

3. EVALUATION OF OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

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The purpose of this report is to briefly present the findings and recommendations of the report "Investing in the Next Generation An Evaluation of Out of School Programmes" by Dr Lesley MacGibbon. Key outcomes were presented to the Community and Leisure Committee at a seminar on Tuesday 22 June 2004.

BACKGROUND

As part of its commitment to the support of children and young people, the Christchurch City Council has for many years supported out of school programmes (school holiday programmes and after school programmes) through service delivery, funding support, advice and resourcing.

The majority of the financial support has been from community board project funding, with some operational funding provided through the Community and Recreation Unit. Service delivery, advice and other resourcing is provided by staff of the Community and Recreation Unit (Community Recreation Advisors and Community Development Advisors).

CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

The Council's involvement in the provision of funding support, service delivery, advice and resourcing for children/youth out of school programmes contributes to the following Council outcomes:

- A learning city
- A sustainable natural environment
- A prosperous city
- A city of inclusive and diverse communities
- A city of healthy and active people
- A safe city
- A cultural and fun city

EVALUATION OF OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Over the past few years social and economic trends have seen a growing demand for these services.

Within the context of increasing demand for Council support, the Community and Leisure Committee requested in November 2002 that staff "prepare an evaluation report on Out of School Programmes on a metropolitan basis".

The objectives of the review were determined to be:

"To conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of current Council involvement in Out of School Programmes including:

- Details of current provision (number of programmes; attendances; funding sources, etc).
- Analysis of gaps in provision.
- The efficiency of how Council funding is being utilised (ie money per attendance).
- The effectiveness of the support in achieving Council policy goals, including an examination of whether resourcing Out of School Programmes is the best "investment" Council can make for children's welfare and development.
- Evidence of benefits and outcomes to children and their families through participation in Out of School Programmes (literature search; case studies).
- Potential impacts of external funding sources on Council's current level of provision.

Subsequently Dr Lesley MacGibbon was contracted to undertake the evaluation. Dr MacGibbon is a community educator, trainer and researcher with long term experience of the non-governmental organisation sector in New Zealand. She has also worked on a number of social evaluations for the Christchurch City Council.

RESEARCH METHOD

A variety of methods were used to gather data for this evaluation, including both qualitative and quantitative methods. Research included a review of Council documents; a review of empirically based research articles/documents that addressed the benefits/outcomes of attendance at Out of School Programmes; an analysis of overseas trends in the provision of Out of School Programmes; and an analysis of demographic data from the New Zealand Census 2001 and the New Zealand Deprivation Index. Telephone interviews were carried out along with an intense study of ten Out of School Programmes. Programmes selected were spread over the Community Board areas to give a geographical spread and included a variety of management structures and varying amounts of Christchurch City Council support. Observations of the programmes were undertaken and paid staff members, board/committee members and some programmes groups of children were interviewed.

KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from Dr MacGibbon's evaluation showed that during recent decades there have been dramatic changes to social and economic structures within a variety of countries, including New Zealand. These changes include the increased participation of women in the workforce, the growth of dual-earning families and an increase in the number of solo parents. Therefore, Out of School Programmes are a significant resource for these groups of people.

Without access to quality Out of School Programmes, it was found that children of working parents are at risk physically, emotionally and socially.

The Council has played a crucial role in enabling this development to take place. This support has been particularly important in enabling Out of School Programmes to operate in lower socio economic communities. In more affluent communities, programmes can recover a greater proportion of their costs from parent contributions. In Christchurch, only 9% of Out of School Programmes are run as private businesses with most of these operating within affluent communities.

Although Council financial support is only one source of funding for these groups, in the face of the current situation of lack of central government recognition of this area, Council funding is often the difference between programmes continuing to operate or being forced to compromise on standards of quality or to close down altogether.

Dr MacGibbon's evaluation document pointed out that the Council's support of Out of School Programmes is fragmented and inconsistent across the different Community Board areas and Council Units. Community Recreation Advisors were well informed about Holiday Programmes in their ward areas. In some wards, Community Development Advisors were well informed and had up to date knowledge of the after-school programmes operating in their areas. In other ward areas, the Community Development Advisors were less involved with programmes in their areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation recommends the following:

A) OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Christchurch City Council continues to support Out of School Programmes as an effective way of meeting the policy goals and supporting children and their families.

Recommendation: That the Council financially supports Out of School Programmes until such a time as programmes can source adequate ongoing funding from central government.

Recommendation: That the Council at a local and metropolitan level advocate with central government for secure central government funding for Out of School Programme provision.

B) RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL CURRENT PRACTICES

With 'fine tuning', some of the fragmentation currently evident in the Council involvement in this field, can be eliminated. The following recommendations focus on ways that the Council can be more effective in achieving its policy goals of supporting children and families, and contributing to social wellbeing in Christchurch communities.

C) STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

- Recommendation:** That the Council develop strategic alliances with the Ministries of Education and Social Development at a local and national level.
- Recommendation:** That the Council advocate with the MSD for adequate ongoing Out of School Programme operational funding.
- Recommendation:** That the Council negotiate with the Ministry of Education for Out of School Programme access to school buildings and facilities.

D) PLANNING

- Recommendation:** That the Council develops an integrated city wide approach to strategic planning for Out of School Programme support.
- Recommendation:** That the same criteria for prioritising funding Out of School Programmes be implemented by all Community Boards.
- Recommendation:** That the Council is proactive in its support of programmes in disadvantaged communities. 'Disadvantaged communities' can be identified by the use of school decile ratings and deprivation index ratings.
- Recommendation:** That Council responsibility for the service delivery of after school and holiday programmes is integrated into one Council unit.

E) FUNDING PRIORITIES

- Recommendation:** That Council funding for Out of School Programmes be prioritised:
- (a) To supporting new initiatives with 'start-up funding', and ongoing support to programmes operating in disadvantaged communities.
 - (b) That if partial funding is available from central government (eg MSD), ongoing funding from the Council is contingent on the central government funding being assessed.
 - (c) That these criteria be constantly reviewed in relation to other funding provided by central government.

F) MONITORING PROGRAMMES FUNDED BY THE COUNCIL

- Recommendation:** That a common approach to monitoring and evaluating programmes financially supported by the Council is implemented across Community Board areas.
- Recommendation:** That the Council in consultation with other key stakeholders (for example the OSCAR Network) develop appropriate measures of success that are linked to the social outcomes of the LTCCP.
- Recommendation:** That the monitoring process does not incur additional expenses on the programmes funded.
- Recommendation:** That the monitoring system is similar to that used by other funders of the programmes.
- Recommendation:** That the Council staff receive appropriate training.

G) INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- Recommendation:** That a central database be established to :
- (a) Record information on a city-wide basis for Out of School Programmes operating in Christchurch
 - (b) Record all Council funding assistance received by individual programmes.
 - (c) If possible record what other funding programmes have accessed in the past two years.
- Recommendation:** That the Council staff utilise this information to provide decision making committees with information needed to make informed funding decisions.

COMMUNITY BOARD FEEDBACK

Before being presented to the Community and Leisure Committee Seminar on 22 June 2004, the key findings of the evaluation were presented to the community boards in May 2004. Only the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board dealt with the evaluation within a board meeting – hence the comments from the other community board seminars which were discussed by the Community and Leisure Committee Seminar are informal.

Burwood/Pegasus Community Board Seminar Meeting

The following specific issues were discussed by Board members in the course of the presentation:

- There was support for clearly identifying the Council's contribution to the funding of out of school programmes and advocating to central government for the provision of ongoing funding.
- It was considered that statistics should be collected and compiled on the number of families/children participating in the programmes.
- Evidence presented in the report on outcomes for children and families from out of school programmes (page 80) is based on overseas studies where a number of indicators have shown more positive outcomes for participants. It was suggested that the report should make it clear that these findings are based on overseas studies rather than specific Christchurch research.
- The desirability of retaining children from 11-13 in out of school programmes was supported. While acknowledging that most programmes are nearly full with younger children, it was suggested that the changing abilities and needs of the 11-13 age group be addressed; for example, by giving that age group leadership roles with younger children. A separate trial programme has been initiated in Burwood for the 11-13 age group.
- Noting that a recent Hagley/Ferrymead report had shown a wide variance in fees for out of school programmes, information was requested on the fees for programmes in Burwood/Pegasus.
- It was considered that there should be a requirement that the information systems record other funding accessed by out of school programme providers over the past two years to inform the funding decisions of Boards.

Fendalton/Waimairi and Shirley/Papanui Community Boards Seminar Meeting

- It could be useful to have a breakdown of funding for programmes from Council, Government and the Business sector to support lobbying the Government.
- SPARC funding for active programmes – are OSPs structured enough to attract this funding?

Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board Seminar Meeting

- This Board is making a deputation to the Community & Leisure Meeting in July. The following are a summary of the points they discussed at their seminar meeting:
- Financial assistance at a metropolitan level rather than local Community Board level
- Importance of having data available
- Role of the Ministry of Social Development
- Lobbying MPs for financial assistance from central government
- Christchurch City Council being one of the best financial supporters
- After school programmes and holiday programmes
- The number of children benefiting from the programmes vs the amount of money contribute
- Higher income families, lower income families and subsidies.

Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board Seminar Meeting

- There needs to be a central overview of all programmes across the city.
- Out of school programme funding should be done on a strategic city-wide basis.
- Community & Recreation Unit to start putting procedures in place to gather information on a city-wide basis regarding:
 - Demographic material and breakdown of funding
 - Out of school programmes with waiting lists
 - Identify where there is a need for an out of school programme
 - Identify where there are gaps in provision
- Whether funding is being distributed equally to ensure there are no disparities
- Staff to continue to provide community boards' input and monitor the success of programmes in their areas.
- There should be one metropolitan fund (for all Boards to access) and a strategy to enable consistent monitoring to be achieved.
- The Council should distribute the evaluation report (or its executive summary) to local schools and the Ministry of Education.
- Funding to follow the child (special needs children).
- Ministry of Education needs to be a partner in developing a strategy for out of school programmes (especially in cases where a school has no physical space to establish an out of school programme, but there is a need for one).

Riccarton/Wigram Board Meeting

- This Board requests further investigation into access to OSPs. They were concerned with equity and welfare issues. They want to make sure that those who really have the greatest need have access to programmes.

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE SEMINAR

- Council funding is very important to security/tenure of an Out of School Programme
- Out of School Programmes are taking up a large percentage of Community Board Funding
- The Committee sought clarification on recent budget decisions of this area
- Councillors thought that there was a need to discuss provision of classroom space for Out of School Programmes with the Ministry of Education as finding suitable accommodation for them is sometimes difficult and it may be easier to have them on site at schools.
- Out of School Programmes are a significant resource for one parent families and two parent families where both parents are in paid employment.

SUMMARY

In terms of the question 'Is this the best way Christchurch City Council can support children and families?' the evaluation concludes:

"It is difficult to say if the funding and support that goes into Out of School Programmes is the best way of achieving the Council's policy goals and the best investment that the Christchurch City Council can make for children's welfare and development. However it is difficult to envisage another way that could be as effective as Out of School Programmes are in achieving these goals.

Currently no other Christchurch City Council activities contribute as directly to 'promoting the healthy happy development of children to their full potential, both as children now and for the future well-being of children/tamariki and their families/whanau'.

By supporting out of school programmes the Christchurch City Council makes a real difference in many families. Compared to the amount of resources the Christchurch City Council puts into the programmes, the benefit to the community is huge. In 2002/03 44 after school programmes catered for 188,840 attendances and 67 organisations ran holiday programmes that catered for 44,975 attendances."

Staff

Recommendation: That the recommendations of the evaluation report be adopted.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the recommendation be adopted.