



Broadening our Horizons

Collective Impact for a Stronger Hume
Now and into the Future



June 2015

Context & Background

In June 2014 conversations commenced between Mary Tobin of ED Circles and HWLLEN in regards to the possibility of working with Maggie Farrar from the UK. Maggie is a Strategic thinker and Education Leadership Consultant and it was felt there was synergy and relevance in working with her to explore collective impact and shine a light on the work already happening in the Hume Community. The intention was to link that with our desire to strengthen that work through collaboration and sharing of best practice impact and how we can work better if we work together and share experiences, knowledge and our wants for our community. We invited Hume City Council and Lentara Uniting Care to join us as sponsors of the work we would do with Maggie and were delighted that they provided their support and encouragement to create a 3 day program.

In establishing the program and format for the 3 days work, we acknowledged that we already had a number of frameworks that formed the intention of our work in Hume and outlined the hopes we have as a community. Hume Horizons 2040 is an aspirational document to guide planning for the Hume City Council but also details the hopes and desires of the Hume Community. This document provided the template from which to launch our curiosity. It allowed us to make an invitation to come together to enquire about collective impact and a structure in which to validate and contain our work so that we remained focused on achieving some tangible outputs.

It became obvious in our planning that there were several ideas and concepts that were seen as important to capture and explore.

- Where to next to sustain and improve stronger families and therefore a stronger community in Hume?
- How do we strengthen and build improved capacity through effective leadership in exploring families as partners in learning?
- And how do we promote engagement between schools and families to improve school outcomes?

We also explored the notion of what shifts in understanding and shifts in practice we wanted to encourage as a result of our work with Maggie. We identified a need to improve retention rates in education which would then in turn aim to remove some barriers between Hume and the “outside world” and assist in our enquiry of; Are our young people competitive in the world beyond Hume ?

We also acknowledged that data and the metrics we use will have impacts on the way we work and can equally be used by emerging leaders to support shifts we want for the future of young people in Hume. We want to transition to economic independence and social inclusion. How do we shift to ensure we have a responsive service system?

The three days were structured so that there was an opportunity for conversation as a broader community and then focus attention on the Middle Years and the Early Years in Hume. The aim over the three days was to connect the strategy and frameworks with the necessary culture change, capacity building and daily practice that is essential if the strategy is to take root. We wanted to explore the power and potential of integrated approaches to working that connect the community and different sectors, but also draw on good practice internationally – being curious about highly effective, locally led self-improving learning systems and the potential impacts for embracing that on the Hume Community.

We wanted to explore the local leadership required to achieve that and the role of policy makers, strategists, central administration and individuals. Part of this was also to explore how policy and practice go hand in hand to achieve an adaptive and dynamic learning system.

What we came up with...

Broadening our Horizons – Collective Impact for a Stronger Hume now and into the future

The Big Day on June 2nd focused on effective local learning systems and the value of building a *culture of collaboration* in communities and *the power of connected leadership* in strengthening and empowering people to work together. Multifaceted accountability was also explored . It was wonderful to discuss ideas such as “Adopting a Growth Mindset” (Carol Dweck) and the power of Learning and co-construction.

Many attendees found the use of some protocols derived from “The Power of Protocols” extremely beneficial – particularly the model of Tuning In; Tuning Up.

We explored the power and potential of integrated approaches to working that connect communities, sectors and people to support us in building stronger communities and achieving better learning, civic and social outcomes.

The hope for the day was;

- to be active and responsive in our enquiry,
- to be reflective about the work already happening
- to look to learn new practises and approaches that we can take into our everyday work in Hume
- to strengthen ourselves and our commitment to the wider learning community of Hume
- to make sure the best of what we do is shared.

So what happened?

The day commenced with reflecting on how we would work together – essentially setting some ground rules for our day together. The concept of being curious and enquiring by nature – to always ask the “why” resonated very strongly in the room and it was actually a wonderful way to open the ears, hearts and minds of those attending.

Another key message was the importance of being reflective and that it is ok to sit with “unknowing”. In a busy and fast paced technology driven culture it is very easy to constantly get an immediate answer – a better way of working is to resist the instant solution.

Critical messages received were

Effective local learning systems are designed to

- “Build community – build clusters”
- Congratulate effort
- Seek out “good mistakes” and be intrigued by mistakes
- Enjoy and recognise the “effort” of making something happen
- Keep on learning.



Protocols are a great way to learn and illicit information or commence a conversation – they also enable Equity of voice

Protocol – Tuning in; Tuning up

Maggie suggested an excellent resource for learning about different protocols to use is “The power of Protocols” (available from online book stores).

-Be reminded to JUST LISTEN – do not break off into comment and discussion as the protocol happens.

-“Hearing and listening are 2 different things”

Ensure the local learning system is designed for Impact; Relationship; Learning

‘Any reform initiative that improves relationships has a chance of success. Any that doesn’t is doomed to failure’ Michael Fullan

Connected Moral Purpose and Committed Moral Purpose are essential for a local learning system to work

There are 3 critical elements to the design of an effective local learning system

- Co-Construction is essential to ensure success
- Do not make assumptions about the learning system and people it supports
- Clear and open communication is critical

To Learn and Improve learning – increase connectivity and create genuine partnerships.

“Isolation is the enemy of improvement”

Never underestimate the value of the action – Never underestimate the

value of the question you ask.



#Multifaceted accountability

- Self (A commitment to learning)
- Moral Accountability
- Professional Accountability
- Contractual Accountability
- System Accountability
- Accountability for improvement – NOT for proving a point
- Seek hard messages – the more informed you are the more likely you are to achieve your goal

#Accountability

- What have we done?
- How well have we done it?
- Is anyone any better off?

The Importance of Review and Scrutiny

Do some “deep dive” reviews – train students as priority reporting teams

Welcome Scrutiny from peers, clusters and external bodies

Balance short term wins and long term sustainable change – change if to be deep rooted takes time

“Peer Challenge is only possible if sufficient social capital (mutual trust, transparency and reciprocity) and collective moral purpose has developed between the partners” David Hargreaves 2012

A model to consider is “Communities that Care” from the US

Collaboration – Not working in Competition

The power of co-construction

Multifaceted accountability – connects rather than isolates

Align the connection points – accountability, insight, multiple voices and use the connectors that are available.

The Power of learning - Understand How and Why we learn;

SHALLOW – when I learn what someone tells me.

DEEP- when I learn what it is I want and need to know (often gained through experience).

PROFOUND – when I learn with and on behalf of others.

In learning communities we ask great questions

- Challenge and question assumptions.
- What’s going on?

- Help me to understand what you mean when you say...

In learning communities we learn to give and receive feedback

- What do you see me doing when I am at my best?
- What do you see me doing when I am limiting myself and others?
- What else do you want to tell me that might be useful?

“Becoming a community of Leaders requires leading and learning. Becoming a community of leaders requires learning together. And learning together requires that the responsibilities of leadership be shared” – Building community in schools Thomas Sergiovanni 1993

The first day was bought to a close by Maggie with the reciting of a David Whyte poem that worked beautifully to link the message of the day – to start with the first step - the step you don't want to take...

start close in ~ David Whyte

Start close in,
don't take the second step
or the third,
start with the first
thing
close in,
the step
you don't want to take.

Start with
the ground
you know,
the pale ground
beneath your feet,
your own
way of starting
the conversation.

Start with your own
question,
give up on other
people's questions,
don't let them
smother something
simple.

To find
another's voice,
follow
your own voice,
wait until
that voice
becomes a
private ear
listening
to another.

Start right now
take a small step
you can call your own
don't follow
someone else's
heroics, be humble
and focused,
start close in,
don't mistake
that other
for your own.

Start close in,
don't take
the second step
or the third,
start with the first
thing
close in,
the step
you don't want to take.

DAY 2

The second day, June 3rd, focused on the Early Years in Hume with a powerful and inspirational message to “Take the first step”. The feedback from the session identified a number of critical themes that really resonated with our attendees. The importance of self improving systems and the power of peer review in creating a culture of continuous improvement. That Leaders must practise the ACT of leadership not the *role* of leadership. A key message was also the idea of approaching our work with enquiry and curiosity – always asking “WHY?” and understanding that each situation we find ourselves in, is an opportunity to learn. Importantly, when we are uncomfortable in a situation and challenged in our thinking we will learn more.

A wonderful quote from the morning was; “If parents want to give their children a gift – the best thing they can do is teach them to love challenge, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning” Carol Dweck Mindset – the new psychology of success 2007.

So what happened?

The session objective was to explore effective leadership in early years and explore approaches to continuous improvement

- What is our promise to this community?
- What is leadership? Not the role of the leader but what are **the acts of leadership?**
- We need to practice the way we need to work and be in order to do this work and honour this work
- We need to be driven by the culture and ethos of our organisation
 - Programmatic response
 - We need real and authentic conversation
 - How do we enact change?

- If not us – who?
- if not now – when?

In order to ensure we continue to be able to lead always seek connection – seek difference – disturb your way of thinking.

- Learning comes from people out of our ‘tribe’ – experts by experience
- Instant solutions are superficial – notice the impulse and check it!
- It is not always about knowing the answer – truly understanding the deeper meaning beneath it and finding the answer
- Enquiry based learning allows for questions – embed language that is meaningful and rich
- Language is Powerful as is communication – watch closed questions.

BE WARY WHEN YOUR ENQUIRY AND CURIOSITY BECOME DIMMED

- Enjoy sitting with the silence (Let the group find the answer not only the “noisy” individuals)
- What is it that only ‘I’ can do? (A powerful thought to follow)
- Pare down – can it be done a different way? Why are we proceeding in the way we are?
- Conversations Speak volumes - the power of conversation
 - Must be explicit
 - Must be genuine
 - Be an active and responsive listener

HOW DO WE KNOW? Do your research

- Get to know the families in Hume and the journeys that they have been on. What is their history and how do we gain trust of the families.
- Family engagement – building relationships with families takes time.
- Engage families and empower them to make solutions - this will allow a smoother interface to vulnerable families.

- Services must be timely – school Hubs are great ways to action the needs of communities.
- Opportunities for staff to see what is really going on and happening in communities.
- Family resilience for life skills.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO HONOUR THE WAY WE WANT TO BE?

- Highly accountable Systems need connected capacity building that is highly resourced.
- Children must be at the heart of all that happens – co-construction of what we are doing takes time
- Safety of Children is paramount – from abuse, neglect, extremism, early pregnancy etc
- Provide robust families with a sense of self who are also confident to ask for what they need – children can keep self and other children safe.
- System of Peer to Peer Review- train teams in scrutiny of practice and data
- Build capability and capacity and create an environment where children can thrive- both internally and externally.
- Keep records that are useful and provide data that is needed and able to be evaluated.
- Consider keeping records that are open that can be used to start dialogue, debate or tell stories – visual diary – photo's. Create the narrative...

“Sure Start” Leadership

- Promise to families – have we co-created programs with families or have we assumed their needs?
- Avoid a dependency culture – sustainability and resilience in families is a measure of success.

- Create Trust – who gets included – how do we change the invitation so people feel welcomed and included.

“LEARNABLE MOMENTS”

- Protocols for equity of voice – speak what needs to be spoken – lay it on the table if you don’t know
- How do we collaborate? Consider less meetings – consider more meaningful and focus driven workshops
- Build playfulness - be creative and innovative. Learning is FUN – you want to see people jumping for joy.
- Need adaptive systems - aware of risks and ensure there are the necessary evaluation tools and methodologies in place.
- Co-Construction – always asking the WHY WHY WHY and be comfortable to sit with the unknowing and enjoy the challenge of finding clarity.
- Problem solving and team building must identify who owns the issue? What is my role in this problem and what is my response to this problem?

A good resource is “The Little Book of Change”

In a climate of continuous improvement – isolation is the enemy of improvement

ACTIVE TRUST , ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY – who do I serve?

THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN A COMMUNITY.

Children’s Communities – Harlem Children’s Zone

Promise , guarantee ambition

By design – not by serendipity

The honest broker needs to be bought to the table.

The Power and the value of being a witness

Listening that is real – “I’m hearing you say...”

Build trust and build practice - this won’t happen quickly – it does take time. Poverty and disadvantage can be stubborn – do what you say you will do and don’t make promises that you cannot keep.

School led self improving systems

Locally lead improvement – reciprocity – collectively agree

Peer review – seek out effective practice deliberately seeks out that nothing is hidden – make sure it is shared and discussed.

Look to clusters in the community

Focus will be determined by the cluster

How would peer review work? How do we make this a self improving community? What outcomes will we improve? What training needs to be provided.

Leave your ego and logo at the door

Declaration of practice

The POWER OF 3

1. Work to Maintain
2. Work to expand
3. Work to explore



Building to a point – not missing the point.

Assume all feedback is given in a spirit of positive intent

Leadership is growing those around you and extending their capacity.

Enquiry and curiosity are a way of learning

Take time to discover the why?

Embrace those ready to be embraced – don't ignore emerging leaders

Accountability to action – not an act but an action – deliberate – intentional – considered. Harness the action of leadership.

Build relationships in order to create local learning systems

Summed up it can be:

1. New ways of working

Values led, co-creative, discovering the why? Assume positive intent

2. Leadership

Learn to lead in an emergent space; What leadership do we need now? Who are emerging leaders?

3. Shared Accountability

Collective impact means we have agreed priorities; We are moved to action; Step up to honour the collective good; Who is ready to be embraced as a Leader?

In the evening of the second day a “Fireside Chat” was held at the Highlands Hotel. This was an opportunity to have dinner together and explore the themes we felt were emerging from the work of the previous 2 sessions. **All opportunities to impact- decision making, advocacy, education, policy and services must be seen as a potential opportunity to shape lives in positive and exceptional ways – Collective positivity, collective impact, committed impact – why are there gaps and who needs to join the collective?**

How do we reshape conversations and agitate for change?

How do we know we are having a positive impact and how do we track or measure our impact?

We used a Horseshoe Protocol to explore how we as a community in Hume respond to the needs of young people and our Community – from the dialogue that was shared 3 critical themes emerged as the centrepieces of all that had been discussed. These 3 themes formed the Enquiry of the Strategic Planning Session to be held the next day.

The final day June 4th focused on the Middle Years in Hume. We again looked at effective local learning systems that respond to the needs of the children in the Middle Years .The themes to emerge were the importance of student engagement and collaboration between school, home and community assets. The notion that “Without an orchestra a conductor is nothing” really resonated as we explored the need to respond as a cluster based system with a locality approached response which looks to the needs of all children in the community and allows a resonant and *loud* children’s voice. Data and metrics are important tools to assist with planning and connecting - not to make quick fix solutions but deeply considered and collectively aligned goals and guarantees.

I am a contribution!

A good resource is “Contributing Leadership” by Benjamin Zander

- Why am I here?
- Seeking Identity – who am I?
- Self efficacy
- What is my contribution to the world?

Time to seek and search to build relationships – invest in trust.

Local Learning Systems must be Interconnected and Interdependent.

AMPLIFY the VOICE of the young people we serve.

Metrics give us reason for self accountability and multi-faceted accountability – what metrics are we using – are they relevant?

Consider “Witness Sessions” as part of community conversations – these can provide beautiful clarity.

Remember to utilise “experts by experience” – genuine, authentic, lived experiences.

Don’t wait to be ready to lead – we learn by leading – your time is now...

Recognising that in Middle Years we can Make a Difference – Let's make a "Tribe" – share good practice and knowledge.

Increase the awareness of the reason we are doing our work – the why and consider ways to showcase our curiosity

Target and expand our school relationships – move to collaboration

Be curious about new technologies that may allow us to work smarter and more efficiently and share our learnings and knowledge more easily.

Consider an "asset register" - what do we already have in this community that will allow us to work better and smarter?

PERSONALISE MORE – PROFESSIONALISE LESS

How did I learn when I was a young person/Teenager? The power of reflection...

Storytelling can be powerful and valuable – try using "Do you remember when?"

WHAT BRINGS YOU ALIVE AT WORK??

Reservoirs of Hope – " When Reservoirs run dry - .. be wary"

Ask genuine questions - I am curious.

"HOOVER THE BRAINS OF EVERYONE WE MEET" – FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Wicked issues – no single solutions

http://www.heraldextra.com/tom-wujec-got-a-wicked-problem-first-tell-me-how/youtube_61657c44-6512-5d11-ab53-246575f0564b.html

Authentic Engagement – don't defend, or blame or seek explanation

Move from Family Centred to Peer Centred

Consider – At age <5 there is 1 impact for a child – FAMILY

5-11 there are 2 shared impacts – FAMILY/SCHOOL

11-16 Neither family or school have impact – it is about PEERS



Families need to:-

- Monitor potentially risky behaviour
- Spend free time together
- Ask about social activities – discuss future
- BE aware of the child's progress

A good way to have a conversation is to Offer 1 negative – 5 positives

Be wary of “us versus them” language.

Need to be an active, integrated, PART of their lives.

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT - STUDENT VOICE

Student led conferences at school allow this – students present a portfolio twice a year

- Linked to the report
- Teacher assists parent and student to evaluate
- Set goals for the next Term/Semester

Witness Sessions – Ask questions

- Use protocols
- How do you know when you are in an inspirational lesson?

A helpful resource is “The Secret Language of Leadership” by Steve Denning (stevedenning.com)

Is a Hume Commission possible?

Set up like the Harris Student Commission

<http://www.harrisfederation.org.uk/41/learning-commission>

Was set up as a research and development project to bring together hundreds of students and teachers to create a new design for learning across the Harris Federation.

“If parents want to give their children a gift – the best thing to do is to teach them to love challenge, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning”

Be ambitious for the work – leave your ego and logo at the door – Whatever it takes...

Identify Values, Guarantees and Ambition – be explicit in this

Consider the question “What will characterise a young person in Hume?” It is important as a community to be explicit in our desire around the answer to this question.

Who will disturb my thinking?

– Who needs to be invited to come and be at the table when ideas are being explored?

Connected Schools and Communities – 3 Conclusions

- Relationships Matter
- In its richest and most developed sense – learning is a deeply mutual undertaking
- What is enacted in schools and their surrounding communities on a daily basis matters and shapes the child .

A good resource is “The Connected School “NCB & Pearson 2015

THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON MOST AT RISK IN OUR SOCIETY IS THAT CHILD WHO HAS NOT YET MADE ONE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE OTHER ADULT -Tom Brighouse – London

Commissioner for schools

Build a cluster based locality approach – Don’t go it alone...Collective responsibility brings shared success

A cultural shift from only thinking about “my children” but to ‘our children in Hume” and a governance model that supports this.

A mechanism for moving children (sometimes temporarily) to where they will have their needs met.

Partnership with community assets – cultural, sporting, business, higher education partners have profound and long term impacts.

Clear protocols for transition – policy, procedure, student led initiatives.

Consider an agreement on middle years guarantees.

Schools need to be inward looking – open. Seek out other perspectives and consider Schools reviewing other schools.

Scrutiny – part of our Professional development to each other and allowing opportunities for shared learning and improved outcomes.

Consider what is – “Our Promise to our young people – their promise to themselves” – ensure it is developed by students and the wider community. This is only possible through collaboration.

Designed to build character, strength and resilience.

Am I part of this future? – Does this matter to me? Am I part of Hume and its Horizons? Am I an outsider working in this community? I have a desire to improve the outcome.

If we never give an invitation to work together, learn together, lead together and plan together – nothing will change.

In the words of Maya Angelou

You have been paid for

Your ancestors have fought the good fight

You don't have to prove yourself

You don't have to earn affirmation or pay more dues

You are accepted just as you are

There are no criteria for this life and this work except your willingness to say yes to the universes offer to you.

Maya Angelou

To wrap up the 3 days a final session looked at “Where to from here?”

We explored 3 themes that emerged across the 3 days. It was a great way to extend some invitations to work together and commit to continue the learning and inspiration from the 3 days with Maggie Farrar.

The themes explored with Maggie were;

1. New ways of Working – Even better if?..Can technology be better utilised? What data/metrics do we have available? What do we need to let go of?
2. Leadership – How to tap into emerging leaders in Hume and who are they? How do we make the Youth Voice Loud ? How do we learn to lead?
3. Shared Accountability –Embrace Collective Impact and Cluster based approaches need to be adopted. How do we come up with agreed priorities and invitations to move to action? Who will make the invitation?

Critically much conversation revolved around the creation of shared objectives as a collective and the importance of connection. Who is isolated in the community currently? Who did not attend these 3 days and what do we need to do to engage those who are absent?

Importance of how we transition from where we are as a community in Hume to where we want to go...what PD and facilitation do we need to help this happen?

Protocols of how we work together? Community conversations? Youth Voice appears absent?

Definition of core business and an aligned vision statement across all who want collective impact. Our curiosity needs to be enlivened .

Talent has no demographic – celebrate leadership

Acknowledge the multiplicity of the ACT of leadership not the role of a leader.

The need to triangulate data – metrics, indicators, AEDI? Who and how – what data are we missing? How do we evaluate the success and impact of what is being delivered.

What we came up with...

Action Group 1

Hume Global Learning Village to be set up as a backbone organisation

Collaborative Action – Invitation to hear more.

1. Neutral Space for Collaboration – How can we help members achieve this?
2. Facilitate decisions about data and collection.
3. Share methodology and case studies on simple, powerful, measurement of impact. (Numbers and story) to include Hume Horizons indicators .

Action Group 2

Lots of vision statements exist across multiple systems/services – we need a simple, compelling narrative about Hume from people who want collective Impact.

1. HEYP Executive to invite Early Years stakeholders to participate in a process of identifying key indicators to measure children's outcomes in Hume – related to identified priorities in order to create a "State of Hume Children's Report"

2. Review meeting structure of HEYP Executive to ensure they support alignment and achievement towards identified priorities and indicators.
3. Develop a deeper understanding of Hume Horizons 2040 across community and organisations in Hume.

Action Group 3

Collective Impact is only possible if community connections are possible, strong and clear.

Provide opportunities to become a leader in the Hume Community.

1. Develop a Hume Leadership Group - extend an invitation to participate in this group to all existing structures in Hume Community (harness youth, diversity and those who we do not hear from).
2. Invite a cluster of school's to do peer review.
3. Develop a talent spotting strategy for our new and emerging leaders – Co –created and co-constructed.

Summing Up

The three days were attended by approximately 160 people with the evaluation sheets providing a resoundingly positive response to the sessions and the only real request was “more please” and “not long enough”.

The level of engagement and curiosity that was enlivened was powerful and the response now needs to be; How do we harness that power, energy and revitalising quality to ensure the connection and collective is powerful and meaningful?

Evaluation sheets from the 3 sessions were just a joy to read. Maggie has a wonderful capacity to connect with people and inspire them – a common theme in the responses was the reinvigoration that Maggie gave for the work that people do in Hume.

Another response was that it reinforced that much of what is happening in our community has solid roots in these ideas and concepts – but the conversation re-enlivened the desire to make improvements to how things are done – particularly in how meetings are run and how we communicate.

The Presentations Maggie utilised are available on the HWLLEN website at http://www.hwllen.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=141

 <p>Broadening our horizons Collective impact for a stronger Hume –now and into the future</p> <p>Maggie Farrar 2nd June 2015</p> <p><small>Powered by the Australian Government Department of Social Services</small></p>	 <p>Becoming our best - Giving our children a great start in life</p> <p>Maggie Farrar 3rd June 2015</p> <p><small>Powered by the Australian Government Department of Social Services</small></p>	 <p>The power and potential of the middle years Rising to the promise</p> <p>Maggie Farrar 3rd June 2015</p> <p><small>Powered by the Australian Government Department of Social Services</small></p>
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Looking for the Castle, Second Time Around

It's time to acknowledge who you really are.
to answer the question that's been niggling you,
to wipe the wanderer's ashes off your feet,
to go in, to the life that's been waiting for you.
You have never been so prepared. All your skills,
the years of training; the practice, the effort
the constant polishing; everything points
towards this as your moment. And yet...
you hesitate. There's a thing that holds you back;
that's always been there, in the background:
a voice, an image, a living part of you that says,
Not me. I'm not the one they're waiting for.
Look around you. Who were they looking at:
the guides, the mentors, the friends you've lost?
Who were they giving their focused attention
their psychic investment; their hope, and their love?
It's time to stop looking upwards at others,
to find the gold that you dropped in the dust.
What you have is enough. What you are is ready.

...Down the road, turn left. It's over the bridge

© William Ayot
Bedfordshire
June 2013

Addendum:

Building Quality Education and Stronger Communities UK Study Tour

'How do we build a culture of authentic engagement between families, schools and communities that energises the commitment to collectively serve the locality in which we live and work'

In the first of its kind, a diverse group of 20 educators and community leaders from the Hume region of Melbourne engaged in productive conversations over a number of months and undertook a study tour to the UK in September 2015. The group, which had not previously worked together, included government, Islamic and Catholic schools at both primary and secondary levels, as well as community organisations.

The intention of the tour was to shine a light on existing strengths within the community and to explore the way in which schools and organisations can work together to optimize educational outcomes and further strengthen the whole of the Hume community. Particularly as a response to the knowledge and ways of working that was explored with Maggie Farrar at the Broadening Our Horizons conference.

As Hume is an area incorporating a rich cultural mix, the project aimed to build connections and deeper understandings so that there is greater capacity to build bridges and opportunities through a focus on education and community partnerships and witness how educational settings in the UK had achieved this and worked successfully to improve the educational outcomes and life opportunities of the communities they supported.

Themes that emerged from our study tour in London;

Keep it **R.E.A.L**

RELATIONSHIPS – to child, to self, to community; to the Globe. It was apparent that all settings we visited framed their relationships in respectful and genuine partnerships ; a strong desire to promote strong and meaningful social cohesion and social justice values in all relationships.

EXCELLENCE– and relentlessness. High aspirations and high standards were explicitly identified across all elements of the learning communities we visited. The absolute commitment to having high expectations of self; of learning opportunities; of others in the learning and wider community and of the expected future of all children. It was also evident that action research and continued learning for all in the learning community contributed to achieving further excellence.

ALIGNMENT – Central to the alignment of the ethos and values of each learning community was consistency of approach, rich language and messages delivered and received. Alignment of values was aided by ensuring the key objectives and aims of each setting were clear, concise and backed up by data and metrics to allow evaluated outcomes to be achieved.

LEADERSHIP – Each setting and learning community had Leadership that was explicit and inspiring. Equally important was the notion that leadership by “title” needs to be redefined and deconstructed – that each learning community had many “ leaders” and that “experts by experience” can be tapped into , to further extend and reconstruct the Leadership that will work most powerfully in each community.

Being in a city like London where there is incredible diversity, energy, history and narrative provided a wonderful place to grow as a group. Whilst it sounds a little cliché, the journey to and from each setting produced rich and powerful conversations, reflections and calls to action. The destinations provided frameworks and evidence to nurture and extend the thinking and knowledge.

The highlight for many was a visit to the Mulberry School for girls in Tower Hamlets. Supporting a very highly disadvantaged and low socio-economic community the school has pioneered excellence in education for girls for 50 years. The school is ambitious for its students and their families and the vision and ethos they promote is visible, tangible and constantly reviewed and evaluated. Developing the community one child at a time made all of us acknowledge the power of language and the capacity school communities can have in having an enormous impact on the outcomes of their community.

Another highlight was the opportunity to co-coach each other and debrief with Maggie Farrar after each school visit – these sessions again created powerful conversations, reflections and opportunities to display vulnerability and commitment to the work and our purpose in Hume.

The study group continue to meet together and share the impacts of the learning and enquiry and anticipate this will continue formally annually.