Part of St Kilda Youth Services (SKYS) Education, SKYS 2Faze and Young Parents programs offer an alternative to mainstream school education for young people, aged 15-25, who are seeking to begin, restart or complete their educational journey. SKYS has been providing education services to young people since 2004. Students include those who experienced bullying at school, are facing homelessness, struggling with mental health or drug and alcohol issues and/or just don’t ‘fit into’ mainstream schools. The Young Parents program caters specifically for young parents and pregnant teenagers. In 2013, there were just over 90 students enrolled in the two programs.

**How this program works**

SKYS Education aims to be a sector leader in the flexible and innovative delivery of best practice in alternative education. Underpinned by a commitment to developing meaningful engagement and treating young people with dignity and respect, the 2Faze and Young Parents programs enable young people to develop their academic skills and exercise their creative and practical talents in a supportive community environment. Different personalities and learning styles are catered for and education programs are tailored to individual interests. The program works by placing the student at the centre of the whole experience, focusing on their self-esteem, educational, social and personal development with a range of welfare support provided at SKYS and beyond.

Learning takes place at the SKYS Learning Centre in South Melbourne. 2Faze runs Monday to Friday and Young Parents runs Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:30am to 2:30pm. Students learn in small classes receiving support from teachers, youth workers and their peers. There is a dedicated space for young parents and their children. All modules are delivered in a practical manner with a focus on student engagement and participation. 2Faze provides a Year 10-12 curriculum combining the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), (Foundation, Intermediate or Senior), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA). Students undertake classes in Media, Music, Work Related Skills, Personal Development, Recreation, Photography, Literacy and Numeracy. Students are assisted to plan for their future, supported to achieve their education and training goals. Young Parents offers options in VCAL, CGEA and VETS in Music and Media as well as units on parenting and early childhood development and links to health care professionals in the community.

**Outcomes**

Positive outcomes, indicating the success of this program, include: at-risk students engaging with education, their academic, personal and social development, welfare outcomes improving with participation, students receiving credentials and moving into further education, training and work.

**Credentialed attainment:** 72% of young people on the 2Faze programs received a certification; 56 students graduated from the VCAL program with either an entire or part VCAL certification (2012).

**Destinations and pathways:** At the end of 2012, 57% of young people re-enrolled in SKYS programs, 28% went on to further training and 11% into employment. An example of success is provided through one young mother (a newly arrived refugee) who participated in the Young Parents program completing an outstanding project as part of the program and has now gone on to continue her studies at TAFE.
Engagement and participation in learning: Since 2004 SKYS has provided education to hundreds of young people that otherwise would have been unlikely to return education (2012). Enrolments have grown for 2Faze from the high 60s in 2010 to over 90 in 2013.

Civic/community participation: SKYS host the annual St Kilda Youth Festival. Young people volunteer in partnership with SKYS staff to run the event. Every year students also create films, edit the program and present and act as hosts for the Armed and Dangerous Film Festival.

Health and Well Being and Engagement with families: Feedback from parents shows recognition of the impact on young people and their families. From a Mother, 2012: I would like to thank SKYS for assisting my daughter through a crisis period and giving her support and self confidence through the VCAL education. I also have felt supported by SKYS through their assistance to her. From a Father, 2012: Thank you for all have done for my son. You have restored his self-confidence and put some new meaning into his life. The changes in my son at the end of 2012 compared to the beginning are remarkable. I am so very grateful that my son now has the ambition to go forward with his life.

Productive partnerships: Education Delivery Partnerships with Melbourne City Mission (since 2011) and Salvation Army (since 2012). Established partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to explore the development and piloting of a first-of-its-kind online learning platform for VCAL (2012).

External recognition: 2012 recipient of Victorian Learn Local Outstanding Organisation Award.

Wider influence: SKYS expertise in delivery of VCAL has been recognised by other VCAL providers that benefit from advice and shared links to a range of schools, programs and networks (2012). Recognition of SKYS programs by civic and business leaders and Victorian curriculum managers.

Why this program is successful
SKYS identify the flexibility, innovation and entrepreneurial aspects of their staff as key to students’ successful outcomes. Students highlight that SKYS programs: make every day really special, help young people to strive for what they want to do in life, and provide the learning tools students need.

Want to know more?

Sources of information

Please note, where possible and appropriate, we have adopted the language and terminology used by the program sources (italic fonts) and referred to the most recent publically available information.

This vignette was developed in 2013 by The Victoria Institute for Education, Diversity and Lifelong Learning (part of the Australian Government’s Collaborative Research Network) for the project Putting the jigsaw together: innovative learning engagement programs in Australia and supported by the Ian Potter Foundation.