, currently working as a Health promoter.*

Jono Selu *is of Samoan, English, and Scottish heritage, and works as the Practice Lead at Te Ngākau Kahukura.*

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1 WaQuY recently changed its name to Rainbow Hub Waikato. They've also moved their focus on youth to support all ages. It's an exciting time for rainbow mahi in Waikato and I encourage everyone who can to tautoko them.

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Define Youth Work

What does this look like in your practice?

Youth work continues to be an ever evolving space. While we may discuss its definitions and practicalities in academic and existing Youth Work circles, it will take longer for these discussions to filter down to the social conscience.

Jaime Hutton, John Williams, Joshua Tabor

Defining Youth Work: A Volunteer Perspective

Attribution: Jaime Hutton, John Williams, Joshua Tabor, PhD

Youth Work is an immensely diverse and ever changing sector.

Contemporary definitions of Youth Work offer us much in the way of unpacking what it means to practice[1] youth work. Youth Work has been defined as a professional practice, a relationship[2], and a process[3]. The sector has moved from its colonial roots[4] to a more holistic and indigenous approach[5]. As we continue to evolve our understandings of Youth Work, it is important to ensure that Youth Work principles remain accessible to those who practice them on a more casual basis.

Scouts Aotearoa is a movement that is built almost entirely of volunteers. For us it is vital that our discussions and definitions of Youth Work are understandable and relatable to those who practice Youth Work in a volunteer capacity. With over 5000 adult volunteers aged anywhere from 18 to 90, a philosophical debate on the theoretical foundations of Youth Works is often considered irrelevant to the actual work being done on a weekly basis. Our volunteers tend to be hands-on, practical people, who enjoy getting stuck in and working alongside rangatahi to create incredible experiences and help them learn new skills.

This presents a challenge: How do we align the good will of volunteers doing Youth Work with the broader sector?

A Volunteer Perspective

To help us gain a better understanding of the perception and definition of youth work across the movement, we conducted an informal survey of both rangatahi and volunteers. We asked two questions:

- How would you define Youth Work?
- Do you consider yourself a Youth Worker?

While our sample size will trend towards those who are more engaged with the national levels of the organisation, the feedback we received provides a great deal of insight on the perception of Youth Work among our volunteers. Overall, we received around 70 responses, predominantly from adult volunteers. Most of our rangatahi responses came from our Youth Advisory Group and a local Venturer Unit one of us volunteers with.

Of the respondents, around two-thirds considered themselves to be youth workers, with just over a third not relating to the term. There were several themes that emerged from those that didn't identify with a youth worker label - most notably a conflation between Youth Work and social work or counselling, with a sense that youth work was significantly more professional than what they do on a volunteer basis. (There were also several who defined Youth Work as youth in the workforce.)

Interestingly, around 43% of those who didn't consider themselves youth workers contained elements of the work that almost every volunteer in Scouting already does within their definitions. To us, this seems to indicate that while many of our volunteers have some amount of understanding of Youth Work, the label of youth worker is still not something they feel comfortable with.

If we look at the definitions of Youth Work above, most would certainly include our volunteers. Building positive relationships with young people, supporting their growth, working alongside them to achieve goals, advocating for the voices of rangatahi, and supporting them to explore their world - these are all things that our adult volunteers do on a weekly basis. So why, then, is Youth Work a term that fails to resonate with many of our volunteers?

There's likely to be a few explanations for this, and reasons will certainly vary from person to person. From our perspective, there seem to be two core points; a lack of social narrative around what Youth Work actually is, and, stemming from this, a perceived sense of professionalism required of youth workers that acts as a barrier to self-identification.

Youth Work continues to be an ever evolving space. While we may discuss its definitions and practicalities in academic and existing Youth Work circles, it will take longer for these discussions to filter down to the social conscience. Furthermore, it's unlikely to do so unless we are intentional about making our discussions of Youth Work accessible to those who do not spend the majority of their time engaged in Youth Work conversations.

We're starting to work on that now. For many of our volunteers, this discussion is part of growing that understanding. As one volunteer put it, ***"I hadn't really thought of myself as one [a youth worker] until this question asked but I guess from my definition I would say yes."*** - Justin (Adult Volunteer).

A similar response was given by one of the young people we spoke to. He defined a youth worker as anyone who has an impact on the outlooks of young people, and noted that he is a volunteer with a local Kea Section. When asked if he considered himself to be a youth worker he paused for a moment, reflected, and then responded ***"to some extent I guess I am, yes."*** - Jamie (16).

These types of conversations are important in shifting cultural understandings of what Youth Work is, and encouraging deeper thought for volunteers on their roles in the Youth Work space.

Continuing these conversations also helps us to deconstruct many of the misconceptions that may be held about youth work. For some of our volunteers, Youth Work is perceived to come with a higher level of professionality and training than they feel comfortable with. Several of our respondents defined Youth Work as something that was a paid position, often as a branch of social work or counselling, or working with "troubled" youth. With this lens, the label of Youth Work comes with a degree of anxiety from those who feel significantly out of their depth.

When such a significant amount of our Youth Work is delivered by volunteers, most of whom fit their volunteering around busy lives, it is vital that we make Youth Work definitions and practices as accessible as possible. Volunteers bring a wealth of experience to the Youth Work sector, and it's important that our discourse includes them, and works to break down barriers to participation.

Defining Youth Work

To define Youth Work, then, it is important to ensure that we keep our definitions accessible to those who step in and out of these spaces as time allows, as well as those who spend most of their time immersed in the world of Youth Work. With this in mind, we've identified three key cornerstones of youth work to use in our working definition; Youth Work is positive, intentional, and strengths-based.

Youth Work is Positive and Mana Enhancing

"Any work enabling youth to grow in their abilities and confidence" - Youth member (15)

Positive youth development is at the core of all that we do. As youth workers we empower our rangatahi to share their voices, broaden their horizons, and determine their own path.

"Working with young people, not at them." - Mathieu (17)

Youth Work is Intentional

"Purposely working towards youth development, directly with the youth themselves or indirectly. Young people will learn and grow whether they have adults facilitating or not, but youth workers are like a trellis for vines to grow on, strong and supported." - Adult Volunteer

Youth Work is more than simply providing a space for young people to merely exist. We have purpose behind what we do, and are actively engaged in creating opportunities for young people to grow and explore their worlds.

"Working with, or supporting those who do, youth under the age of 18 with the goal of improving their future."
- Matthew (17)

Youth Work is Strengths-Based

"Finding the best in a young person, and helping it grow"
- Su (Adult Volunteer)

Every young person is different, and has different needs. To ensure our practices are truly mana enhancing, we must work to identify and work with the strengths of our young people, to help them grow in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them.

"Our job as youth leaders is to provide an environment that allows for safe exploration of these boundaries physically and emotionally, and for kids to find their own conclusions about their purpose and to learn for themselves and from themselves...

...a Youth Worker is engaged and connected to the individuals and finding ways for them to discover for themselves their total 'why' as they see it."
- Cory (Adult Volunteer)

At the end of the day, the title we identify with is less important than the mahi we do. Whether they call themselves youth workers or not, there are thousands of people across the country who support our rangatahi to grow, learn, and find their place in the world. An accessible definition is one of the tools we have to help provide support and recognition for youth workers who may not feel like they fit into a more academic perception of a youth worker.

Scouts Aotearoa's Journey

Scouts Aotearoa is a movement of volunteers. As an organisation with very few employees, most of whom are dedicated to the structural support of the movement, it is our volunteers that shape how our Youth Work is delivered at a local, regional, and national level. The majority of our Youth Work takes place on regular weeknights out of community based halls throughout the country - supplemented by weekend activities, camps, tramps, and larger activities such as jamborees, regattas, and national schools. As a movement, Scouting has always had personal development, Adventure Based Learning, and community engagement at its core; this is still reflected in our purpose:

> *"We empower youth through adventurous experiences to lead lives that make a positive difference."*
>
> **- Scouts Aotearoa purpose.**

Scouting is also a movement that is steeped in colonialism. From our founding in 1908 and our origins in the UK, to many of the traditions that have been passed on through the movement, both within Aotearoa and globally, colonialist roots influence how we do youth work. Decolonising Scouting is an ongoing journey, and one that our movement continues to grapple with.

For the movement, this is a time of significant growth and transition. Not only are we working towards decolonisation, but intertwined with this is the process of redefining our leadership pathways for young people. To ensure our youth development is mana enhancing, this means a significant upskilling of our volunteers in Youth Work practices.

For some time, there has been an underlying assumption that if we provide our young people with adventurous experiences and leadership opportunities, youth development will naturally follow. While this can often be the case, positive youth development doesn't just come from nowhere; it is fostered and supported by a culture of support and intentionality from those who work with young people. This is work that many of our Kaiārahi and Leaders are already doing, but needs intentional support if we want to develop in our practice and provide the best outcomes for our rangatahi.

Conclusion

As we continue to mature in our understanding of Youth Work, it is vital that we are intentional about bringing others along on the journey. When the bulk of our youth work takes place in the volunteer space, we must ensure that these people are involved in shaping the conversation. If our discourse is inaccessible to casual youth workers, we run the risk of leaving behind a significant cohort of practitioners.

Out of necessity, our definition is simple and accessible. It avoids terms like "professional practice" which can be alienating for volunteers. By taking an outcome based approach, we present Youth Work as a familiar undertaking that allows for the alignment of our volunteer workforce to key aspects of modern Youth Work; including the code of ethics, supervision, and intentionality.

If we ensure our definitions and discussions of Youth Work are accessible to our volunteers, we can create a space where everyone who practices youth work is able to engage, upskill, and provide the best outcomes we can for our rangatahi.

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Joshua Tabor is the CEO of Scouts Aotearoa

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Youth Workers are the ones who see the very core of their practice as stemming from a primary relationship with young people - fullstop, The End.

Nikki Hurst

Myths of Youth Work

Nikki Hurst

1. Youth Work is too broad to define

Working alongside young people occurs in many spaces, places and ways. This can lead us to think that Youth Work is too broad to define. What this actually means is that Youth Work *happens* in a lot of spaces and places. And what we really need is a shared understanding of what Youth Work is.

To define Youth Work, what we are really looking at is what is the fundamental kaupapa that underpins our mahi. There are many formal, academic definitions / frames and also artifacts that show us what Youth Work is, to evidence our approach (see our editorial and this entire edition of Kaiparahuarahi). My understanding of where those all overlap, is that Youth Work at its heart is a commitment to a primary relationship with young people - and this is why this is the initial clause of our Code of Ethics (Korowai Tupu, 2020).

This means that to engage in a practice of being with a young person, *and* call that Youth Work, you have committed to putting your relationship with that young person before any other relationships / factors that affect being alongside that young person. Our taiohi are of course part of a crucial constellation of whānau, hapū and iwi. But Youth Work means to consistently work from a space of seeing our primary relationship as being with taiohi, where the outcome of this work is the strengthening of all relationships within the safety of that primary relationship. The gap between our shared relationships with a young person's whānau, hapu and iwi may be infinitesimal - and yet it is there. Youth Workers are primarily Youth Workers through their relationship with a young person.

Decades of research show time and again that mana-enhancing relationships are the crucial factor in the wellbeing of taiohi (Deane & Dutton, 2020). Relationships that centre on, and give leadership to taiohi are not only mana-enhancing, but change-inducing (Deane, Dutton & Kerekere, 2019; Duncan, Miller, Wampold, & Hubble, 2010).

2. Youth Workers just play games

To paraphrase Lloyd Martin (2003), other professions build a relationship to deliver an outcome / intervention / practice. Youth Workers engage in outcomes / interventions / practices to build a relationship. In 'playing games' we are actively achieving our fundamental purpose as Youth Workers - building a secure relationship with taiohi, in a way that is engaging and meets their needs.

Not all Youth Work occurs in games, as noted above and in our Code of Ethics the places that Youth Work occurs is vast (Korowai Tupu, 2020). Youth Work can occur through games, but Youth Work can also occur through conversation, creation and many other formats. The kaupapa underpinning this is always relationship development and formation, and while play / games are fantastic ways to build connection, they aren't the only way.

Also, this statement assumes play is bad... and there is an overwhelming amount of research that suggests this isn't the case (Mullin, 2014)... *cough, Harry Shier for one.... *double cough, entrenched in UNCRoC...

3. Youth Workers don't do paperwork/ are disorganised

This one is a little harder to bust, and my answer will have to be more anecdotal than I'd like. Do most Youth Workers I've met love to do paperwork? No. Is this generally a requirement of their mahi, paid or unpaid? Yes. Do most Youth Workers agree to abide by the Code of Ethics? Want to do what's best for their taiohi? Yes and yes. So... well... paperwork and being professionally organised are clauses in our CoE. So, please just do it.

I have worked with some incredibly organised Youth Workers. And certainly you see the best of Youth Workers when they are organising things alongside / for young people. Let a fair whack of Youth Workers loose in a stationery shop, sports equipment store or similar and carnage ensues. Have a Youth Worker plan out alongside young people a camp, recording a song / film, or just capturing their ideas and they are generally loving it. Ask them to complete the RAMS forms and there's less excitement. But I'd also argue this is the same for nearly all people who work alongside other people. It's not just us.

(But no excuses, get your Transforming Practice forms in!!)

4. Youth Work is only for at-risk youth

There are many facets to not seeing Youth Work as something for all young people.

If we take this narrow view, (and in doing so problematise taiohi... but that's another argument for another day) many incredible Youth Workers practices would be left out. This is particularly true of our volunteers, and no one can tell me that our uniformed, faith-based, sporting or creative arts based Youth Workers don't change lives. UNCRoC tells us that everyone has a right to support, safe relationships and people who care about them. Youth Work may be most obvious with young people deemed to be at risk (still not a term we would use, sigh), but this doesn't mean that all young people don't need and deserve access to high quality, relational Youth Work.

This viewpoint is unhelpful at community level and is hugely problematic at a national level. And yet, it's what we have experienced for a number of decades. While aspirational, our current Child and Youth Wellbeing strategy has a strong focus on children, in places reading as if 'and young people' was added to the end of sentences. The recently released Youth Plan 2020 focuses on rangatahi aged seventeen and up, but fails to address the needs or aspirations of those twelve to sixteen.

Currently across government there is little uptake, knowledge or understanding of the evidence-based, sector led Mana Taiohi, principles of Youth Development for Aotearoa, and yet the development of these principles was supported by the Ministry for Youth Development. Embedding these principles at a community and national level would require and enhance broader understanding in a very real way - both of young people AND those who work alongside them.

It would also mean that we need to stop seeing young people as problems to solve...

5. Youth Work is a sub-set of social work or education or (your choice here)

All professions have a whakapapa. Youth Work has a long and visible history, and in the case of Aotearoa one that is uniquely ours.

For Aotearoa, this started with Te Ao Maori and the specific ways that pre-colonisation Māori understood and grew taiohi (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010). Māori approaches to, and understandings of, Youth Work and youth development underpin modern approaches to Youth Work in Aotearoa in a way that is hugely effective and deeply valuable (Baxter, Caddie & Cameron, 2016). It is uniquely of our place in the world, and of our practice.

Youth Work internationally is often seen as an extension of education. And while this may be true of approaches in Europe or the United Kingdom, that is not the whakapapa of Youth Work in Aotearoa. Beyond Te Ao Māori approaches, a flashpoint for Youth Work in Aotearoa occurred in 1954. On the back of moral panic and a government response to this (the Mazengarb Report), we experienced a rise in volunteerism to support the young people of the time (Beals, 2014). This cycle continues in Aotearoa across the decades to the present day - society experiences young people in a way that they don't feel is appropriate, groups of people are engaged to work alongside young people (funded or not), the issue dies down and society moves on - and Youth Work remains. At each step of this cycle, Youth Work occurs, and over time has formed and strengthened in it's own way. Sometimes that is seen in volunteerism, others as part of the educational system, or health system or social services system. But at each stage, the relational practice of those calling themselves Youth Worker has been its own distinct way of being.

For Aotearoa, our Youth Work is deeply aligned to the impact of society on the practice of Youth Work. For this reason, I argue that what philosophically underpins our practice is sociology. And in knowing our whakapapa we strengthen and deepen both our identity as Youth Workers, but also our place in our national whakapapa (Beals, Foaese, Miller, Perkins & Sargent, 2018). Similar vocations may be responsive to societal shifts, but Youth Work as practiced in Aotearoa has been consistently shaped by society, necessitating a deep understanding of the place of taiohi in our society - and frequently as the voice advocating for more, better or different spaces.

Those who work alongside taiohi exist within an eco-system. This eco-system is bound by government strategies, populated by a variety of professions, and impacted by scarcity in a range of ways. Those who work alongside taiohi do so from a range of professional perspectives. Within the social services sector, particularly in the context of governmental initiatives, funding and discussion, we have seen a focus on social work – often to the exclusion of the wider children's and youth sector.

This is problematic for a range of reasons, not least the lost opportunities of differing perspectives, evidence-bases and authentic collaboration prevented through funding that specifies who a service must hire. It restricts the voices around the table at a systemic level and fails to reflect the reality of the practice where trans-disciplinary teams are the norm. It also places a large burden on social work – both from the perspective of needing to do it all (risking professional burnout), but also from the perspective of expecting one section of the eco-system to provide all of the ideas and inform systemic shifts.

This problem occurs across the whole eco-system – in not having all the voices of those who work alongside tamariki and rangatahi within government ministries, at the policy development level, able to be funded for mahi in communities / services, incorrectly designated roles in care and protection, etc...It continues to place a substantial responsibility on the social work profession, leading to a scope of practice that is overly broad and a diluted, generically-trained and generically-competent workforce.

Excellent, holistic, multi-disciplinary practice occurs at community level but has low visibility at national level. Funding for collaborative or innovative approaches remains hard to source. Completing research in these spaces to ascertain effectiveness is ad hoc at best, and difficult to disseminate. Without deep knowledge and understanding of tamariki and rangatahi, and collaboration between those who hold this, we place ourselves in a harder position than we need to be.

Different professions bring differing perspectives – social work aligns strongly to whānau-led, postmodernist approaches with a good dose of psychological theory underpinning their school of thought; counselling to person-centred, modality driven approaches and an emerging focus on contextual practice; Youth Work in Aotearoa is strongly sociological, committed to mana-enhancing practice and primarily focused on the relationship with the young person. All have merit. All have gaps. It is when these different approaches are able to work together, from a place of shared respect, that they have the potential to create change, spark new approaches and allow space for best practice to emerge.

But if you need a quick answer, I go back to that first clause of the Code of Ethics. Others who work alongside taiohi will also do so within a relationship. But Youth Workers are the ones who see the very core of their practice as stemming from a primary relationship with young people - fullstop, The End.

Some more myths...

The exciting thing about Youth Work is that it is constantly evolving. And that those who show up are welcome into the room as we continue to shape and grow our vocation. Below are five more statements that I consider myths in relation to Youth Work.

As an ex-teacher I'm missing setting assignments, so am leaving these here for you, reader, to consider and answer for yourself. I've also included a bibliography at the end of this article that gives you a start place to search out some answers that have been written down. I'd also suggest your own thoughts and experiences are equally as valid, and equally in need of some critical reflection.

Enjoy!

6. **Youth Workers should be young themselves**
7. **Youth Work has one model that works**
8. **Youth Work must be voluntary**
9. **Youth Work isn't a profession**
10. **Anyone who works with young people is a Youth Worker.**

Nikki Hurst continues to be obnoxiously proud to be a member of Korowai Tupu, the Rōpu and pretty much anything else she can be roped into. Her current Youth Work practice occurs on the board for Sticks 'n Stones where she really isn't needed, and is super grateful the young people on the board continue to send her Zoom links to come and listen in awe as they change the world. In her day job, Nikki is incredibly blessed to be leading the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, who work for a more just and compassionate society, informed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Her self-care is through coaching an incredible group of Year 3 tamariki for netball, and if anyone is looking for more fun in their life - she highly recommends it. There might be a fair whack of Youth Work that is brought into this space too.

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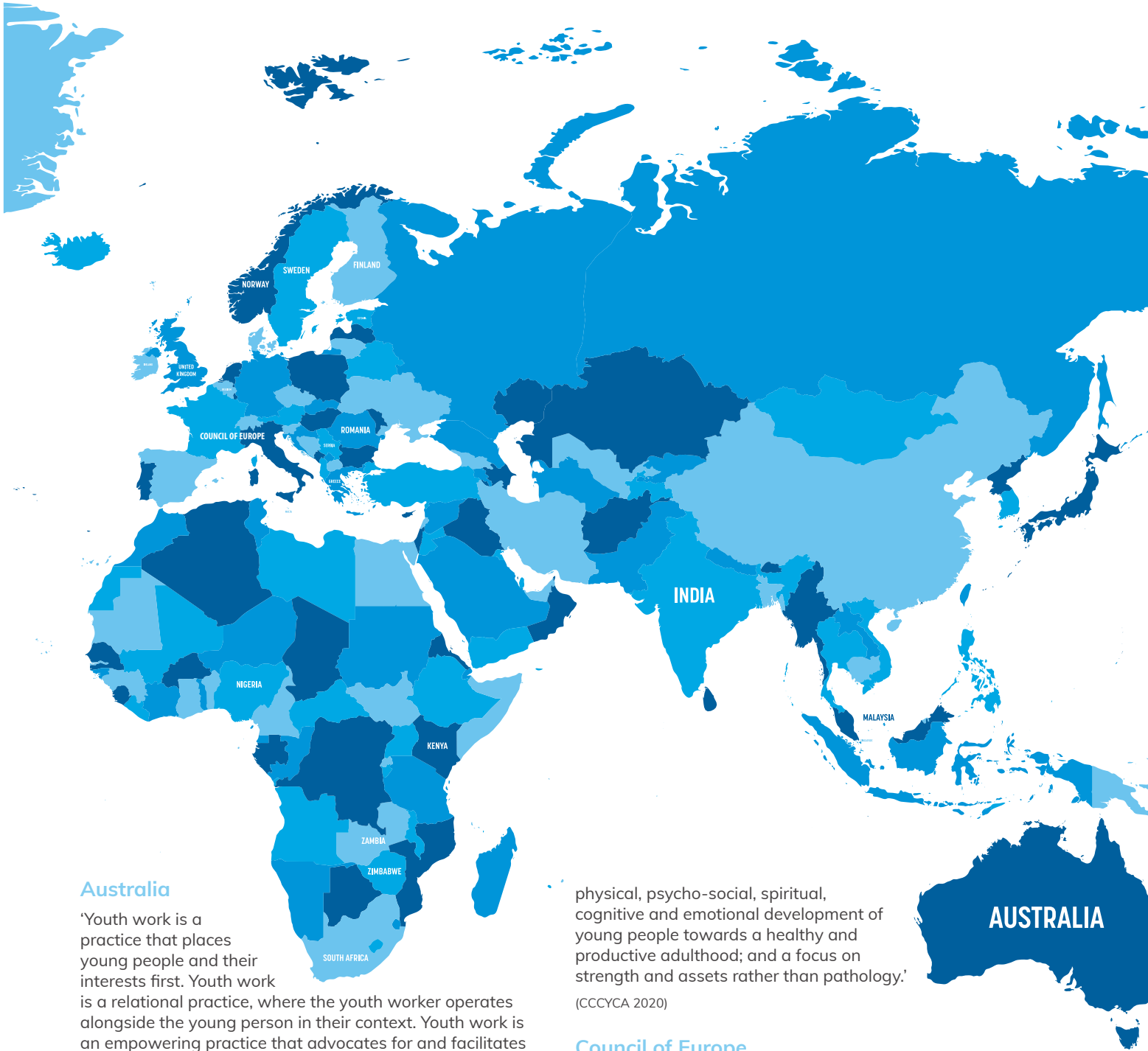
Youth Work Definitions Around the Globe



Australia

'Youth work is a practice that places young people and their interests first. Youth work is a relational practice, where the youth worker operates alongside the young person in their context. Youth work is an empowering practice that advocates for and facilitates a young person's independence, participation in society, connectedness and realisation of their rights.'

(AYAC 2013)

Canada

'Child and youth care workers specialise in the development and implementation of therapeutic programs and planned environments, and the utilisation of daily life events to facilitate change. At the core of all effective child and youth care practice is a focus on the therapeutic relationship; the application of theory and research about human growth and development to promote the optimal physical, psycho-social, spiritual, cognitive and emotional development of young people towards a healthy and productive adulthood; and a focus on strength and assets rather than pathology.'

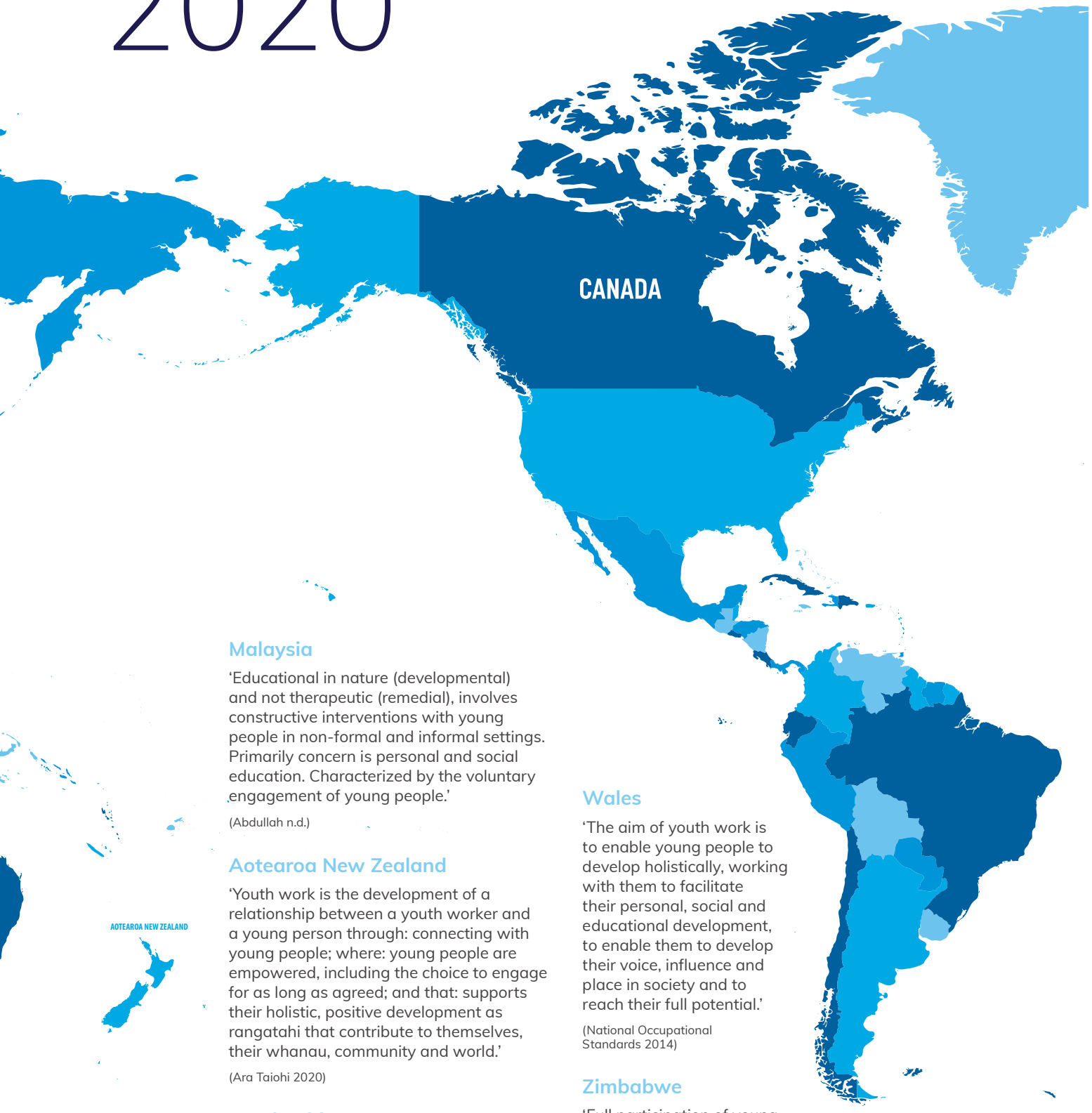
(CCCYCA 2020)

Council of Europe

'Youth work is a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making.'

(Council of Europe 2020)

2020



Malaysia

'Educational in nature (developmental) and not therapeutic (remedial), involves constructive interventions with young people in non-formal and informal settings. Primarily concern is personal and social education. Characterized by the voluntary engagement of young people.'

(Abdullah n.d.)

Aotearoa New Zealand

'Youth work is the development of a relationship between a youth worker and a young person through: connecting with young people; where: young people are empowered, including the choice to engage for as long as agreed; and that: supports their holistic, positive development as rangatahi that contribute to themselves, their whanau, community and world.'

(Ara Taiohi 2020)

South Africa

'Youth work is primarily focused on challenging the view that young people are an impediment to national progress. Youth Work is a field of practice that focuses on the holistic development of a young person.'

(National Youth Policy 2020)

Wales

'The aim of youth work is to enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential.'

(National Occupational Standards 2014)

Zimbabwe

'Full participation of young people in sustainable development through advocacy and capacity building of youth and youth organizations in Zimbabwe.'

(Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust 2020).

Belgium (Flemish Community)

'Non-commercial, voluntary socio-cultural work organised in the leisure sphere for or by young people between the age of three and thirty years old and under educational guidance. It promotes the advancement of the full development of young people'

(European Commission 2020a)

England

'Youth work focuses on personal and social development – the skills and attributes of young people – rather than to 'fix a problem'. It is an educational process that engages with young people in a curriculum that deepens a young person's understanding of themselves, their community and the world in which they live and supports them to proactively bring about positive changes.'

(National Youth Agency 2020)

Estonia

'Youth work is a creation of conditions for promoting the diverse development of young people which enables them to be active outside their families, formal education acquired within the adult education system, and work on the basis of their free will.'

(Republic of Estonia 2017)

Finland

'Youth work means the promotion of active citizenship in young peoples leisure time, their empowerment, support to young peoples growth and independence, and interaction between generations.'

(Finland Ministry of Education 2006)

Greece

'Education and welfare services to support young people's safe and healthy transition to adult life, as well as leisure time activities which aim to contribute to the personal development of young people and enhance their active political participation and social inclusion.'

(Petkovic & Howard 2015)

India

'To build future looking, wholesome adolescents and youth leaders through psycho-social interventions leading to economic, political and social inclusion. We believe that social change is effected through deep mind-set change of individuals and along with the empowerment of the socially excluded, it is imperative to hugely shift the attitudes of individuals in powerful decision- making positions in order to change the social structures that marginalize communities.'

(Pravah 2020)

Ireland

'A planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people through their voluntary involvement, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.'

(National Youth Council of Ireland 2020)

Jamaica

'Youth are an important part of Jamaica's history and future but often remain an untapped resource. This makes youth work practice a very important part of enabling an environment that will ensure youth become recognized and supported as the valuable human capital that they are. We promote youth work, as well as are involved in innovating the practice to achieve positive youth outcomes.'

(JPYWA n.d.)

Kenya

'The Policy defines youth work as all forms of youth engagement that build personal awareness and support the social, political and socioeconomic empowerment of youth. This Policy holds that youth work involves skills and competency development among the youth while enhancing their self-esteem, social connectedness, economic productivity, emotional and intellectual maturity and autonomy as well as supporting their self-empowerment within caring and supportive environment.'

(Republic of Kenya 2019, pp.15)

Malta

'Youth work in Malta is a non-formal learning activity aimed at the personal, social and political development of young people. Youth workers engage with young people within their communities, including the voluntary sector, and support them in realising their potential and address life's challenges critically and creatively to bring about social change. Youth work takes into account all strands of diversity and focuses on all young people between 13 and 30.'

(Teuma and Zammit 2019)

Nigeria

'Youth work is defined in Nigeria as youth engagement practice and methods that provide for the empowerment of its young men and women between ages 15 and 29. Putting their participation at the centre of National development efforts to meet their needs and aspirations; and to seek solutions to their problems irrespective of their ethnic, religious, and socio-economic background through non-formal learning delivered within international best practices.'

(Nigerian Youth Work Association 2020)

Norway

'Youth work is informed by the needs of young people and their participation, and through spaces where they engage with competent and caring adults.'

(Kramer 2020, pp. 3)

Romania

'Concepts in youth work are: participation, especially political and civic participation, leisure activities such as summer/winter schools, and counselling for young people on different issues concerning education, jobs, travelling, associations, information, training and voluntary work.'

(Youth Partnership 2020)

Scotland

'Effective youth work helps young people to learn about themselves, others and society through non-formal educational activities which involve enjoyment, challenge and learning.'

(Youth Scotland 2020)

Serbia

'Youth work is planned educational curriculum, created with the purpose of providing support to young people in the process of independence, by helping youth in personal and social development to become active members of the society and participants in the decision-making process. The idea of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in the process of acquiring skills, competencies and knowledge.'

(Youth Partnership 2018)

Singapore

'A person who works with young people to help them become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent, through the provision of developmental, preventive and/or remedial services.' It also recognised that there is no fixed job definition or role for the youth worker, varying with each individual youth organisation.'

(Tan J 2009, pp.89)

Spain

'Youth work is to strengthen the participation and integration of young people in different spheres of society as citizens with full rights.'

(Youth Partnership 2020)

Sri Lanka

'Appropriate processes conducted by youth workers with the active and willing participation of young people that enables and empowers them through ensuring their emotional, social, ethical, intellectual and physical development, in a caring and secure environment'

(Professional Youth Work Association 2018)

Sweden

'Youth work in Sweden takes an inclusive position, aiming to reach all young people, from a positive stand point where they are seen as carriers of resources and possibilities'

(European Commission 2020b)

Wales

'The aim of youth work is to enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential.'

(National Occupational Standards 2014)

Zambia

'Youth work is a profession committed to serve young people in their struggle for agency in their own lives and inclusion in the common wealth of their society. We are engaged with the environments in which they live, walking alongside them in their journey towards full citizenship and participation, working towards clearing the barriers that they face, and advocating for social change where this is needed.'

(Zambia Youth Workers Association 2013).

This list was compiled by the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations and can be found here: https://www.caywa.global/post/global-definitions-document.

The Intersection Between Social Work and Youth Work

With compulsory registration of Social Work being required from February 2021, and the development of the Social Work Scope of Practice, representatives from Korowai Tupu (the Professional Association for Youth Work in Aotearoa) met with the Social Work Registration Board and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers to clarify expectations for people who have qualified as social workers and practice as youth workers.

Here is a summary of this advice:

Mandatory registration requires anyone **who calls themselves a social worker** to be registered, otherwise they are in breach of the legislation. It is a professional choice as to whether the individual chooses to call themselves a social worker, and if they do, they must register as a social worker.

Youth workers who hold Social Work qualifications therefore need to make intentional decisions about their professional identity. Their options are:

- **Some youth workers will choose to be bi-vocational.** These youth workers must register as a social worker and are strongly recommended to apply for membership of Korowai Tupu. This will put them in the best position to operate ethically in the intersection between these two professions.
- **Other youth workers may have qualified as a social worker and now consider their sole professional identity as a youth worker**. If these youth workers no longer identify as a social worker, they need to make sure:
  - They are not registered as a social worker (and if they are they need to deregister),
  - There is no mention of Social Work in any employment related material (e.g., contract(s) and job descriptions), and
  - They do not hold themselves out as a social worker (they can acknowledge they trained as a social worker, but that is historical, and they now practice as a youth worker).

For anyone who identifies as a social worker, and therefore is registered as such, the Scope of Practice determines whether the individual requires a practicing certificate (i.e., if the role they are in is in 'scope' because it uses Social Work skills and experience). The Scope of Practice includes roles that do not hold the title of Social Work. This does not mean the role is Social Work, but that the registered social worker will be using Social Work skills and experience in the role and meets the professional requirements that enable registration. This does not mean that everyone employed in that role needs to be or register as a social worker.

- Complaints about registered social workers are considered by the Social Work Registration Board.
- Complaints about people who are not registered and have held themselves out as a social worker are considered by the Ministry of Social Development.
- Complaints about youth workers who are members/ accredited members of Korowai Tupu are considered under the Korowai Tupu restorative complaints process.

Korowai Tupu

Got something to say?

It could be published in a future issue of Kaiparahuarahi

This is a journal that's a little bit different. We aim to reflect the diverse and developing practice of Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand. That means we welcome contributions in various shapes, sizes and forms. That's right: there's no word limit, no style guide and no money. All contributions are voluntary. The editors might offer you some feedback and do a tiny amount of grammatical polishing, but generally we avoid censorship and promote free and honest voices.

We've named this journal *Kaiparahuarahi* to honour the trailblazers who humbly create paths where there was not a way before.

This kupu was gifted by the late Matua Bruce Stewart in the build up to the first Ara Taiohi wānanga.
We will continue to invite specific people to share unique perspectives from the multifaceted youth development sector. We also really like publishing ideas that were previously unpublished, like something someone's talked about often in workshops, or emerging trends in our practice.

The existing three issues have presented a wide range of experiences from the field. This journal is a chance to capture the evolution of our mahi in real time.

- **Issue 1** celebrated 20 years of Youth Work ethics in 2017. Originally conceived as a one-off publication, an irregular journal emerged naturally.
- **Issue 2** explored Mana Taiohi principles in practice, shortly after the launch in 2019.
- **Issue 3** recorded a series of blogs written during the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Issue 4 Defining Youth Work is in your hands!

Who knows what will emerge after this?
Our dream is to publish two issues each year. Or maybe one issue each year. Somewhat like Youth Work itself, we're really making this up as we go. As we said, there aren't really any rules.

What would you like to read about in future issues?

Send us email: admin@arataiohi.org.nz
Make sure the subject line includes "Kaiparahuarahi".

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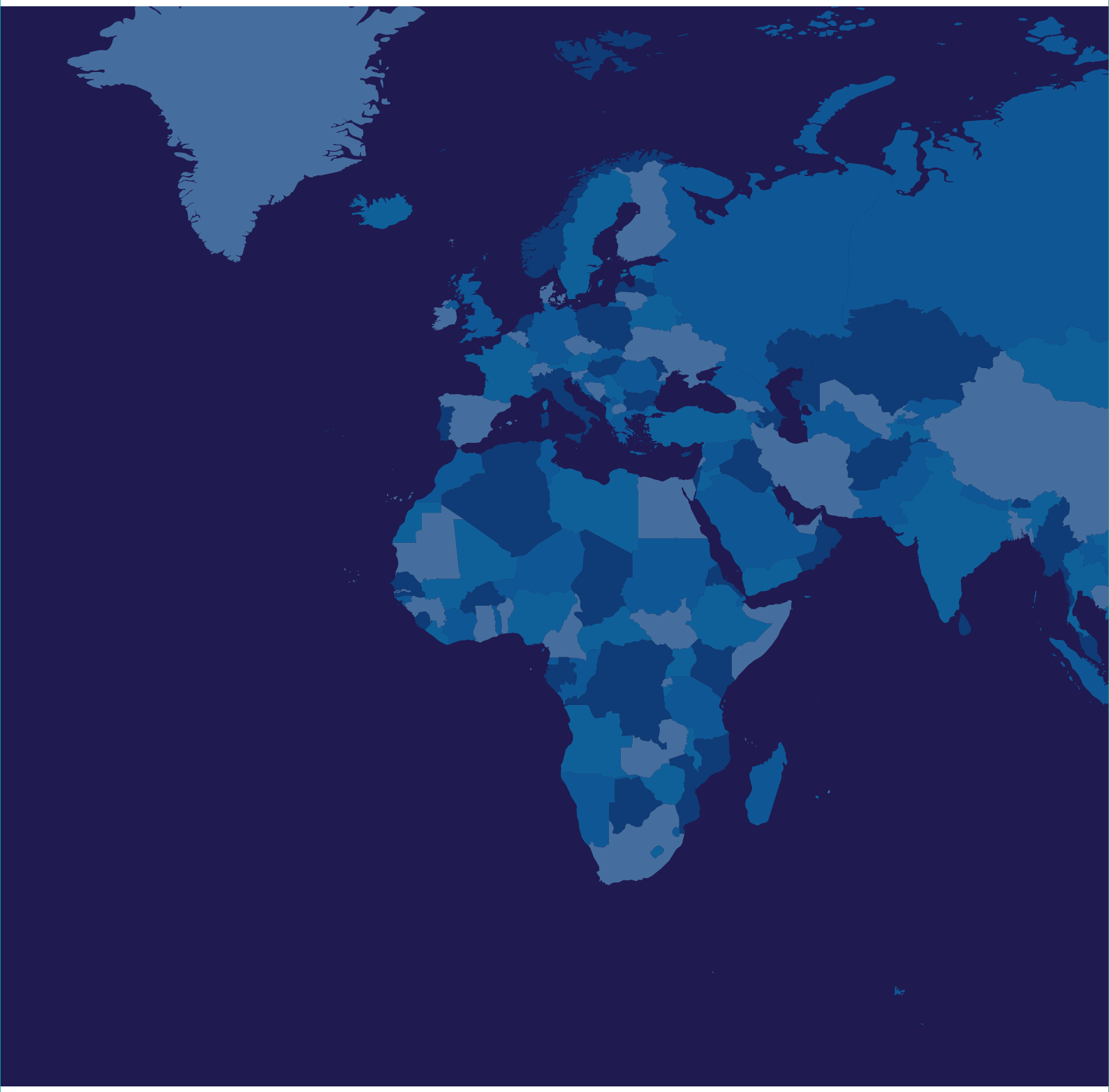
Defining Youth Work



AraTaiohi
Peak Body for Youth Development

Korowai Tupu