



The Australian Centre
for Philanthropy and
Nonprofit Studies



PROGRESS REPORT:

YOUNG MOTHERS PATHWAYS PROJECT

October 2022



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to their elders – past, present, and emerging – and thank them for their wisdom, forbearance and spirit of sharing. We celebrate that the lands on which we study and work have always been places of teaching, research and learning, and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the community.

We wish to thank all the young parents for providing their insights and feedback. We thank all our funding partners and community stakeholders for their contribution to this project.

QUT's Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (ACPNS) was commissioned by Campbell Page to assist with the planning of the evaluation and authoring this report. ACPNS's role is to ensure that the project is evidence-based, and the outcomes are reported in a transparent and responsible manner.

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Executive Summary

This report explains the development of a new project, The Young Mothers Pathways Project (YMPP), being piloted by Campbell Page in Deception Bay, Queensland. The project was initiated due to research that has found young single mothers are at very high risk of lifelong welfare dependence. In June 2021 there were 190,000 jobless one-parent families with dependents in Australia. Of these, 90.2 percent had children under 15.¹ In more than 90 percent of these cases, the sole parent was a woman.²

The YMPP is being developed using a wraparound approach to support young mothers aged between 15 and 30 years identify a career and actively move towards financial independence for their families. The project has been developed to support young mothers to identify their capabilities, aspirations and opportunities so they can increase their participation in education and employment opportunities.

Since beginning in October 2020, the project has supported 52 young single mothers. The interim evaluation findings suggest that using a wraparound model is appropriate when working with young mothers who have individualised and complex support needs. The preliminary findings indicate 45 percent of the young mothers have increased workforce participation in employment that fits with their parenting priorities and 39 percent are working towards 26 weeks retention at 15 or more hours per week. Additionally, 50 percent are studying towards their career of choice. Of the school-aged mothers, 58 percent are completing Year 12 or VET qualifications.

By embedded the principles of systems thinking, appreciative inquiry, reflective practice, and accountability, the feedback from young mothers shows they are increasing their capabilities (55 percent); motivation (61 percent) and opportunities (57 percent), as well as increasing their identity and confidence (49 percent); health and wellbeing (43 percent); community connections (59 percent); and parenting confidence (41 percent) through their involvement in the project.

The feedback suggests that the YMPP is effectively working to support the young mothers break the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependence, access educational and employment opportunities, develop capabilities, strengths and connections, and achieve their economic, health and wellbeing aspirations.

Introduction

Campbell Page is a not-for-profit organisation whose purpose is to prepare people for work, engage local communities and to create, capture and connect people to jobs. Since 1985 we have been helping people thrive by getting a job (and keeping it!). That is why we deliver a constantly evolving range of community, employment and commercial services from over 80 locations across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. In 2020 Campbell Page received philanthropic funding to trial and evaluate a new project in Southeast Queensland for young, single mothers aged 15-25 years old. Shortly after the project commenced, the age group was increased to mothers aged 15-30 years.

The goal of the Young Mothers Pathways Project (YMPP) is to break the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependence by supporting young single mothers to access educational and employment opportunities and develop the capabilities, strengths and connections that enable them to achieve their economic, health and wellbeing aspirations. The project aims to offer a flexible and integrated wraparound service and has partnered with local social and education providers to ensure it is a place-based intervention which builds capacity within the community.

This report uses a range of academic literature to explain the project's theory of change, project design approach, operational model and outcomes measurement framework. Additionally, it presents an overview of key literature supporting the evidence-based approach that has been taken to design, implement and evaluate the project. The report then reviews the evaluation approach to date, and outlines some of the early findings.

In this report the term 'young mothers' is used to describe the project's participants and direct beneficiaries who are young (15-30 years old) single, female parents. Quality Early Learning Education and Care is the term used to describe children's education and care services (childcare).

Young Mothers Pathways Project (YMPP)

Key points

- The project aims to a) support young single female parents achieve their employment and educational potential; and b) create opportunities for sustainable employment fundamental to breaking the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependence.
- The project is financed by philanthropic funding.
- The project began in late 2020 and is being delivered in Southeast Queensland.
- Beneficiaries are single mothers aged 15-30 years old.
- The goal is to work with 60 young single parents over three years.
- The project works collaboratively with local schools, community service providers and employers.

Aims, target group and location

The aims of the YMPP are to a) support young single mothers achieve their employment and educational potential; and b) create opportunities for sustainable employment fundamental to breaking the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependence. These aims were developed due to research about the level of unemployment amongst young single mothers and the impact this has on families and children of single parents.

In June 2020, the unemployment rate of Australian young people aged 15–24 was 16 percent, an increase from 12 percent in 2019, and the highest rate since 1997.³ Approximately 11 percent of all Australian unemployed parents are caring for young children, in most cases as single parents.⁴ Unemployed families have, on average, a lower socioeconomic status (based on educational attainment, health, neighbourhood safety and access to basic services) than families working full-time or long part-time hours.⁵

Young single mothers were identified by Campbell Page as a priority vulnerable cohort. Research suggests that by the age of 25, around 90 percent of children whose parents have high welfare dependence will have interacted with the welfare system, compared to around 45 percent for those with no such dependence.⁶ Furthermore, 36.5 percent of young people who leave school before completing Year 12 will not move into further education, training or work. 37.7 percent of these

young people are females.⁷ The reasons for young people disengaging from school and work is complex, with health care and lack of access to quality early learning education and care being additional barriers that increase young peoples' risk of experiencing social exclusion.^{8, 9}

Deception Bay, a coastal suburb in the Moreton Bay Region in Queensland was identified as a location to pilot the project. This location was chosen as Nous Consulting were engaged by Campbell Page to undertake a national assessment to identify areas with high representation of single parents. Their findings found four communities in various Australian states to consider. A localised assessment of each of these four communities identified that Deception Bay was underserved but also had the opportunity to partner with key stakeholders such as Goodstart Early Learning, Mimi's House and Deception Bay State High School and their Aspire Program to pilot and steer a wraparound initiative. This assessment, coupled with Campbell Page's knowledge of the Deception Bay community through the delivery of previous employment services made Deception Bay a good choice.

Once the location was chosen, a partnership between Macquarie Group Foundation and Campbell Page provided foundational funding progressively joined by Third Link Investment Managers, Desmond Prentice Charitable Fund, The Lionel & Yvonne Spencer Trust under Perpetual IMPACT and Collier Foundation to fund the pilot project from 2020–2023.

Service design considerations

Campbell Page's review of best practice suggested the project should have three interconnected foundations. Firstly, the project should be structured on the principles of the 'wraparound' model. Secondly, for young mothers to engage in education and employment, they require parenting confidence and competencies. Thirdly, sustainable employment for young mothers is fundamental to breaking the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependence, so this suggests there needs to be appropriate employment and Quality Early Learning Education and Care opportunities for young mothers where they live.

[Wraparound](#) | Campbell Page explored the success of other models including Wraparound Milwaukee, the Beethoven project, the Winnipeg Boldness Program and the Generation Project.

[Impact of parenting and education](#) | Evidence to support this foundation came from the Centre on the Developing Child, the Early Years Study 1 and 2, the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth,

Bump and Bump Up, The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project and the 2018 Early School Leavers and 2018 Year 12 Completers reports.

[Achieving sustainable employment](#) | Evidence about the importance of employment and Quality Early Learning Education and Care opportunities for young mothers was reviewed. A 2013 report by the Australian Institute of Family Studies states that part-time work was the dominant choice for mothers when the report was published.¹⁰ However, when mothers are employed, the availability and affordability of Quality Early Learning Education and Care is an important concern for these parents so they can maintain their employment. Research identifies that a lack of affordable Quality Early Learning Education and Care can be an important barrier for mothers seeking work. Hence, increasing the range of employment opportunities while investing in childcare opportunities, is considered a good strategy to combat family and child poverty.¹¹

Project Goals

The goals of the project are to:

1. Develop an innovative model that supports young, single, female parents to increase their participation in learning and employment, and thereby experience improvements in family wellbeing and community connections.
2. Reduce barriers to education, employment, healthcare and Quality Early Learning Education and Care.
3. Create opportunities for sustainable employment fundamental to breaking the cycle of intergenerational welfare-dependence.

The project addresses several of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

1. SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing
2. SDG 4: Quality Education
3. SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
4. SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

This project, facilitated by Campbell Page, aims to be culturally relevant and strengths based, involving a 'wraparound' model that uses a systems approach to build individual, sector and community wellbeing.

The values of the project are:

- The safety, health and wellbeing of the parent and their child/ren is the highest priority.
- Dignity and respect for the strengths, culture and self-determination of mothers.
- A wraparound and systems approach.
- A 'try, test and learn' approach which generates new insights and empirical evidence regarding what works to reduce long-term unemployment and disadvantage.
- An integrated and flexible service design that uses a participatory and community development approach to create social change.

A collaborative and partnership approach

Since the inception of the project, a community Advisory Group (members are various local organisations) was established working in partnership under an agreed Terms of Reference with the common goal to improve opportunities for mothers and their children. The Advisory Group lead strategic systems thinking, collaboration on ideas and learnings, and influenced co-design drawing on the experiences of mothers accessing their respective services.

During the design and planning phase the Advisory Group met monthly. This moved to quarterly so the group could discuss the project, strategize and report on the activities and outcomes and evaluate progress.

Members of the Advisory Group, from the initial stages of the project, were:

- Goodstart Early Learning
- Deception Bay High School (and their Aspire project for young parents), and
- Mimi's House.

Project design

During the first six months of the project, the team undertook a series of design approaches to ensure the project was developed with a human-centred approach. These included:

- mapping of local support services,
- developing connections, working relationships and networks with key service providers,
- mapping of young single mothers' needs,
- mapping of young single mothers' journeys,
- using a 'Lean Business Canvas' to explore value proposition, communication channels and values,
- creating a Decision Tree,
- completing a literature review,
- developing a theory of change,
- establishing terms of reference for the reference group, and
- developing a Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

After six months, the first person was employed to begin operationalising the project, develop further relationships with stakeholders in the community and consult with YMPP participants to gain ideas and feedback regarding the project.

Challenges

The YMPP began when the COVID-19 pandemic was causing lockdowns, people were isolating, and schools were adopting home schooling. As such, this made it impossible to work face-to-face with many young mothers. Consequently, the YMPP had to comply with restrictions but be incredibly flexible to keep participants and stakeholders engaged and supported.

Theory of Change

Key points

- The theory of change for this project was developed in consultation with key stakeholders and young parents. This followed a review of the relevant literature to ensure it was evidence-based.
- The Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour (COM-B) framework suggests three factors need to be present for any behavioural change to occur: capability, opportunity, and motivation. This model has underpinned the YMPP theory of change.
- The theory of change takes a systems approach, recognising that there are many issues in a young parent's life that can support, or hinder outcomes being achieved.

A theory of change examines how a project's inputs and activities are influencing change, through outputs, outcomes, and impact. The theory of change, when applied to any project, should be based on existing research, experience and participatory input from those who the project works with.

The YMPP theory of change was developed after reviewing both academic and grey literature, and consulting with community stakeholders and young mothers who the project aims to support. Campbell Page has worked with young parents in other projects for many years (e.g., ParentsNext) so the theory applied in the YMPP context was developed after reviewing feedback in other young parents' projects as well.

This project proposes that:

If single young mothers are supported to develop and use capabilities, have the motivation to achieve their aspirations and have the opportunity to access resources and opportunities, then they will be able to increase their participation in education and employment opportunities.

If they are learning or employed, they will be able to experience improvements in family wellbeing and community connections, then they will be able to enhance their employability skills, parenting skills, identity and confidence, financial capability and economic security, health and wellbeing and develop positive family and community relationships.

The theory of change is underpinned by the Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour (COM-B) framework which has identified three necessary conditions required to create change and sustain behaviour.¹² These are:

1. Capability (or Ability)
2. Opportunity
3. Motivation

The theory of change assumes that these three conditions help young mothers participate in activities to achieve their aspirations. More specifically, by developing the right capabilities, taking advantage of new and fulfilling opportunities, and being motivated to take action to change and grow, young mothers can dramatically improve their wellbeing and experiences to live richer, more productive and fulfilling lives. This also has a flow-on impact within their families and local communities, ultimately leading to a range of socio-economic and community benefits. The YMPP theory of change is described in Table 1.

Table 1: Young Mothers Pathways Project Theory of Change

What we do	Support young single mothers to identify their personal strengths and aspirations, then provide family-centred wraparound support to help them improve their wellbeing and life experiences.
Why this is important	A family-centred wraparound approach can effectively support young mothers with complex needs, develop their strengths and capabilities to achieve their individual goals and aspirations.
Outcomes	Young single mothers increase their participation in learning and employment, and experience improvements in family wellbeing and community connections.
Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial capability & security 2. Employability skills 3. Parenting skills, identity & confidence 4. Health and wellbeing 5. Community & family relationships

Methodologies and approach

Key points

- This section presents a brief explanation and overview of the underpinning research and processes that Campbell Page has used to design and develop the YMPP. The combination of these is considered to have enhanced the success of the project to date.
- A range of literature was reviewed to establish which methodologies would create a project that was human-centred, individualised, flexible and appropriate for young mothers.
- The COM-B Framework is the framework that underpins the YMPP Theory of Change.
- The wraparound approach ensures the YMPP is individualised and human-centred.
- Campbell Page has purposely embedded the principles of systems thinking, appreciative inquiry, reflective practice, and accountability within every stage of the project.

Human-Centred Design

Using a human-centered design (HCD) approach has been valuable for Campbell Page to help keep young mothers at the centre of the design process.¹³ HCD tools such as empathy mapping and journey mapping were used in the design phase of the project and continue to be used as an approach to engage and co-design the project with young mothers.

Journey mapping is valuable as it helps to understand and determine how to meet people's unique needs and experiences.¹⁴ As an example of its use in human services, journey mapping has been used in aged care where internal and external stakeholders were brought together to focus on a person's experience of ageing.¹⁵ Other organisations have undertaken similar journey mapping to uncover powerful insights. A national charity used it as an advocacy tool to campaign for people with disabilities to gain improved access to goods and services.¹⁶

Journey mapping is a valuable tool for the YMPP as it provides many benefits including:

- 1) identifying primary/secondary customers and stakeholders,
- 2) understanding the needs and wants of customers within specific experiences,
- 3) articulating channels to reach customers, and
- 4) identifying the specific capabilities an organisation requires to operate.¹⁵

Journey mapping can also build empathy as it provides organisations with a way to understand how their services may be perceived and experienced¹⁷ by “stepping into participants’ shoes”.¹⁸ On a more holistic level, a journey map helps to systematically think through the individual steps people encounter when they interact with or experience a service.¹⁷ This ‘beginning to end’ approach looks at awareness, decision-making, interactions, engagement and ultimately the impact of the solution on peoples’ lives.¹⁹

As the YMPP evolves, journey mapping is being used to explore a young mother’s history and understand what experiences, systems, supports, and barriers stand in the way of achieving her goals and aspirations. Journey mapping also aligns with the project’s wraparound strategy which considers how participants access a variety of different services and resources. This process considers ways to support the young person to access community, education, and employment opportunities by incorporating stakeholders, processes, and participant experiences.

A Systems Approach

Systems thinking is an effective way to help explore and understand the complex nature of people’s lives and assists to improve the overall effectiveness and sustainability of projects.²⁰ Systems-level approaches are used to help remove some of the barriers young people face when trying to access health services and have been used to assist young people who are pregnant or parenting.²¹ Systems-level interventions recognise the needs of young parents can seldom be addressed by a single service provider and diverse support is often required to address the extensive needs of young parents and their children.²²

Systems thinking underpins the wraparound approach. It has been suggested that systems thinking tools can help stakeholders to see how the community is interrelated, assist with identifying barriers to change, and uncover what has the greatest potential to create a positive outcome.²³ Young parents can play a key role in this process by identifying ways of improving systems of care to better address

their needs, and be encouraged to lead change, rather than simply having a voice in the conversation.²⁴

The YMPP is using systems thinking to map the variety of challenges faced by young parents and consider the collaborative community partnerships required to create a network of support for each young parent in the project. Collaboration supports this approach, as systems-level strategies enhance knowledge and resource sharing, capitalise on expertise from multiple disciplines and facilitate the coordination and sustainability of services.²⁵ Encouraging collaboration between a variety of services with the common goal of supporting young people can also create new resources or projects, reduce duplication and promote changes to policy.²² An example of this is the *'Pathways to Success'* program in New York designed to improve the health, educational and family outcomes for young parents. The program identified the need for greater collaboration and achieved outcomes for parents by improving the communication and coordination of community resources.²² Overall, the program demonstrates how an approach which considers pre-existing systems can identify and improve barriers to service awareness, accessibility and usage whilst reducing the impact of bureaucratic policies, friction between organisations and disjointed organisational silos.

A systems approach also recognises the significant role friends and family play. Even if family relationships are complex, young parents are part of a family, and their decisions are made in that family and social context.²⁶ For this reason programs should consider the young parent's social network and role models, and how these networks support the young parent to overcome challenges, exercise agency and establish a positive identity.

Work Readiness

Work readiness and work opportunities are important for young parents because unemployment can increase the likelihood of a person becoming dependent on welfare, and experience increased employment insecurity during adulthood.²⁷ The chance of being unemployed is increased if a young person's parents received any income support while they were growing up, showing the intergenerational effect that unemployment can have.²⁸ In particular, single mothers are consistently one of the most disadvantaged demographic groups in Australia as they face complex life challenges such as stigma, poverty, and lack of insecure housing.²⁹ This hardship often occurs regardless of employment status, level of education or location.²⁹

Outcomes of long-term unemployment can also include:

- poor physical and mental health³⁰
- family disruption
- decreased social participation
- financial shame³¹
- poor wellbeing for the children of unemployed people³²
- intergenerational welfare dependency³³

Other key factors to consider include:

- the chances of securing full-time employment fall from over 50 percent when unemployed for less than 3 months to less than 25 percent once unemployed for over 2 years.⁴
- Indigenous youth are much less likely than non-Indigenous youth to be in education and are significantly more likely to believe that getting ahead in life depends on individual or family-background characteristics.^{33, 34}
- exposure to youth unemployment (between ages 18 and 21 years) is connected with poorer mental health not only at age 21 years, but also at ages 30 and 42 years.³⁵
- unemployment is an incredibly stressful experience that can negatively affect an individual's perception of their overall wellbeing.³⁶

While these are complex and negative factors related to unemployment, simply being unemployed or in receipt of welfare at some time in one's life (e.g., when parenting) does not necessarily mean a person will be unemployed for prolonged periods or pass on any negative associations about employment to their children. There is now a range of evidence-based strategies to enhance the protective factors young parents and their children need and improve the educational and employment outcomes for young parents. These include:

- Young parents should not be forced into programs that increase their stress and stigma. Programs should be child and family-centred, empowering young parents to become healthy and resilient people who can navigate the complexity of their own lives and find secure and flexible work close to home and/or school and Quality Early Learning Education and Care.²⁹
- Programs supporting young parents should use a wraparound approach, be flexible and individualised so parents can be supported with their diverse needs,

interests, and readiness.³⁷ Programs need to be therapeutic and culturally safe.^{38, 39, 40}

- Young parents should maintain a positive view about employment and life's opportunities. They should not stop believing in their ability to (re)gain satisfying employment.⁴¹
- Young people should be supported to gain skills (capabilities), networks (supports and opportunities) and assistance with education and employment pathways (decision making), as these are potential mechanisms that can help young parents and influence the types of networks an individual is exposed to.⁴²
- Young parents should belong to a social network that can contribute to their full participation into the community.⁴³
- Communities should have good networks and increase access to and use of services by young parents (a system-level response).⁴⁴

These principles have deliberately been incorporated in the design of the YMPP.

COM-B Framework

COM-B is a valuable framework to use for the YMPP, as key components can be identified and influences considered, rather than relying on a single theory of behaviour.⁴⁵ COM-B is also beneficial as it is considered a starting point for developing behavioural interventions for change.^{45,46}

The framework suggests that behaviour results from the *interaction* between capability, motivation, and opportunity.

“Capability can be psychological (knowledge) or physical (skills); opportunity can be social (societal influences) or physical (environmental resources); [and] motivation can be automatic (emotion) or reflective (beliefs, intentions).”⁴⁵

The COM-B framework has been widely applied within other health-related change projects. These include a study by Lucas, Olander, and Salmon (2020)⁴⁷ who reviewed how healthcare workers supported young mothers to improve their nutrition and exercise after pregnancy. Kostas et al. (2021)⁴⁸ also used the COM-B framework to assess youth mentoring programs including the barriers and enablers for young people. COM-B has also been implemented in research regarding prenatal and postnatal care by Flannery et al. (2018)⁴⁹ who investigated the enablers and barriers to physical activity in overweight and obese pregnant women. Similarly, Ellis, Pears, and Sutton (2019)⁵⁰ looked at factors influencing postnatal physical activity levels which corresponded with the COM-B model of behaviour to support intervention design.

Using the COM-B framework, Campbell Page has been able to determine the targeted behaviours desired for, and by young single mothers in the project. Discussion with the young parent then considers what abilities, motivation and opportunities the mothers might need to achieve these.¹⁶ This reflects a systems approach, considering what young single mothers need and want such as, housing, cultural identity, financial literacy, Quality Early Learning Education and Care, transport and employability skills.

Wraparound

The YMPP was designed and modelled on a 'wraparound' approach which uses a family-determined process to empower the family by identifying who and what can best support young mothers achieve their aspirations. This approach means the young mothers feel heard, and the project's plan of action reflects the family's priorities and perspectives. The process brings together a group of informal and formal family and community support relationships, as well as cross-system supports to create a network that enhances the capabilities, knowledge, skills and strengths of the family and their community.^{51,52}

The wraparound approach acknowledges that the transition from youth to adulthood involves several social and developmental milestones including job exploration, personal development, securing employment, completing education in post-secondary studies or vocational training, and gaining independent living skills⁵³. However, some young people do not have a smooth transition and if not provided with relevant and effective interventions and support, they can experience challenges such as dropping out of education, unemployment, crime, early or unplanned pregnancy and housing instability or homelessness^{54,55} For this reason, a wraparound approach takes the view that support should be a place-based, individualised and collaborative effort to help a young person and their family feel empowered, understand their rights, voice their opinions and engage in the services and support available to them.⁵⁶

A growing body of research on the wraparound approach has been published over the past 20 years including evaluations demonstrating that the key elements of wraparound can achieve positive individual and community outcomes. For example, 'The Co-Creating Evidence' (CCE) project embarked on a three-year evaluation of eight programs in Canada.³⁷ These community-focused programs all utilised a multi-service model that offered a 'wraparound approach to care' designed for vulnerable pregnant or parenting women experiencing substance abuse and other multifaceted issues. In particular, the programs had a strong focus on removing barriers for women accessing services. As well as providing basic needs and social support, the programs offered essential services including primary, prenatal,

postnatal, and mental health care, as well as services for those experiencing substance abuse and trauma/violence. This is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of wrap-around services offered by the CCE Programs⁵⁷

Peer support/connection	Food/nutrition	Basic needs
Housing	Child welfare or custody	Substance use
Trauma/violence support	Women's health	Prenatal/postnatal health
Children's health, assessment, referrals	Parenting	Cultural programming

With a combination of social, primary, and prenatal care, these programs have succeeded in responding to participants' diverse requirements, interests, and stages of readiness, and in doing so have helped promote collaboration, set expectations, and avoid children being removed from their family. This was achieved by considering issues such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, violence in the home, mental health challenges, child welfare, health concerns, minimal social support and poverty, unstable living conditions and homelessness. Additionally, it was found that women who are pregnant or parenting often face numerous barriers when seeking help including feeling judged, fear of child welfare involvement, a lack of mental health support, housing and transport, Quality Early Learning Education and Care issues and substance abuse in the home. The research found that pregnancy is often a pivotal time when women are interested in contemplating or making a significant life change. This interest means they can be receptive to engaging with services which have a non-judgemental, relationship-based, and trauma-informed approach.

The research also indicates that women respond more positively to programs offering a multiservice and collaborative strategy compared to single-service programs. Young parents valued person-centred attitudes, accessibility, quality information and staff consistency to reduce the amount of information required to share with many health and community services. These approaches appear to achieve outcomes such as enhanced health and overall wellness, housing improvements, better connection with children and decreased feelings of isolation. Strategies that support young women to connect with traditional knowledge and

wisdom (known as cultural programming) can also improve cultural identity and connectedness.⁵⁸

The “ability to blend social and health care services is a distinguishing feature of these types of programs. They have cut through barriers that traditionally have seemed insurmountable, to provide context-specific support to pregnant women and new mothers and children that address a very wide range of social and structural determinants of health”³⁷

One study reviewing a wraparound service assisting women with substance abuse uncovered similar findings.⁵⁹ It indicated that outcomes were improved when women-specific needs were met through a range of services including childcare, employment support and mental health therapy. Another study reviewing youth wraparound services focused on families, of which 59 percent were single mothers.⁶⁰ In the review, the wraparound approach appeared to be a suitable model for helping young people as it can be designed to help youth in their transition phase, including flexible and tailored strategies, diverse and informal support, an emphasis on identifying strengths and the inclusion of family. The wraparound approach of focusing on cross-system collaboration also aligns with the need to coordinate multiple systems and providers to assist young people.⁶¹

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is “a fundamental shift in the overall perspective taken throughout the entire change process to ‘see’ the wholeness of the human system and to “inquire” into that system’s strengths, possibilities, and successes”.⁶² The approach focuses on “achievements, strengths, positive choices, and resources, and can assist participants in discovering and magnifying these successes”.⁶³

As opposed to the common method of focusing on problems, mistakes, barriers and obstacles, AI engages young parents to collaborate for positive change and improvement. AI can promote confidence and give young parents a sense of control and involvement in the change process.⁶³ AI therefore facilitates a transformative change approach and is potentially beneficial for engaging young parents. This approach has been adopted by Madsen (2009)⁶⁴ who suggests AI supports community services to focus on collaborative inquiry, believe in clients’ resourcefulness and become more accountable to clients. Similarly, Schmied, Burns and Sheehan (2019) used AI in a study to identify what worked well in communities to support breastfeeding. They found AI was an effective way of bringing diverse community members together to establish what changes would build healthy and happy communities.

The evidence suggests that AI provides a valuable foundation for delivering and reviewing the YMPP as it strongly aligns with the positive and strength-based values of the project. Additionally, this approach has the potential to create a climate of trust and hope that can result in more sustained change.⁶⁵

In order to use AI, the YMPP adopted the SOAR framework, which focuses on Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results. The framework was developed by Stavros and Hinrichs (2009)⁶² in order to enable relevant stakeholders to examine and discuss a topic of exploration using AI. The YMPP developed SOAR conversations to be aligned with the COM-B model, focusing on capabilities (strengths), turning challenges into opportunities (opportunities), identifying what is compelling (aspirations) to those who have a 'stake' in the program and how success can be verified (results).

During the conversation between the young parents and YMPP support worker, SOAR allows each young parent to construct an action plan through collaboration, shared understanding, and a commitment to achieving results. The framework places emphasis on asking positive-orientated questions to guide a group process or change effort.⁶⁶

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is an approach used by AI practitioners. Although there are multiple definitions and interpretations, reflective practice involves the ability to continuously reflect on actions and experiences to engage in the process of ongoing learning and adaptation.⁶⁷ This involves taking the time to challenge and change practices, incorporate new understandings and improve overall outcomes.⁶⁸ Over time, reflective practice has developed as a way of fostering learning organisations which have service providers that are constantly monitoring and reflecting on how to improve their project and outcomes for stakeholders.^{69, 70}

Dewey (1938)⁷¹ originally described the three attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness as forming the basis of reflective practice and the process itself can be looked at through four lenses for reflection including: the autobiographical (self-reflection), the student (the participants' perspective), the colleague (peer feedback and advice) and the theoretical lens (scholarly literature).⁷²

Accountability

Despite being described as a complex and abstract concept,⁷³ accountability is “the means through which individuals and organisations are held externally to account for their actions, and as the means by which they take internal responsibility for continuously shaping and scrutinising organisational mission, goals, and performance”.⁷⁴ The YMPP has been designed recognising that the principle of accountability helps to prioritise building relationships with all stakeholders, but especially participants as it encourages young mothers to have an active voice in the design, development and evaluation of the project.⁷⁵

Making accountability an important approach within the YMPP, Campbell Page has worked internally to set up monitoring and evaluation systems and processes and has held regular meetings with funding partners and community stakeholders. Furthermore, the YMPP has reviewed the academic and best practice literature to ensure the project is using an evidence-based approach and has a transparent and sound evaluation and reporting framework.⁷⁶

Overall, the YMPP’s strong focus on evaluation is particularly relevant as there are “movements within philanthropy and charitable giving, towards greater rationality, effectiveness, and return on ‘investment’ of funds, and these principles are strongly connected with measuring, evaluating, and comparing outcomes” (Williamson & Kingston, 2021).⁷⁷

Conclusion

This section has provided a brief explanation and overview of the underpinning research and processes that Campbell Page has used to design and develop the YMPP.

The literature reviewed indicates there is no single or simple approach that can address the complex challenges of being a young single parent who has the aspirations to engage in education or employment opportunities. There are many social, cultural, and economic barriers and so it is the combination of the different evidence-based approaches and methodologies that can enhance the success of the YMPP.

Outcomes for Young Mothers

There have been 52 participants who have engaged in the program since it began in October 2020.

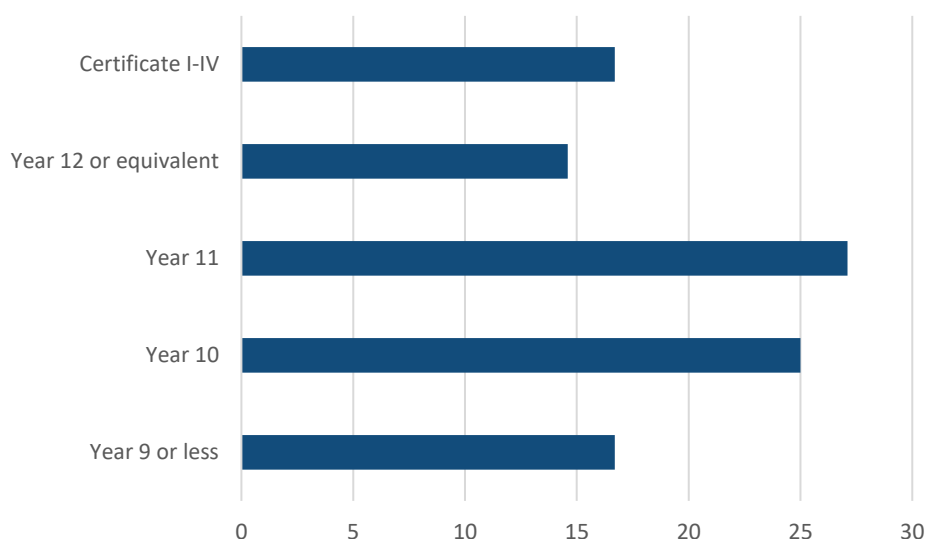
Participants profile

The participants' ages range from 16 to 30 years with the mean age being 22 years old when they commenced in the YMPP. The most common postcode participants were living in was 4510, which includes the suburbs of Bellmere, Caboolture and Caboolture South in which 16 participants (30.8 percent) were living. The second most common postcode was 4506 (Morayfield) where 11.5 percent of participants were living.

Most participants (94.2 percent) were born in Australia, and all spoke English as their first and only language. Some participants identified as Indigenous (17.3 percent). A small number of participants (3.8 percent) stated they had a disability.

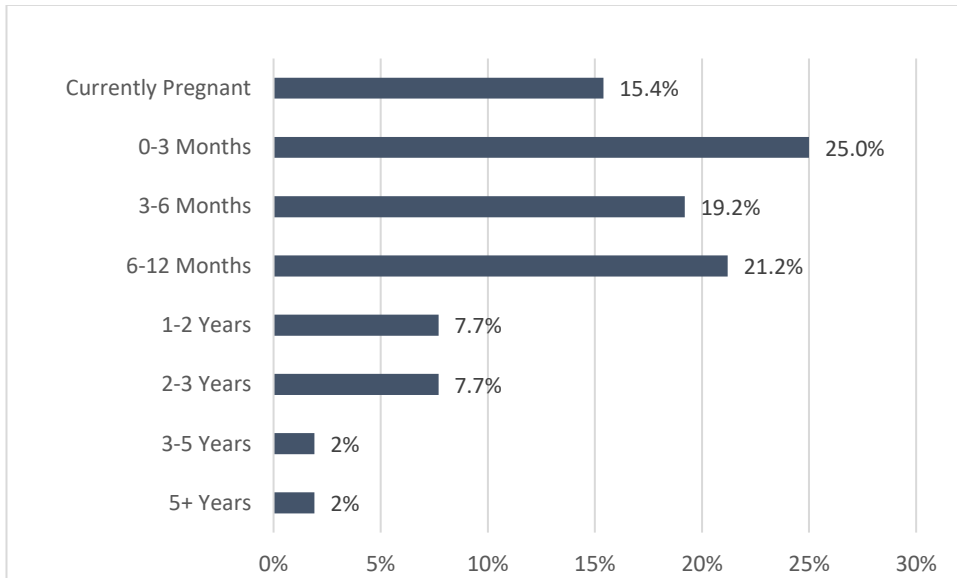
When asked about their highest level of education completed, for those 18 years or older (n=48), 31.3 percent had finished Year 12 or equivalent (and 16.7 percent had gone on to do a Certificate I-IV). Conversely, 16.7 percent had completed Year 9 or less, while 25 percent had completed Year 10 and 27.1 percent had completed Year 11 at the time of joining YMPP.

Figure 1: Highest level of education completed (participants 18+ years)



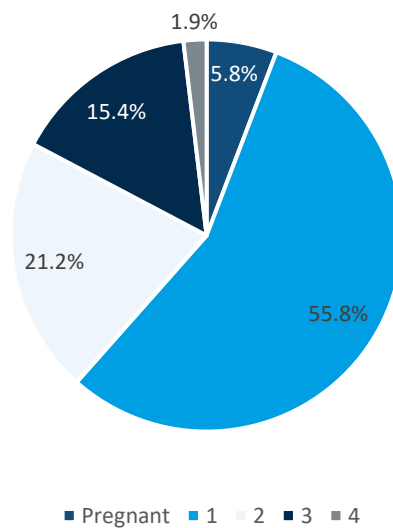
A large majority (80.8 percent) of participants had been single parents for less than a year with 15.4 percent pregnant at the time of joining the project. Six participants had been single parents for longer than two years.

Figure 2: Pregnant and single parenting status when joining the project



Just over half of all participants (55.8 percent) had one child, while a further 21.2 percent had two children at the time of joining the YMPP.

Figure 3: Number of children



Outcomes

Methodology

Several challenges have been encountered in assessing participants' change in motivation, capability, employability, and work readiness using surveys. A selection of surveys that can capture outcomes have been trialled, but it was not possible to survey all participants at 12 monthly intervals due to the complexity of the young mothers' lives. Work and study priorities, carer responsibilities, pregnancy, family illness, transport and COVID lockdowns all impacted survey completion. Participants also generally liked talking through the surveys. As participant numbers increased this approach become inefficient and online surveys received a low response rate. The quantity and quality of the survey results declined with the shift from face-to-face to online survey. The early findings indicated that 12 months was insufficient time to measure change due to the complexity of the factors.

Observations and case notes have proven to be a more reliable measure of change in a participant's motivation, capability, employability, and work readiness and have therefore been used to determine the outcomes for participants in this report. The YMPP support workers documented how each participant has been engaged in their individual weekly and month case notes. These case notes document what support has been provided and the outcomes and milestones relevant for each participant.

Participant progress was monitored, and each participant (n=52) was individually assessed against a number of outcome measures including:

Has the participant:

- Demonstrated enhanced capabilities?
- Demonstrated enhanced motivation?
- Demonstrated enhanced opportunities?
- Got an individualised plan?
- Increased post-school education?
- Increased their workforce participation?
- Increased work retention for 26 weeks?
- Increased participation in family & wellbeing?
- Made new community connections?
- Increased parenting confidence and knowledge?
- Increased identify & confidence?
- Increased health & wellbeing?
- Increased community & family relationships?

The percentage of all participants noting these improvements is displayed in the tables below.

Table 3: Education and employment outcomes achieved

Employment and education outcomes	Percentage of participants
Increased post-school education (19-30 years old)	50%
Increased workforce participation (19-30 years old)	45%
Commenced employment less than 26 weeks ago and working towards 26 weeks retention at 15 or more hours per week (19-30 years old)	39%
15–19-year-old mothers completing Year 12 or VET qualifications	58%

Table 4: Increased motivation, opportunity and capabilities

Motivation, opportunity, and capabilities	Percentage of participants that demonstrated improvement in this area	Examples of observations recorded in case notes
Demonstrated enhanced motivation	61%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking out career progression • Starting education work • Applying for TAFE • Identifying new goals • Increased attendance at Early Learning Education and Care • Active participation in workshops • Exploring therapeutic interventions
Demonstrated enhanced opportunities	57%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting in higher duties • Undertaking: Driving lessons, Equine therapy, Wags therapy, White Cloud foundation
Demonstrated enhanced capabilities	55%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers licence attainment • RSA/RSG qualification attainment • Job seeking without support, following job search coaching • Maintaining resume

Table 5: Family, wellbeing and community connection outcomes achieved

Outcomes family, wellbeing, and community connections.	Percentage of participants that demonstrated improvement in this area	Examples of observations recorded in case notes
Increased participation in family and wellbeing	43%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunited with family • Applying learnings about healthy relationships • Resolving family conflict • Applying new parenting skills to manage difficult behaviours • Improved living arrangements • Participation at wellbeing workshops e.g., cooking on a budget
Increased identity and confidence	49%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to culture • Commencing work in an Indigenous organisation • Increased self-care in readiness for job interviews • Improved hygiene • Comments on self-worth when goals are attained
Increased health & wellbeing	43%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health care plan updated • Active participation in reiki, mediation, art therapy workshops, Reports of using the psychological therapies learnt at Equine/Wags/ Workshops • Attending doctor appointments • Relocating to a safer home

Outcomes family, wellbeing, and community connections.	Percentage of participants that demonstrated improvement in this area	Examples of observations recorded in case notes
Increased new community connections	59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking with other mothers and service providers at our workshops • Referral and engagement with other service providers (financial, health, medical, domestic violence)
Increased community & family relationships	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored parental and child development supports and subsidy applications at Goodstart Early Learning Education and Care • Increased family connections • New friendships
Increased parenting confidence and knowledge	41%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully implemented parenting skills following coaching • Reports of feeling more relaxed and comfortable sending children to Early Learning Education and Care and realising the benefits. • Sharing parenting stories in group settings • Sharing parenting success stories of what has worked • Following of paediatric services through to diagnosis

Healthy Families Initiative

Due to a number of participants experiencing poor mental health, this initiative was a special project provided to support a select number of single young mothers in accessing mental health services including animal assisted psychological interventions and specialist health services. Campbell Page was successful in securing additional funding for this project.

Participants

The 20 participants identified for this project were diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression. They had exceptionally low incomes and limited connection to services, family and community and therefore were identified as suitable participants.

Activities

Activities included Equine Therapy (24 sessions held over 6 months). Animals are used in therapeutic settings to help people navigate challenging emotional experiences, and develop skills such as emotional regulation, self-confidence and responsibility.⁷⁸ It is generally considered a complementary therapeutic service to be used in partnership with more traditional treatment. This project was co-designed with the Equine Provider to improve accessibility for participants. The service also recruited additional therapists to eliminate excessive waiting times.

Similarly, W.A.G. Therapeutic Service⁷⁹ utilises highly trained therapy dogs as tools to assist children, young people and adults with their mental health needs in a playful, fun and caring environment. Therapy dogs are utilised to engage the participant in different therapy techniques such as drawing, storytelling, animal assisted interventions and relaxation techniques.

Some of the participants were also supported to access specialist mental health services which included psychologists.

Results

A total of 25 participants were referred or connected with services:

- Equine or WAGS Therapy (run by psychologist): 16 participants (64%)
- General Practitioner: 5 participants (20%)
- Community Health Services Micah projects: 3 participants (12%)
- Tele-Mental Health Service: 1 participant (4%)

Of the 14 young mothers participating in the Equine Therapy, 13 (93 percent) chose to continue working one-on-one with their psychologist on their mental health goals.

A total of four participants were supported to access “Calm” which is a self-paced guided meditation course to support stress and anxiety management with guided breathing exercises. This online technology was recommended by the Equine Therapy psychologist as a beneficial tool to embed self-care management practices into the mother’s daily routine.

One participant worked with WAG Therapy. This participant was also supported to obtain a Mental Health Care Plan with her General Practitioner and ongoing support is being provided.

One participant was supported to navigate a number of complex medical referral processes to attain a full mental health review from a psychiatrist.

One participant was referred to White Cloud, a Tele-Mental health service aimed at providing practical support, easy access to treatment and early intervention projects for people living with or at risk of developing depression and anxiety.

Outcomes

Evidence of the outcomes were collected through observation, a survey and verbal feedback. Findings show that the participants were all able to create positive lifestyle changes and increased their self-care, achieving improved mental health.

The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21)⁸⁰ was administered at the start of the intake session and again on completion of the final session of Equine Therapy by the psychologist and was included in the participant’s final report. The DASS is a quantitative measure of distress along the three axes of depression, anxiety and stress. It is not a categorical measure of clinical diagnoses.

Table 6: The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21) scores

	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0-4	0-3	0-7
Mild	5-6	4-5	8-9
Moderate	7-10	6-7	10-12
Severe	11-13	8-9	13-16
Extremely severe	14+	10+	17+

Of the four reports received so far, 100 percent of the young women have recorded improvements in their mental wellbeing. As an example, results from four of the participants show all reported a reduction in their anxiety, depression and stress. The most notable change being with the level of anxiety they were experiencing.

Table 7: Participants mean scores before and after Equine Therapy

Domain	Mean score for 4 participants at commencement	Mean score for 4 participants at completion
Anxiety	25	9.5
Depression	19	14
Stress	25.5	16.75

Pre and postnatal checks were appropriate for two participants. One mother accessed antenatal care, and both continue to access postnatal support and care.

In addition to DASS21 survey, participants were also asked to complete an evaluation feedback survey. Five participants completed this and all (100 percent) stated that they felt more confident seeking support from health services. A majority (80 percent) of participants reported increased confidence in parenting.

Table 8: Participants' responses after Equine Therapy

Responses from five parents	Yes %	No %
Do you now feel more confident seeking support from health services?	100%	0
Has the support you have received from the mental health service helped you to feel more confident about parenting?	80%	20%

In total, 16 participants (64 percent) chose to continue to access mental health services demonstrating increased confidence and self-awareness in managing their mental health. Of these, three mothers and their children are accessing Child Health Services.

Interviews

Personal one-on-one interviews were conducted with five participants. All of the participants interviewed said they feel more confident seeking support from health services.

If it didn't cost so much, I would be going back every week. Helped me feel more positive about myself and decisions I am making.

Feedback about the psychologists included:

She has helped me see things easier and helps boost my confidence

She helps me talk through situations and gives me solutions

I felt open and I could discuss anything. (I) felt validated

Participants spoke about the impact of the project on their lives:

I'm able to understand that when certain situations arise. I don't blame myself anymore

It feels really calming and I can use the strategies I learned.

After the Equine Therapy, one participant reported developing an increased understanding about when her child was upset or unsettled. She reflected on the therapy saying she had learnt that her child's behaviour was not a reflection of the child trying to upset her or "push her buttons". She learnt to recognise the child was upset for a reason and unable to express how they were feeling. She felt that the sessions gave her the skills to not respond to the child immediately and instead practice breathing techniques before responding in a considered way. The YMPP Coordinator observed this during a home visit with the young mother. She paused and gathered herself before responding to her young child who was screaming and pulling at her clothes, gently reassuring the child and asking them what was wrong.

One young mother reported experiencing difficulty managing the behaviours of her two children, as had their school. Following the Equine therapy, she demonstrated an improved ability to respond to her children using a more in-depth understanding of her children's emotional needs. This young woman shared the mindfulness techniques she learned from therapy with her children and said it was helping her children to better regulate their emotions during times of stress.

Case studies

We used a purposive and selective sampling approach in choosing case studies to include in this report. They demonstrate the complexity of young mothers' lives, and how the YMPP approach is working to support them achieve their aspirations and goals. Names have been changed to protect participant anonymity, but all the young mothers gave us permission to share their stories.

Brooke

Challenges

Brooke is 15 years old and was in Year 9 when she found out she was pregnant. Brooke was overwhelmed with the decisions she had to work through: termination, adoption or being a parent, so she decided to just not think about it which meant that she tried to keep going to school as normal. However, once the school found out, they strongly suggested that she leave school. She did not want to leave her friends but was now feeling unwanted and unsupported so decided to move to a new high school as completing Year 12 still felt important to her.

However, when the day came to start the new school Brooke could not bring herself to go. The thought of going to a new school to make new friends whilst being pregnant was too stressful. So, Brooke stayed at home instead. By the time Brooke's baby was born, she was not feeling happy or maternal, she did not feel any attachment to her baby so spent a lot

of time crying and feeling jealous of her friends being able to go out and go to school. It made it harder that her son's father had not made the connections with his baby that Brooke had hoped for.

Brooke became worried about her baby, he cried a lot, and she felt exhausted so she became worried that she would be considered unfit to look after him, and this made her fearful of "the system" and whether people were judging her.

Brooke's sister encouraged her to apply to the Aspire project, run by Deception Bay High School even though it was going to take a few hours each way on the bus to get to. Having to take the bus with a baby was a huge mission every day, especially when she was tired, so Brooke decided to look for somewhere to live independently and closer to the school.

Strengths, Opportunities and Aspirations

Brooke's strengths are resilience and her motivation to complete Year 12. The support she has from her family and the new friends she is making are protective factors that are helping her feel supported. She has the opportunity of attending the Aspire project where she can develop her

parenting skills and increase her confidence about meeting the needs of her son, as well continuing her studies. Brooke's aspirations are to increase her employability skills so she can find work once she finishes school.

Outcomes

With support from the YMPP Brooke has been able to move to independent housing so there is an opportunity for Brooke to develop her life skills and

budgeting to ensure her accommodation remains stable after she completes Year 12.

Mia

Challenges

Mia is a 19-year-old Aboriginal woman who moved away from her family home at 16 years old to move in with her boyfriend. She fell pregnant and now has a daughter aged 2 years old. A fragmented relationship with her family and not having a driver's licence was making daily life challenging for Mia. She had to walk everywhere or pay for a taxi when getting groceries which was expensive.

When Mia joined the YMPP she was employed as a Peer Support Worker with MICAH Projects working casually less than 15 hours a week. Mia absolutely loved her job but being a developmental role, it was only available until she turned 21 years of age. That created all sorts of uncertainty for Mia as she did not want her money for food and rent, her career and passion to come to an end.

Strengths, Opportunities and Aspirations

Mia's strengths are being hardworking and self-determined. She loves to support other people as she has a natural affinity to care and help others. Friends turn to her for support, and she has a good peer support network. She loves her work, and she has a stable budget in place that allows for increased family and community participation. However, she knew that getting a driver's licence would increase her independence and give her easier access to community and employment opportunities.

Mia had little knowledge of her culture and her cultural identity was something she wanted to explore.

She felt grateful that she was receiving support from MICAH Projects and the Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program (ANFPP) and had developed an interest in community services whilst working at MICAH Projects however, her longer-term goal was to work as a midwife.

Outcomes

The YMPP supported and paid for Mia's professional driving lessons. Referring her to Braking the Cycle allowed her to develop a supportive relationship with a community

volunteer who helped her prepare for her driver's licence test and Mia is now a fully licensed driver. It has changed her world as instead of having to walk, she drives her

daughter to day-care, drives to work and shopping whenever she needs to.

With support from the YMPP she enrolled in a Diploma of Child Youth and Family Services. Not long after commencing this course she made the difficult and brave decision that this course was not for her. She was conscious about making sure this was the right decision, she did not want to feel like she failed. Mia started thinking about what was next for her and her family. She accepted free learning opportunities with Emerging Minds online to expand her knowledge and skills and with guidance Mia proactively reached out to the Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program (ANFPP) searching for a support role. The YMPP supported her with her job application and to prepare for an interview, and she successfully gained the position of Family Partnerships Worker.

Mia was ecstatic to be starting in her new role. It is full-time hours supporting families and working closely with midwives and health

professionals in an Indigenous controlled organisation where she will not only have the opportunity to build her skills in the field of her choice, but she will also have the opportunity to connect with her culture.

With support Mia has addressed many of her challenges. She has gained full-time work and is saving money. She repaired the relationship with her family, and they have now reconnected and are a positive support in her life. Her child's father has recently started to make some financial contribution such as part payment to Quality Early Learning Education and Care. She has stable Department of Housing accommodation and is saving for a private rental bond and has a strong aspiration of one day buying her own home.

The YMPP continues to support Mia as she navigates the challenges of work-life balance and working in a professional team. This ongoing support is fundamental to Mia's stress management and employment retention.

Tilly

Challenges

Tilly joined the YMPP at the end of 2021. She is 18 years old and has a 4-month-old son. She had a difficult childhood, the eldest of seven children, moving out of home when she was 13 years old to live in a tent. School was not a priority to her then, so she left in Year 10. However, she did want to complete a Certificate III in Horticulture but falling pregnant left her unable to complete the practical component of the course and so she was unable to complete the Certificate.

Tilly is constantly facing challenges in her life. She recently separated from her partner and is learning to navigate the difficult task of co-parenting as she puts the needs of her son first. Her landlord advised her lease would not be renewed so Tilly faced homelessness with her son in the current housing and rent crisis. She felt quite overwhelmed and was already accessing psychological support through Wags Therapy. After a number of anxious months, Tilly's landlord agreed to renew her lease with a \$50 a week rent increase.

Strengths, Opportunities and Aspirations

Tilly is confident and articulate, and she knows intuitively what she wants to do with her life. She has a passion for Complimentary Medicine and has dreams to complete a Bachelor of Naturopathy/Complimentary Medicine. She aspires to complete an Undergraduate Certificate in 12

months and commence the Bachelor studies the following year. She has dreams of owning her own home and farm where she will have the opportunity to use the knowledge gained from her studies to grow her own plants for medicinal products, she will one day sell in her own shop.

Outcomes

Once Tilly had stable housing the YMPP supported Tilly with driving lessons to achieve increased independence and work readiness. The reduced commute time would give her more parenting time and increase work opportunities.

With support Tilly commenced an Undergraduate Certificate in History and Philosophy of Complimentary Medicine, a stepping-stone to the Bachelor's degree without the Year 12 prerequisite. With support, Tilly wrote a letter of commitment for the application and then the YMPP

helped purchase her textbooks and provided a laptop.

Within a couple of weeks of commencing her study, Tilly was offered the role of MICAH's Peer Support Worker. This was perfect for Tilly as it secured her ten guaranteed paid hours of work each week. After the completion of her second shift, she was ecstatic and shared her excitement with the YMPP support worker.

Tilly struggled to balance her role as a mum, with study and work so she made the difficult choice to postpone her studies while she focuses on caring for her young son and work. This decision has been empowering to Tilly and she is excelling at being a working parent. She intends to recommence her studies when the time is right.

Tilly's strengths are her resilience, determination, and desire to have a meaningful career. She continues to be highly driven and has increased

her connections and confidence over the past few months, developing good support relationships with her new work colleagues, mentors, and new friends.

Through her Peer Support Worker role Tilly has had the opportunity to develop her confidence mentoring other young mums. She has also been attending interagency meetings where she shares her views, ideas and offers insightful information.

Tilly has been able to identify when she has taken on too much and make the decision to focus on what is right for herself and her family. She has displayed insight into the importance of looking after both her mental and physical health and wellbeing to better care for her young son whilst also working. The YMPP continues to support Tilly develop her own identity and when she chooses to return to her studies, she will be supported with a wellbeing plan to help her balance the additional complexities.

Jenny

Challenges

Jenny joined the YMPP as a 23-year-old mother of two boys. She grew up not knowing her father, and her mother was in an abusive relationship. At 16 years old Jenny left school and entered her own abusive relationship. Her partner did not allow her to work, she was not allowed her own phone or learn how to drive. The control worsened with time. When she had her first child, she was not allowed to toilet train him.

The violence impacted on her physical and mental health. She has

extensive damage to her teeth and a missing front tooth. She talks about her teeth often and has dark periods of depression and anxiety. Over time it led to her excessive use of marijuana. She had a second baby and by the time Child Protection became involved her eldest child was 5 years old, still in nappies and had regressed from a child who was speaking very well to only communicating in gestures. Both children were removed from her care.

Strengths, Opportunities and Aspirations

Jenny identifies her strengths as being a positive person and helping others. Reading was not a skill she developed but she feels she is getting better at writing, a skill she developed by years of journaling about her life experiences.

Jenny has a high level of self-awareness. She often reflects and talks about the violence that has impacted on her life. She maintains a healthy focus on what she needs to do

to keep herself well and reflects that having children is the best thing she has done. Jenny ended her violent relationship so that over time her boys were returned to her care. She explains her son has sensory issues and issues with eating food. Jenny's diet is also restricted due to the extensive damage to her teeth. She aspires to study health and nutrition, and she is also interested in child and youth mental health.

Outcomes

Support from YMPP has been giving Jenny the space and tools to allow her to identify her goals and pathways to

achieving her aspirations. This has involved supporting her to apply and interview for numeracy and literacy

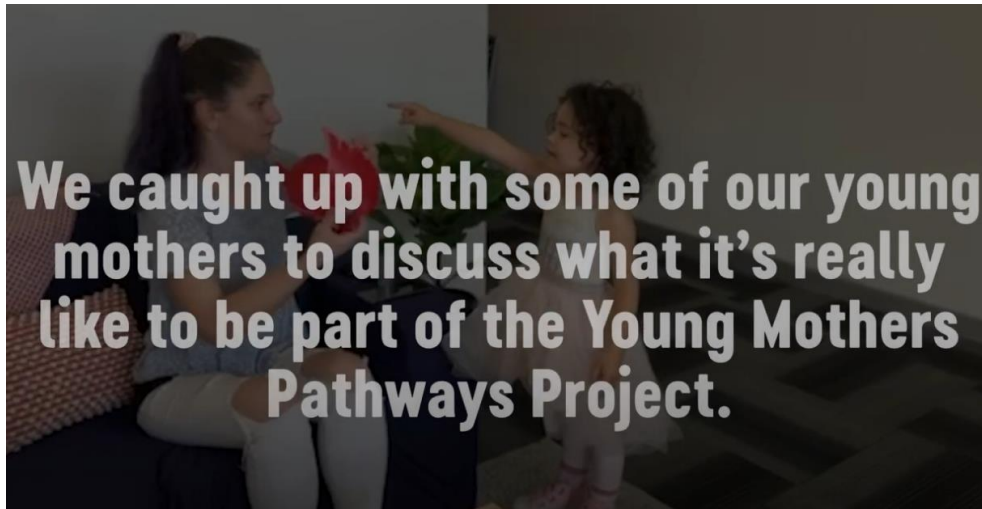
studies and providing her with a laptop and funding for the course. Jenny is now progressing her plan to study and work in health and nutrition.

In collaboration with Churches of Christ Intensive Family Support Service the YMPP is supporting Jenny with her health needs and the developmental needs of her children.

Her eldest son has commenced therapy with a domestic violence service to address his trauma. The YMPP continues to support Jenny to change her and her children's story from isolation, poor health and poverty to a future of their choice where she continues to explore her interests and achieve her goals.

Video interviews

Three young women shared their story in a video interview. They shared what it is like to be a young mother, their challenges and what the YMPP has helped them achieve. The video can be found at: <https://youtu.be/cH-IE9-Y1EU> The young mothers provided their consent to share this video.



Outcomes for Community

The design of the YMPP has focussed on achieving outcomes for young, single mothers. However, the nature of the project design and delivery has also achieved outcomes for the wider stakeholders and community. These outcomes include:

- Community Capacity Building - supporting inclusive local development and cooperation between stakeholders.
- Systems Change - changing the way people work together and address complex problems.
- Try Test and Learn - reflecting on feedback and data to create innovative and collaborative solutions to complex project and service design.

Evidence of Community Capability Building

- Associate Head of Campus Deception Bay Flexi School has engaged in the project to help parents in their school that are pregnant.
- Aspire staff at Deception Bay State High School are attending the YMPP Salvation Army Moneycare financial literacy pilot so they can share the learnings with Deception Bay students and young parents.
- The YMPP's work with Goodstart Early Learning is giving young women employment opportunities in Quality Early Learning Education and Care and supported soft entry access for their children with specialist assistance to apply for subsidies. Goodstart Early Learning had to create the new position of Family and Community Engagement Worker for this partnership to give young mothers these increased opportunities.
- The YMPP provides weekly wraparound and coaching support to the young mothers in the Aspire Project at Deception Bay State High School. The school went through a restructure for us to be able to deliver coaching and wraparound support to young mothers in school.
- The YMPP's partnerships with Morayfield Health Hub and Whitebox Enterprises have improved support to young parent employees.
- The YMPP has partnered with Salvation Army Moneycare, and they are co-designing the financial literacy content for You're the Boss, with participants. This is an award-winning financial-skill-building project, to better meet the needs of young women in the future.
- The YMPP has facilitated and co-designed with Brisbane Equine Assisted Therapy to improve accessibility for participants. The service recruited additional therapists to eliminate excessive waiting times allowing more people in need to

access the service. The financial capacity of young parents to pay for this therapy remains a gap.

- The YMPP is leading interservice information sharing for effective wraparound service provision with The Department of Child Safety, Micah Projects and Glugor. This information is giving these services a better understanding of the young mothers' needs and is building better partnerships between services.
- From the partnership between YMPP and Mission, Micah and Families Together we are identifying the education and employment readiness of young women and have developed system capacity to partner for better wraparound.
- Campbell Page wrote a Healthy Families article to support advocacy and increased awareness about how the YMPP's Theory of Change and COM-B framework are being used to help young mothers navigate the health system.

Evidence of Systems Change

- The YMPP has developed a solid referral network to attract referrals, and this has led to efficiently working closely with Micah Projects, Glugor, ParentsNext providers and Assessment and Service Connect to source the majority of our referrals.
- Referral agencies have changed their customer data collection to give them access to education and employment information to better understand and tailor services to young mothers.
- The YMPP network of Wraparound Supports consists of 84 stakeholders. This network has been established based on the needs of young mothers as well as participation in interagency meetings and local community and event participation.
- The YMPP has improved school to university pathways and alternative pathways into TAFE to provide more young mothers with the opportunity to transition into vocational training or further education.

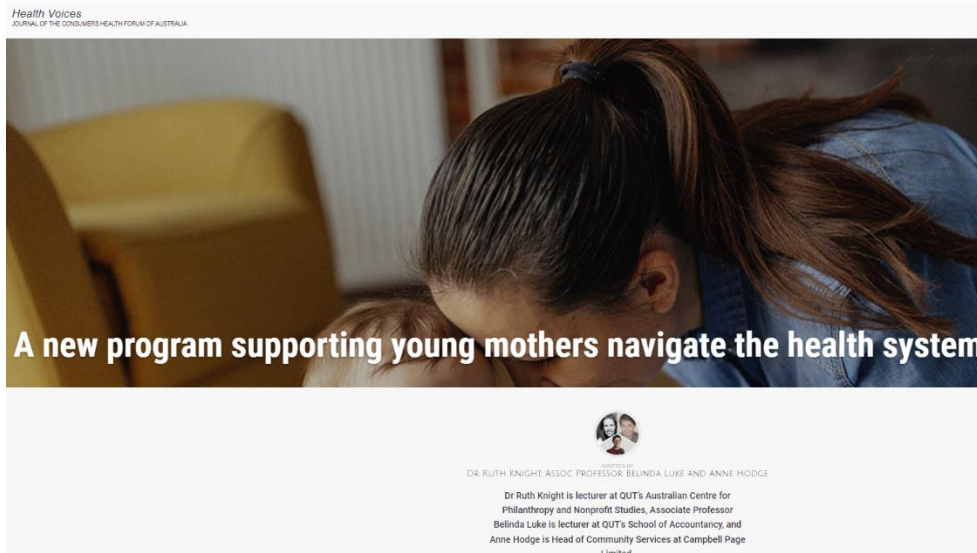
Evidence of Try Test and Learn

- During the design phase the YMPP developed draft KPIs and then analysed and benchmarked these against ParentsNext and other employment data. The analysis showed the draft KPIs were flawed so new KPIs were developed based on this analysis.
- The initial plan was to work with young, single mothers 15-24 years old. Early on in implementation however the YMPP realised the age cap of 24 years would prevent mothers from entering the project with work aspirations and low levels of work readiness. Young mothers and stakeholders were consulted, and this led to a change in the target age group to young mothers 15-30 years.

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- During the project design phase, the YMPP attempted to define “single mother” to determine participant eligibility. On reflection the team learnt the fluidity of relationships and variance in the financial and parental contribution meant this would lead to inconsistencies in eligibility. Also, young mothers were presenting as partnered without having the skills to recognise the relationships they were in were unhealthy, controlling and/or abusive. The YMPP revised the eligibility to work with young mothers who self-identify as single or are considered at high risk of becoming single considering their age, circumstances, living arrangements, and/or financial and carer responsibilities.
 - When speaking with young mothers the YMPP team identified that not all women want an individual support plan. Some participants want ad-hoc timely support on a specific matter. Some have their own career plan and do not need support progressing it. They know when to seek out the support they need from the YMPP. How the project collects data was changed to cater for this.
 - Creating a partnership with Deception Bay High School has taken some time as the YMPP had to navigate the state education system and policies. However regular conversations have led to a good partnership being developed.
 - Mimi’s House have been engaged partners since the project’s inception and instrumental in the project’s codesign. Despite some challenges in creating a partnership, the YMPP continues to collaborate with Mimi’s House.
 - Campbell Page built a data management system for the YMPP. However as participant numbers, outcomes and survey completions increased, the system’s capacity was reached. Campbell Page is now developing a database to cater for more extensive data collection and analysis needs.
 - Early in the project the YMPP identified many participants reported having anxiety and/or depression but they did not have mental health plans. This was a challenge that required wraparound support to improve work readiness, but most participants had reasons for not wanting to get a Health Care plan from a GP based on their past experiences relating to excessive waiting times, lack of affordability, ill-treatment by providers creating adverse feelings of self-worth, and their experience that the health plan often lapses before support is available. Therefore, the YMPP secured additional funding to pilot a Healthy Families initiative providing an easy access pathway to psychological services for 20 women.
 - The YMPP observed instances where young mothers could benefit from increased financial literacy skills, but they did not appear interested in engaging financial literacy skills training. This meant that the YMPP team reviewed many financial literacy projects and eventually partnered with Salvation Moneycare to codesign some content based on what the young mothers wanted and what is important to them. The YMPP changed the content and language based on the young mothers’ feedback.

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- The YMPP team undertook training in Coaching Young People for Success and are applying what they are learning to ensure participants are feeling empowered and using self-determination.
 - The YMPP initially designed a way of helping young mothers identify their career aspirations. However, feedback showed that most participants already know what they want to do in their life. The support they want is helping them achieve their aspirations.

Article



A new project supporting young mothers navigate the health system

Health Voices, Journal of The Consumers Health Forum of Australia

Young people today have to navigate a health system that is typically intended for adults and assumes all users have the equity, capabilities and motivation to access the support and care they need. But young people require our health system and services to be age-appropriate, supportive and easy to find and access. Without these key prerequisites, young people are less likely to connect and engage with services, leaving them without the care they need to achieve positive health, family, work, and education outcomes.

To read the full article: <https://healthvoices.org.au/issues/may-22/a-new-program-supporting-support-young-mothers-navigate-the-health-system/>

Conclusion

This report provides information about the design of Campbell Page's YMPP that began in late 2020 in Southeast Queensland.

The project has taken an evidence-based approach, building on the relevant research and best practice to ensure young mothers are given the support and resources they need to engage in education and/or employment, develop their personal strengths and skills, and become engaged members of their community.

The project has taken a human-centred approach meaning that the activities and support provided focus on the needs and aspirations of each individual young mother, and it provides a flexible approach given that young mothers commonly experience complexity in their lives and multiple challenges and barriers that prevent them from achieving their goals.

The project is using Appreciative Inquiry and reflective practice to continually gather information and feedback from young mothers and stakeholders, assess what is working and how to improve the project's design and activities. This continuous improvement means that the project is continually evolving and responding to how to support young single mothers achieve positive outcomes.

This project has demonstrated it is not only achieving outcomes for young mothers, but also outcomes for multiple stakeholders and the wider community. Community capacity and system change outcomes are ensuring that the young single mothers are being given more opportunities and better support.

The numerous outcomes for individuals, the sector and community suggests that the project is making significant impact on the ability for young mothers to break the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependence, access educational and employment opportunities, develop capabilities, strengths and connections, and achieve their economic, health and wellbeing aspirations.

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