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Improving Health Equity for Young People? The Role of Social Enterprise

TRY Build Case Study

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About this Report

This is one of four case study reports prepared as part of the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project: *Improving Health Equity for Young People? The Role of Social Enterprise (LP160101793)*. TRY Build is a social enterprise based in Dandenong, Victoria and is a participating case organisation in the wider research. This report draws on data collected between January 2019 and November 2019, and therefore should be understood as providing a 'snapshot' in time.

Research Team

The research project is being delivered by the Centre for Social Impact Swinburne and the Centre for Social Impact UNSW under the leadership of Professor Jo Barraket. Data collection for this case study and authorship of this report was led by Dr Perri Campbell. The full research team also includes Professor Jane Farmer, Associate Professor Gemma Carey, Dr Andrew Joyce, Associate Professor Chris Mason, Dr Roksolana Suchowerska, Dr Joanne McNeill, and Ms Batool Moussa.

Acknowledgements

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The research team acknowledges the invaluable contribution of TRY Build – its staff, participants and external stakeholders – who contributed to this case study report.

The research project involves four social enterprises: two in NSW and two in Victoria. The team gratefully acknowledges the involvement of participants from all four case studies. Together, the four case studies will inform a cross-case analysis that will present the broader, thematic findings of the study as a whole.

Executive Summary

This case study report examines the role of TRY Build in producing health equity outcomes for young people and their communities. Forming part of a wider comparative case study project, the research focuses particularly on the organisational context and features of TRY Build that produce these outcomes, with a particular emphasis on whether and how TRY Build fosters the social conditions – referred to as the social determinants of health – through which health equities are realised. The case study involved interviews with key informants, participant observation at TRY Build, and secondary analysis of organisational and media materials.

The research finds that TRY Build supported health equity for young people by: providing access to education and training in a student-centred building and construction environment; supporting personal development and social participation through targeted support and meaningful relationships; and creating pathways into employment through its pre-apprenticeship course.

TRY Australia has a suite of enterprises aimed at supporting and mentoring young people into education and employment. TRY Build and TRY UnContained¹ worked together to provide young people with pathways into the building and construction industry:

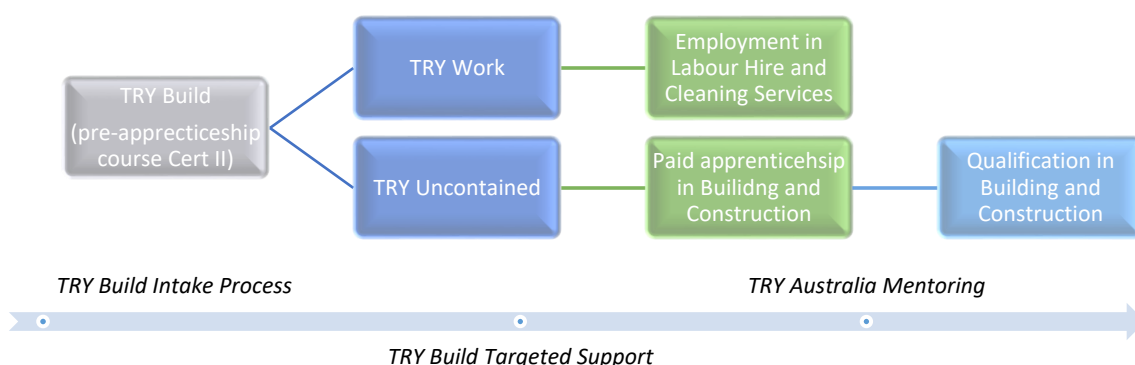


Figure 1. TRY Build training and education pathway

TRY Build (2016-2019) was responsive to the need for alternative training and education in Dandenong and provided a flexible and hands-on program. Our findings suggest that the level of interpersonal support provided to young people by program staff was crucial to learning outcomes, employment pathways and personal development. TRY Build challenged the social stigma regarding mental health and mental health care that young people often experience. The practical training program was aligned with a trauma informed, therapeutic approach, which reaffirmed the importance of self-care and relationship building in young people's lives.

This research was carried out in 2019 with fieldwork concluding shortly before TRY Build ceased operations in November, 2019. *Contextually*, the building industry focus enabled the social enterprise to offer a valuable qualification to young people, however, historically this posed operational and strategic challenges for the organisation regarding contractual obligations and workforce availability. *Structurally*, TRY Build's Warehouse training facility, youth program team and links to TRY Australia's employment network enabled outcomes and impact; however, these were challenged by course compliance issues. The organisational *culture* that began to emerge in 2019 was deeply responsive to local community need for different approaches to young people's well-being, education and employment. The TRY Build therapeutic vocational training approach had

¹ TRY UnContained was closed in early 2020. This occurred after the research report was prepared and was a result of COVID19 containment mandates.

significant potential for meaningful intervention into the social determinants of health that shape young people's lives. The closure of TRY Build interrupted participants support networks and pathways into education and employment. TRY Build recognised this risk and undertook to create an extended lead-in time before cessation in order to facilitate an orderly transition program with linkages to diverse community supports.

1.0 Background

1.1 About the study

The wellbeing of young people is critical to Australia's productivity and success. The social determinants of health (SDoH) are the structural conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life (WHO, n.d.). The SDoH include education, employment, income, housing and social networks. Health inequities stem from imbalances in the availability and accessibility of these determinants and are known to affect wellbeing.

Many social enterprises are established to support the social and economic participation of young people (in this study, aged 16-25) around Australia, but to date there is limited evidence that shows *how* they create wellbeing outcomes. Social enterprises are organisations that are led by an economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit; derive some substantial portion of their income from trade; and reinvest the majority of their profit/surplus in the fulfilment of their mission (Barraket et al. 2010).

In its 'Fair Foundations' document (Figure 2), VicHealth identifies seven strategies through which the fairness of social conditions can be improved. Amongst these, social innovation and initiatives designed around specific 'healthy settings' contexts are identified as central to promoting health equity. Social enterprises often employ both these strategies in day-to-day operations. They engage in social innovation by developing new programs, new types of workplaces, and designing other bespoke initiatives with the aim of formulating novel solutions to address persistent social problems. Social enterprises create healthy settings by targeting specific geographic or organisational factors with the aim of making them fairer and more equal.

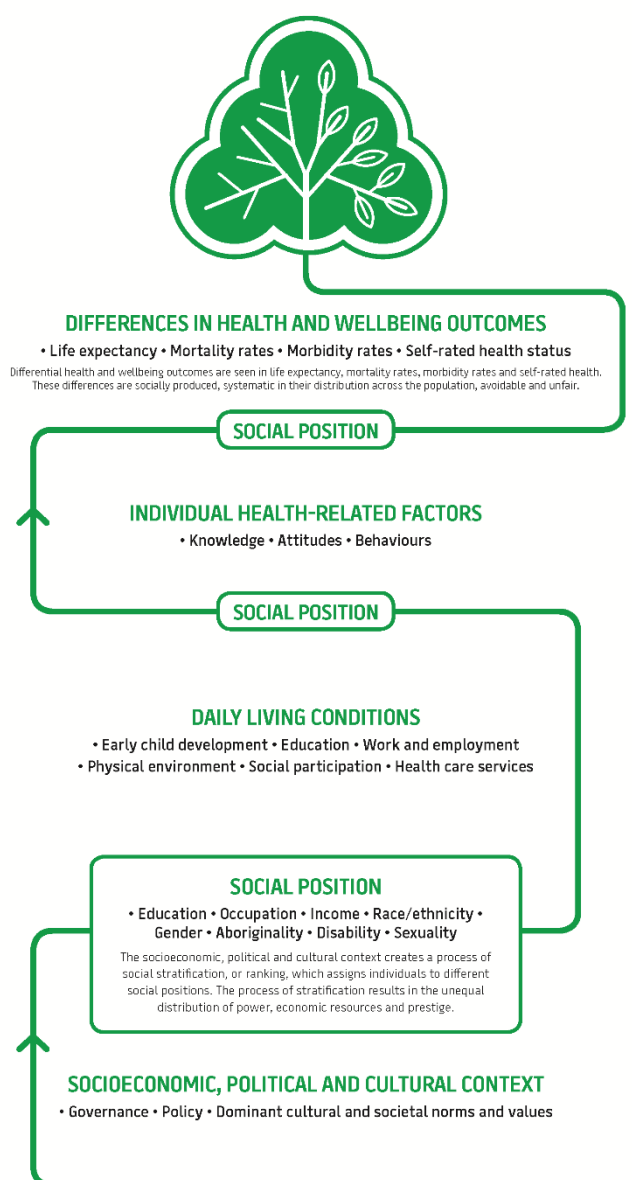


Figure 2. Fair Foundations: The VicHealth framework for health equity

1.2 About the Research Design

This study worked with four social enterprises in Victoria and New South Wales to address the following research questions:

1. Do social enterprises affect the outcomes of social determinants of health for young people? If yes, how?
2. How do organisational features, such as industry orientation and governance structure, affect the impacts of social enterprise on social determinants of health for young people?
3. How do institutional factors, such as industry structures and public policy frameworks inform the effectiveness of social enterprises concerned with improving social and economic participation of disadvantaged young people?

The research questions recognise social enterprises as complex organisations with diverse stakeholder relationships. As a result, they acknowledge the role of and seek to explore the effect of various **organisational features**. Some of these organisational features—such as the geographic location, market positioning, and origins—position the organisation within particular communities. Other organisational features—such as culture, structure, and the policies, processes, and practices—characterise the ‘personality’ of the organisation. These two sets of organisational features strongly influence the design of specific programs. The communities within which organisations are positioned also affect what’s possible and meaningful for organisational culture, structure and processes. **Figure 2** shows the nested relationship between these features.

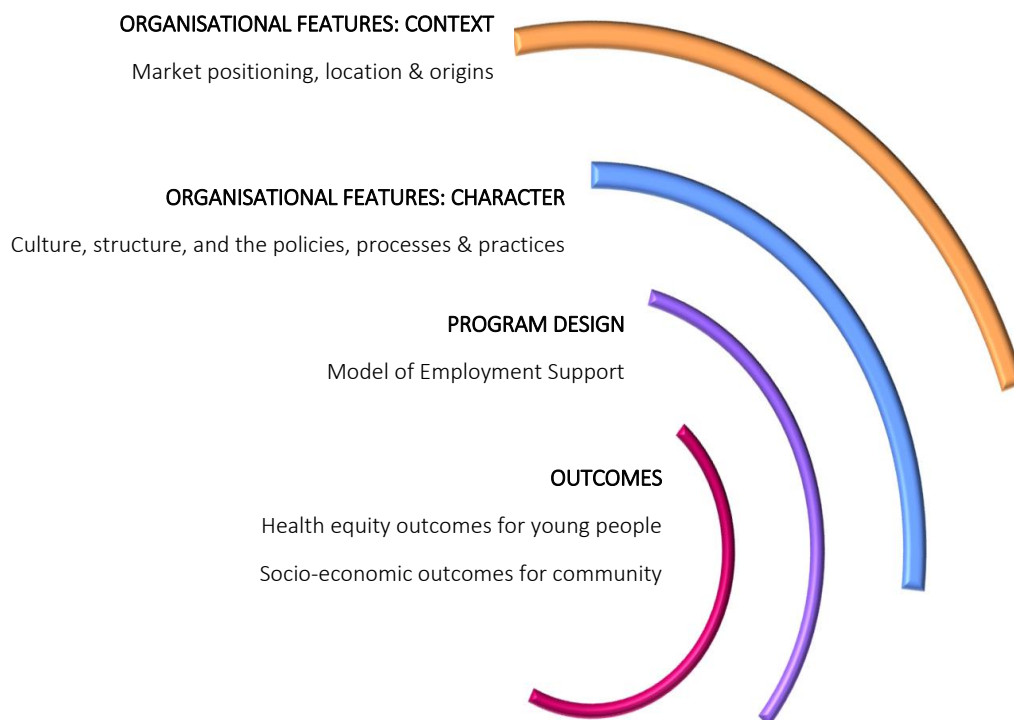


Figure 3. Nested relationships between organisational features and outcomes

Taken together and considering their inter-relationships, these organisational features provide a framework for understanding how social enterprises are helping to improve the health equity outcomes of young people. As with any social enterprise, each element is constantly shifting and program improvements are often made on an ongoing basis. This report should therefore be read as a snapshot at a point-in-time. The case study reports developed at this stage of the project respond

to **Research Questions one and two**. The **third Research Question** is being investigated through a cross-case analysis, to be completed in the next stage of the study. This will add another layer to the findings, generating insights from across the four enterprises—and aiming to assist policy makers interested in providing targeted support, and social enterprises to improve their strategic positioning.

1.2.1 Data collection

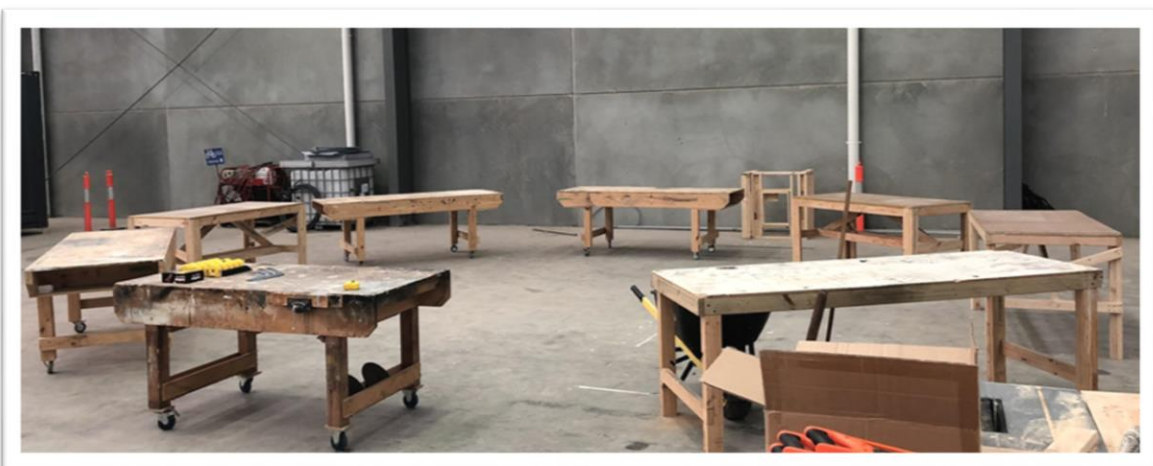
This case study has been developed via ethnographic data collection methods including two focus groups, two weeks of participant observation, 22 interviews and analysis of documents. Data were collected between January 2019 and November 2019. In line with a participatory approach, the study has included TRY Build, its stakeholders and other practitioners of health promotion and social enterprise in the design of the project. More information about the research design is provided in **Appendix A**.

1.3 About TRY Build

TRY Build is a Building & Construction (carpentry pre-apprenticeship) social enterprise that provides training and employment pathways for disadvantaged and at-risk young people. TRY Build was established in February 2016 by TRY Australia (parent organisation est. 1883). Located in Dandenong South, the program provides employment pathways for young people in the region who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), have exited school early, or have had contact with the justice system.

TRY BUILD's twenty-six week youth engagement program offers a pre-apprenticeship Certificate II in Building and Construction. The program takes a trauma informed approach to youth vocational training, with the aim of imparting therapeutic benefits. TRY Build works with a range of stakeholders in the community, including corporate and industry partners and service providers to tackle the barriers to economic participation experienced by disadvantaged young people.

TRY UnContained is a partner social enterprise located next door to TRY Build, and enabling students to continue training and working in the building industry. UnContained aims to produce affordable, sustainable housing by transforming shipping containers into liveable home/office spaces. In addition, they “also manage a cleaning, property maintenance and a furniture making service to create entry level jobs for young people facing long term employment barriers” (TRY Annual Report, 2018).



2.0 TRY Build impacts on health equity outcomes for young people

Between 2016 and July 2017, 31 TRY Build participants successfully completed nationally accredited Certificates in Building and Construction I or II (TRY Build Project Update, 2017). By July 2017, TRY Build had supported seven young people into Building Apprenticeships. The significance of the TRY Build intervention is captured in this quote from one program participant:

“Before the course I wasn't doing anything. I haven't been to school in four years - well, three practically, so I wasn't doing anything until this course... I was going through a lot of stuff at school, like a lot. Like, every day walking into those school yards - just terrifying.

People told me I was the problem at school. Just go back. And I tried back in Year 10, and I couldn't do it. Just, no. It's not for me” (Young person).

From a social determinants of health equity perspective, the wellbeing of young people is shaped by improved access to social and economic participation. Within the TRY Build model, personal development and therapeutic support also enabled young people to engage with new social and economic opportunities. The flow of this intervention is depicted in the diagram below:

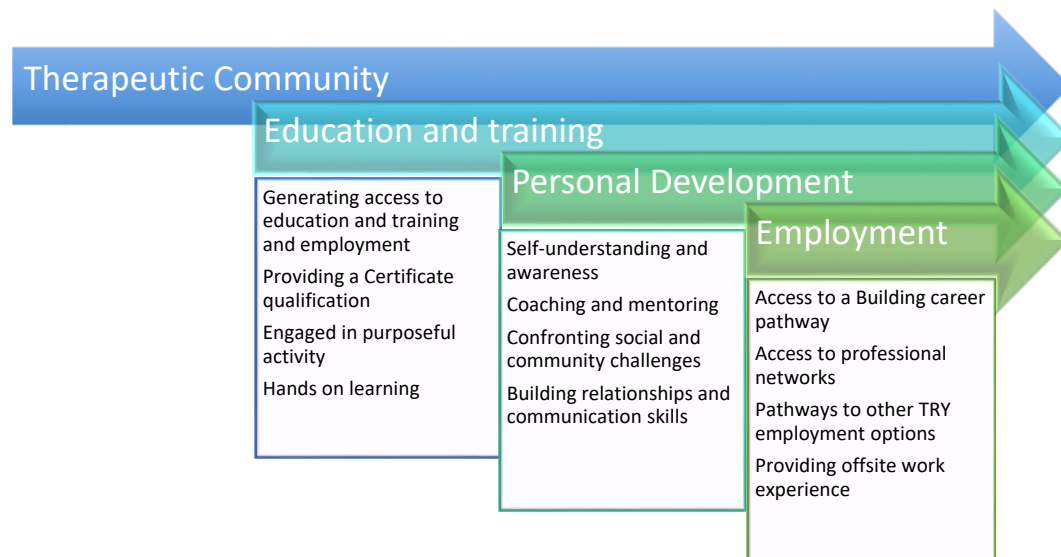


Figure 4. TRY Build Youth Program Overview

2.1 Access to education and training

In 2018 TRY Build came under new management and purposefully developed a Therapeutic Youth Vocational Education and Training program with the aim of supporting young people with complex backgrounds and/or those facing mental health challenges.²

² The Therapeutic Community approach is used in a variety of contexts to support rehabilitation and social participation after experiences of trauma. For instance, in drug treatment: ‘The therapeutic community (TC) for addiction is perhaps the most popular treatment model... It is also the preferred drug treatment model globally in both government and nongovernment treatment programs’ (Perfas, 2019: 22). For more see The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (<https://atca.com.au/resources/>).



"A therapeutic community is a treatment facility in which the community itself, through self-help and mutual support, is the principal means for promoting personal change. In a therapeutic community residents and staff participate in the management and operation of the community, contributing to a psychologically and physically safe learning environment where change can occur" (Magor-Blatch, 2009: 5).

This approach was developed at TRY Build in response to the background experiences of young people participating in the program, many of whom had lived in conflict zones, experienced family violence, or were living in out of home care. The approach was reinforced by trauma-informed practice:

"Trauma-Informed Practice is a strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment" (Hopper et al., 2009: 133).

The young people we spoke to had been enrolled in the program during this time of change. Participants noticed a different, improved program dynamic and were keen to become part of a community that supported positive choices and behaviours.

"And we like the people as well that are here. Like, it's better. The ones that are here now, like all these guys, like I'm fine with them all, but most of the other people [students] who have got kicked out were pretty bad, so I'm glad they actually are gone now... Because they were bringing in people who don't care about the course, didn't want to help themselves." (Program participant)

Some participants were removed from the program in the early stages due to problematic (aggressive) behaviours that placed them and/or others at risk, this was done in the interests of preserving a cohesive therapeutic milieu.

Program participants described learning in a safe environment where their individual needs were met, and also enjoyed the teaching style of the new trainers:

"They help you with everything. They encourage you. The things that you don't know they tell you how to do it. First you ask them and they'll tell you everything from things to learn, how it works, what's the safety, what's the hazards and stuff." (Program participant)

All young people interviewed considered the program a valuable alternative pathway into education and employment in the face of limited opportunities, especially young people who had migrated to or sought refuge in Australia.

Many described TRY Build as different to school. One young person said that the TRY Build learning environment suited her better than school. Some expressed concerns that the course was different from what they expected or were told to expect. As one participant said: *"I thought we were going to build bigger stuff and then I found out we were building this stuff."*

In response to student interest in building larger, more challenging objects, the trainers offered new activities

"Like let's say there's nothing, like literally nothing. If you don't have a school there's nothing like this... There's nothing like other courses and stuff... You drop off in the school, you've got to go work or you don't have any future." (Program participant)

like building a deck and a cubby house. These activities required team work and provided a long-term goal for the students. Young people were still required to make smaller items that could be taken home to share with family and friends as a way of learning basic skills and celebrating their accomplishments.

2.2 Supporting personal development and social participation



TRY Build was seen by young people as a place to “get your life prepped up for the next steps” (Program participant)—not just in terms of employment or education, but also in organising yourself and developing the personal and professional skills needed to carve out a pathway. Many young people were able to experience a sense of safety and trust with the trainers, and gradually felt more at ease being around other students, particularly those who were experiencing challenges and upheaval in their home life.

Young people were able to try new things and complete class projects that they were initially unsure about. This led to an increased sense of self-confidence:

“Just I think getting back into something, to be honest, after not being at school for so long. Having the courage and confidence to get back into something has been a very big change for me. Just coming to this course. I’ve got a lot more confidence now.” (Program participant)

“When I spoke to [the student] and she just didn’t want to be friends with anyone here, I said you don’t have to be friends with people here. As long as you’re happy to be here and to be on your own and you’re comfortable coming here every day and doing your own thing. She said she was.”

(Staff member)

Young people who had completed the TRY Build program and were now involved with TRY UnContained described being able to prioritise their life goals, including personal relationships, based on their achievements in the program.

“Now I’m getting more serious about the course. So I was saying to myself ‘now I get married I have more responsibility and soon my wife will be here’. And once my wife arrive here, at that time I was searching for job and just I was about to finish the course at that time and it was very good. And my wife feel confident because every day I’m going to work and help my family.” (Apprentice)

2.3 Creating employment pathways

TRY Build provided pathways into apprenticeship and employment in building and construction. Participants who completed a Certificate II had the opportunity to pursue further training and apprenticeships with either TRY UnContained or with an external employer.

Young people thought that the training hours while long and at times difficult to maintain, prepared them for work. Some young people felt that they had started a journey towards employment at TRY Build, but were unsure of their next steps upon exiting the program,

“It makes you ready for the work in future when you want to go and have a job and work and stuff. It gets you ready so basically from eight you start and four you finish. Three you finish but it’s still another hour.”

(Program participant)

especially young women who did not wish to work in building and construction. Some young people had decided to seek work in other industries (e.g. retail or hairdressing), and others sought an apprenticeship in building and construction but were not sure of how to achieve this goal.

Two young people who we interviewed had come through the previous (2016/2017) TRY Build program and were now working at TRY UnContained, fitting out the converted living spaces and apprenticing. They had experienced the supported transition into work after exiting TRY Build. As one participant says:

“I just was working with the ‘Glam Experience’. And there was short break and once I finished with the ‘Glam Experience’ I just started ‘Try Uncontained’”. (Program participant)

Young people reflected on the way in which training and work with TRY changed their life by helping them to create new social connections. For some, the program provided a sense of hope which participants wanted to share with other young people.

“When I arrived in Australia I didn’t know what gonna be happen so I just thinking ‘you’re gonna be depressed’, I lost all my friends, it’s a new world for me.

I’m trying to share my information and the story because I know there will be the outside, there will be the guy waiting for that word. And you change his life, you know?” (Program participant).

3.0 How do organisational features affect the impacts of social enterprise on SDOH for young people?

3.1 Organisational features that position TRY Build in context

3.1.1 Origins

TRY Build was developed in response to a gap in training and education options for young people with complex backgrounds. TRY Build opened in February 2016, with 12 young people participating in the program. In its first year the program offered a Certificate I in Building with line-of-sight to a job. This nationally accredited training Certificate was provided through TRY Learning, a registered training organisation (RTO). Following their completion of Certificate I, young people were invited to undertake their Certificate II, which was provided by Builders Academy with the potential to transition into an apprenticeship with Simonds Homes (TRY Build Website, n.d.). In 2018 and 2019 the program focused on offering Certificate II in Building and Construction. The Social Enterprise program evolved rapidly from inception, shifting from a reactive culture to a responsive wraparound culture before its closure in 2019.

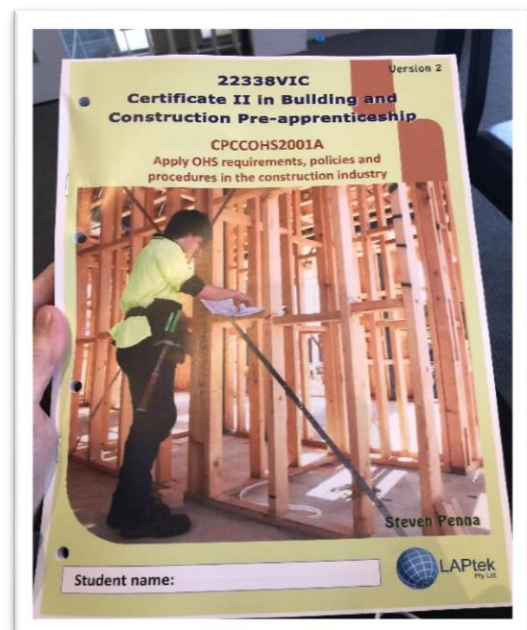
"There's a need in so many parts of Victoria, and the areas that I've worked with my previous role, crying out for this sort of a service. And there's a lack of alternate learning environments. There are some incredible ones, but they're very far and few between."

(Staff member)

3.1.2 Industry orientation

TRY Build positioned themselves in the Building Industry. This had implications for TRY Build's commercial operations and for young people who completed the program and transitioned into an apprenticeship or work. The following elements of the building industry pose particular challenges:

- **Culture:** The building industry is described as 'hard-nosed' and masculinised by Loosemore and Higgon (2016: 197), which presents challenges for the occupational safety of building sites. Masculinised behaviours and norms may place young people at risk or act to further marginalise young people.³
- **Commercial operations:** the building industry has a highly competitive culture with established commercial building companies competing for large contracts. This creates barriers for new organisations seeking to enter the industry (Loosemore and Higgins, 2016: 196).



³ 'Martin identified the Connectivity Centre at the current Westmead Hospital development in NSW as an exemplar for new collaborative approaches that might ameliorate some of these challenges and improve outcomes for those involved' (Barraket and Tucker, 2019: 5).

- *Compliance:* There are strict rules about training compliance in the building industry. This creates tensions for the social enterprise program because Building Certificate course material (i.e. the student handbook) cannot easily be modified to suit the literacy level or learning style of the young people.
- *Procurement:* There are 'Complex and bureaucratic procurement/tendering processes which place an unfair administrative cost burden on social enterprises' (Loosemore and Higgon, 2016: 196). The administrative burden of tendering proposals for funding was experienced by the TRY Build management, including extensive and detailed tender documentation requirements which were often compounded by very short timelines for submission and disproportionately lengthy decisions on outcomes. Reneging on agreements by tier one providers undermined the value of tender submissions for TRY Build. In some cases, this led to negative impacts on staff health and wellbeing, including experiences of exhaustion or burnout.

3.1.3 Location

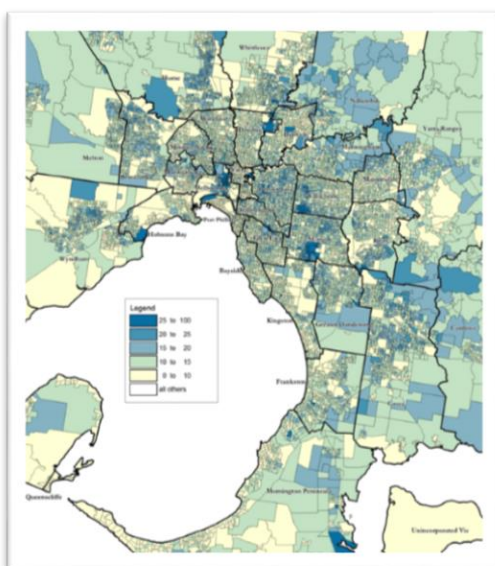


Figure 5. City of Greater Dandenong (2019: 12).

TRY Build was located in an industrial park in Dandenong South. Dandenong has the most culturally diverse population in the greater Melbourne region, comprised of new migrants, refugees from different countries and speaking a variety of languages, with 64% of residents born overseas (Greater Dandenong, 2018).

There are concerns about access to education and employment for the youth population, with “recent Humanitarian settlers [being] at higher risk of leaving school early” (Greater Dandenong, 2012-2013). Local unemployment remains higher than that reported in the Melbourne Metropolitan area⁴ (Greater Dandenong, 2016-2019). These locational challenges are identified in TRY Build’s 2017 Project Overview⁵.

TRY Build aimed to address two key social needs: youth unemployment and housing affordability in

Dandenong. The TRY Build Warehouse is accessible by public transportation including bus routes. However, its location in an industrial area made access to affordable food difficult for program participants.

⁴ Census results show that 7% per cent of 15-19 year olds (or 600 people) and 15% of 20-24 year olds (1,400 people) are neither in paid employment nor enrolled in education (Greater Dandenong, 2016-2019).

⁵ TRY Build (2017). *Project Overview: the TRY Build Initiative*. (see reference list).

3.2 Organisational features that enable TRY Build produce health equity outcomes for young people

3.2.1 Structure

An organisation's structure is how its functions and people are arranged to allow implementation of the organisation's mission and strategy. The key features of TRY Build's structure were:

- An onsite RTO and training team to facilitate learning
- The TRY Australia Social enterprise suite: TRY Uncontained, TRY Clean and TRY Work
- A Youth Program Team
- Designated workshop spaces for hands-on activity



3.2.2 Culture

An organisation's culture is the collection of stated rules and rules-in-use that are enduring and guide how people engage in their work and with each other. Culture is shaped by shared values and principles, and tends to stem from organisational history, especially the values and customs of founders. Key features of TRY Build's culture were:

- A tailored wraparound approach to student support, learning and education
- Student directed learning meets building industry compliance (this is a space of productive tension)
- A modified Therapeutic community approach
- Diversity of participants and staff creating spaces of belonging

3.2.3 Policies and Processes

An organisation's policies and processes are the mechanisms through which work gets done—how information is managed and shared, how staff are recognised and rewarded, how resources are allocated, and goals articulated. Policies and processes that enabled TRY Build's impact include:

- Formal and informal staff communication procedures and practices, i.e. weekly meetings and chats during breaks
- Matching young people with apprenticeships
- Individual coaching for young people
- Intake diversity and student cohort coherence



The organisational features listed here helped to create a program that mitigated the social determinants of health inequities for young people by:

- Engaging young people in learning and training through hands on and class-based education;
- Supporting personal development through mentoring and peer relationships;
- Encouraging social participation in a culturally diverse, safe and understanding environment; and
- Facilitating employment and career opportunities through internal and external pathways and apprenticeship placement.

3.3 How TRY Build supports engagement in education and training

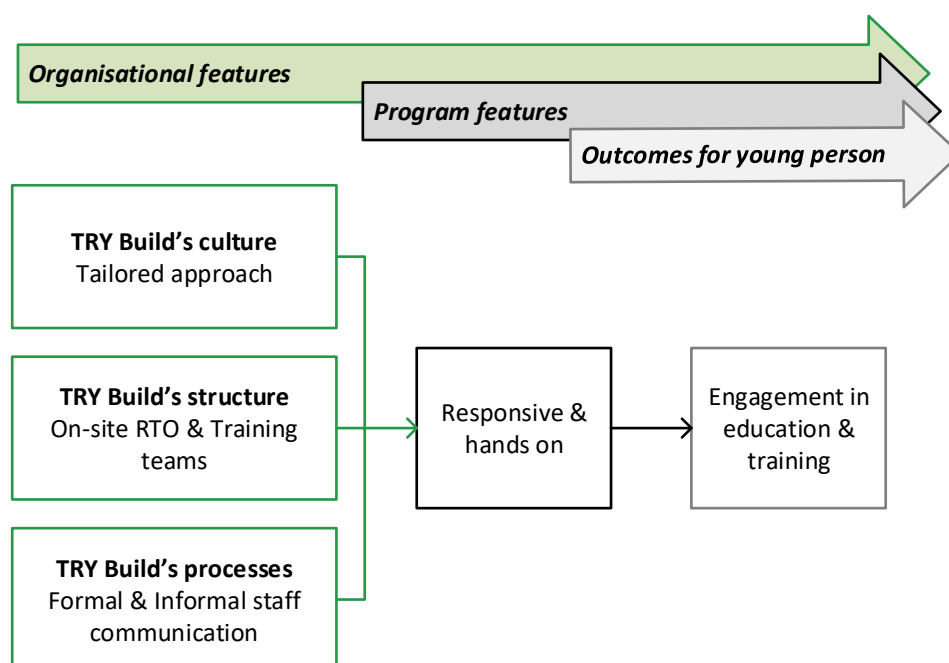


Figure 6 shows the key cultural, structural and policy elements that create an engaging program with outcomes in education and training.

3.3.1 A tailored wraparound approach to education and training

"The idea was to sort of strip it back to privileging carpentry and woodwork as the main engagement piece. And that the welfare elements... we'd come at that in a different way... based on formulating intervention through processes of student review or client review, case review."

(Staff member)

"Caring, nurturing, more encouraging, and things like that. When the student's got the task we'd do, congratulations, fist bumps, back pats, well done guys, let's move on to the next one. So, showing them a physical demonstration and explanations along the way, then let them go."

(Staff member)

TRY Build originally drew on external community services to provide literacy and resilience style workshops, however this approach was altered in 2019. Rather than bring external services and organisations in-house to deliver a literacy class, program staff decided to focus on the building course content and provide individually tailored support to young people.

Through this tailored wraparound approach young people were connected to appropriate health and wellbeing services or education services (Silva et al, 2019). Connections to support services and career pathways advice were provided by managers and the youth support worker, while trainers tailored their delivery of educational content for individual students. However, trainers encountered challenges in teaching theoretical aspects of the course which we will discuss in the following section (3.3.2). During hands on learning trainers had greater capacity to work with participants' different learning needs and styles. Trainers used motivational techniques and encouragement to boost confidence and reassure young people, these techniques are outlined in the figure below:

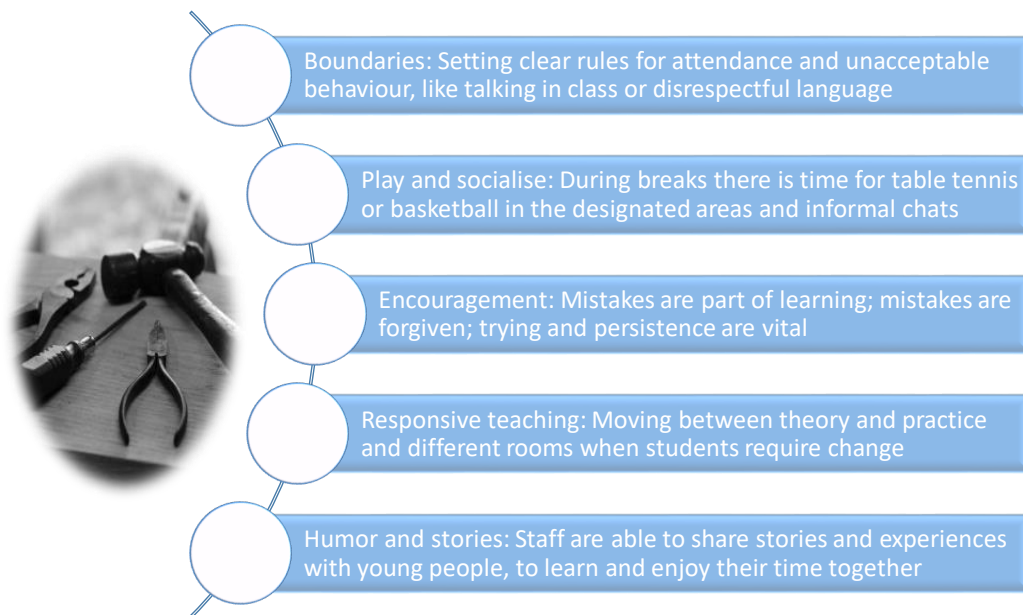


Figure 7. TRY Build key program elements

3.3.2 On-site Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and training teams

"But you've got young people who if they're here for six months, if they're here for the duration of the course their pass might be the fact that they can actually attend a course with a high level of attendance, arriving on time and staying for a whole day, where there's young people out there who struggle – who just don't know that there is a thing called getting up on time for work.

So you can't put that into an RTO compliance framework...

It's about finding the right model for TRY, because TRY is this youth mentoring organisation... the right model to suit the organisation's vision."

(Leadership team)

The TRY Build program followed a course set out by Building Industry education consultants and the RTO 'TRY Learning'. It was the role of trainers to communicate and deliver content effectively to individual program participants. While the course involved a lot of hands on learning in the warehouse, there were theoretical elements which took place in a classroom setting next to the offices of the program staff. Students worked from Handbooks which were reviewed by the RTO to meet the compliance requirements of the building industry.

The challenge for trainers was in finding effective modes of delivery for different learning styles and levels of literacy. Due to the strict compliance regulations in the building industry, the content (i.e. multiple question tests and written questions and answers) in the student handbooks could not be altered. While staff were able to assist students to complete the written components of the course, they identified ways in which the content was not inclusive.

Pressure points existed around the need to complete theoretical material within strict timeframes to meet RTO requirements for student benchmarks. While

having the RTO onsite was useful, some staff queried the existing model involving the use of the language and content set by the building industry for the communication of course content. Some of the challenges for students and teachers included a mix of trauma-related issues. In particular, literacy and learning challenges make it difficult to move cohesively through the course content. The additional compounding issue here was trauma responses for young people who have suffered

negative experiences (humiliation, shame, anxiety) in mainstream settings because of these challenges. When some students became confounded with aspects of the material, these stress triggers would regularly manifest and stimulate a range of behaviours and responses that could be difficult to manage, particularly for trainers who had limited skills in recognising the underpinning reasons for the behavioural response. Students from CALD and refugee backgrounds were dealing with these and other trauma issues, particularly when an aggressive atmosphere arose because of the behavioural dynamics.

3.3.3 Formal and informal staff communication



While student engagement and education was at the forefront of the trainer's minds, behind the scenes there was additional work taking place. Trainers informally debriefed before the day began to share knowledge on student progress and any additional barriers students were facing. Staff were able to compare their insights and reach a shared perspective on how best to support each young person and the group as a whole.

The informal process was updated throughout the day during lunch and/or the afternoon break when staff came together to eat. Trainers discussed the class atmosphere and energy with the Youth Worker and Program Manager, who were then able to prepare referrals to services should they be required, or suggest time be spent with the in-house mentor. Communication regarding each student's progress and participation informed on-going case management and tailored support. Students who were experiencing additional issues outside the course (e.g. anxiety, family related events, criminogenic factors, legal appointments with Youth Justice, bullying and interpersonal dynamics) were flagged for special attention or flexibility during the day. This process enabled training staff to better understand the student group and to potentially alter how they are supported.

The informal daily process was used to build routine and knowledge into the evolving program. It was supported by formal weekly and bi-weekly staff meetings, including:

- Student/Case Review (including course progress and clinical elements)
- Compliance Monitoring and Review
- General Team meetings (information dissemination / feedback, org updates etc.)
- Critical Practice Reflection sessions
- Course Unit Reviews – known as “Validation” in the RTO context and was a specific review of the validity of course unit curriculum
- Individual Staff Supervision with Program Manager

These processes supported:

- A substantial amount of family and carer engagement throughout the period of a student's participation
- Linking students into a diverse range of community-based health and welfare related services (e.g. AOD, Mental health, Primary Health, Centrelink, other educational services).

“We can bounce ideas off each other and that sort of thing, and we get it, because we’ve very much got the same sort of mindset around things.”

(Staff member)

3.4 How TRY Build supports personal development

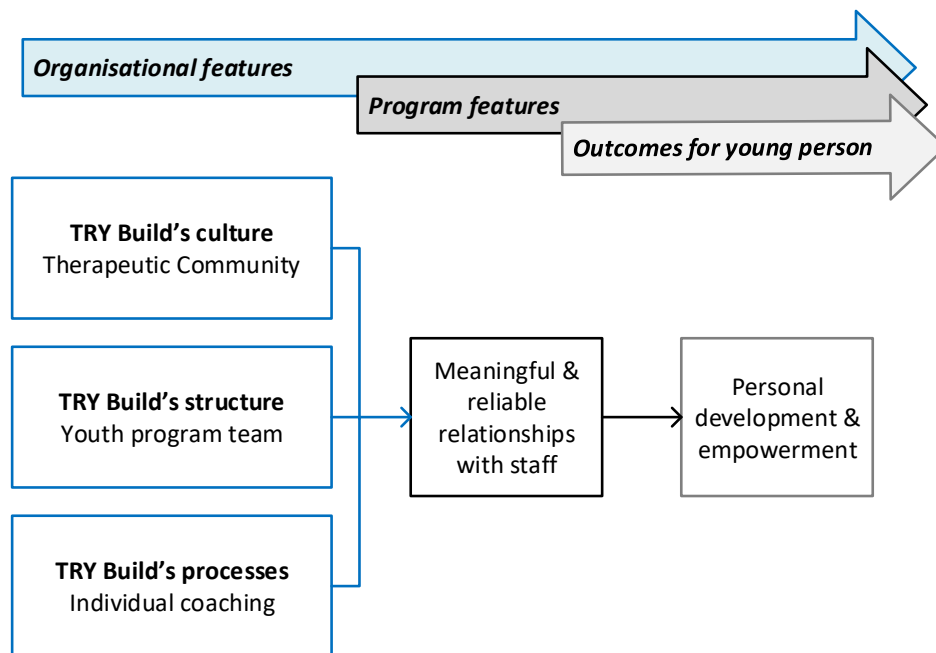


Figure 8 shows the key cultural, structural and policy elements that enable diverse relationships leading to outcomes in personal development and empowerment.

3.4.1 Building a therapeutic community

Reframing TRY Build as a modified therapeutic community meant emphasising the importance of safety, solidarity and support at the social enterprise. Young people were encouraged to contribute to an in-house community of people interested in changing behaviours or making different life choices. This positively impacted the program by enabling young people to confront personal and professional challenges. Rather than ask young people to be more resilient by themselves, the program was structured for connective resilience, by:

- Linking young people with services for counselling (i.e. trauma related counselling for refugees or new migrants);
- Putting processes and practices in place like staff de-briefing and escalation protocols;
- Creating safety and boundaries for students;
- Responding to individual behaviours that are not beneficial with an immediate response (i.e. being reminded of boundaries, conducting meetings with students/family members where appropriate) rather than punitive consequences;
- Being aware of the group dynamic and how this can be affected by individual



behaviours, and being able to alter the group dynamic by removing students if needed (e.g. in cases of bullying);

- Being flexible in education delivery based on students' different learning styles (e.g. different methods of education drawing on other methodologies/pedagogy); and
- Honouring individual acts of courage, for example speaking up in class or voicing personal needs.

3.4.2 The Youth Program Team

Personal development opportunities were supported at TRY Build by the Youth Program team which consists of a manager, two trainers, one youth worker, and two mentors. The team provided wraparound support, in-depth engagement, relationship building, and in-class mentoring. These elements were incorporated into class time. Class time was structured so that participants were able to leave the warehouse or room if they needed to consult a staff member, such as the Youth Worker, about a personal or health related issue. Staff encouraged young people to seek support when they need it.

"I know a lot of the time they might even just check in with how to respond to different situations or they just might want to debrief on a situation. So, I feel like they probably would use my background [youth counselling] knowledge just to maybe reaffirm that what they did was okay or how can we do it differently next time."

(Staff member)

Some social enterprise practitioners seek to 'fast track' personal development outcomes to enhance the wellbeing and capability of their young people. However, at TRY Build there was an understanding of the time investment necessary to contribute to personal development outcomes. The background knowledge of program staff (from youth counselling to trauma informed approaches) contributed to their willingness to address the complex challenges young people faced, whether at home, in their community, or in personal relationships.

Between 2016 and 2018, a pre-accredited training program run at TRY aimed to engage young people, and build their personal skills, relationships and capacity. It also acted as a 'feeder program' into the TRY Build course broadening the pool for student intake and allowing staff to build relationships over time.

Young people who had been connected to TRY Build for longer than the standard 6 months were provided with a strong support base to challenge the education and employment barriers they faced. In this context, the challenge for the organisation was balancing the requirement for outputs with the *real-time* support necessary for successful outcomes. One staff member comments on the time required to support young people:

He's had no parental - no male guidance and I think to a degree, he locked onto me a little bit as well because I would give him the time... I had all the time in the world for him because I just felt he needed - he needed - he didn't need to learn how to be a carpenter or anything like that. He needed just male guidance, just someone to come and talk to.

3.4.3 Individual coaching processes and practices

Individual coaching was provided by youth program staff. Managers and Youth Workers coached young people in their offices by setting specific appointments and making time for walk-in conversations as required. The staff inspired responsibility and autonomy by encouraging young people to plan ahead regarding, for instance, meeting public transport timetables.

Trainers coached students in class and ‘on the floor’ in the warehouse. They believed that learning and mastering new skills has personal benefits for program participants. The Trainers have the benefit of spending large amounts of time with young people during the day, from 9am to 3pm. This enables meaningful relationships to form:

“So, you’ve got Johnny that you know could really do with some one-on-one time... So, I allow half an hour to work with Johnny and we have a bit of banter. And they have no real ‘aha’ moments really, but he’s had a good experience for half an hour with a person, so an older male, who in their past experience, older males have been horrible.

You’ve just designed this space for them to be, and maybe to help them realise that they’ve got choices, you know, not everyone’s like that. I don’t have to be like that” (Staff member).

The mentor was a role that sat in-between formal trainer and youth worker. The program had one dedicated mentor and others who visited on a fortnightly or monthly basis. The hybridity of the role created room for conversations that young people choose not to have in other contexts. The in-house mentor had additional time to develop strong and supportive relationships, which were one of the most valuable elements of the program.

“It teaches them a discipline to be accurate but the biggest thing is it gives them self-confidence and self-belief that they can do it because for most of these kids, it’s the first time they’ve ever started and completed anything in their life, let alone taken home.”
(Staff member)

3.5 How TRY Build supports social participation

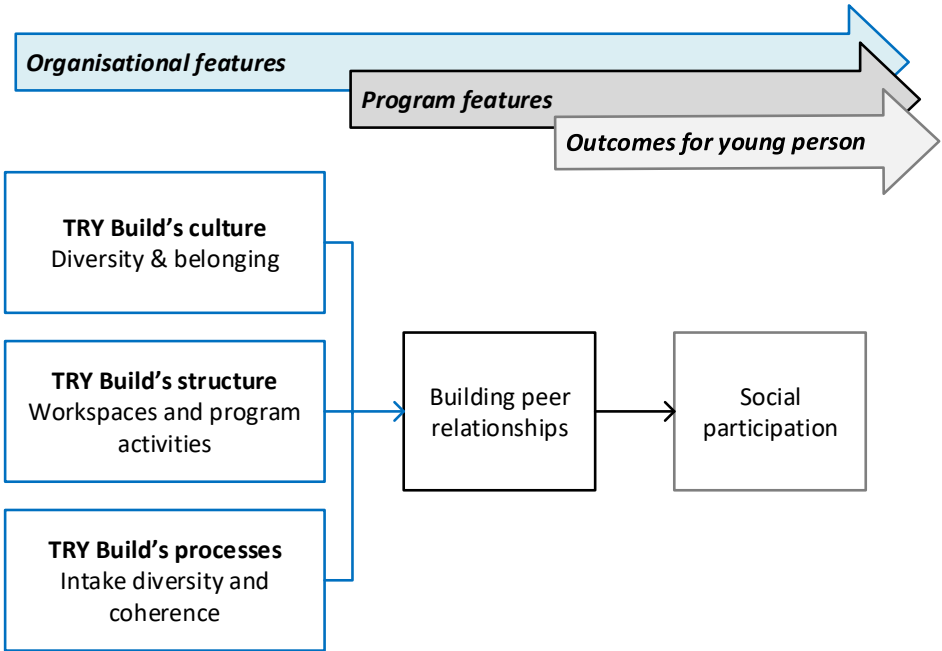
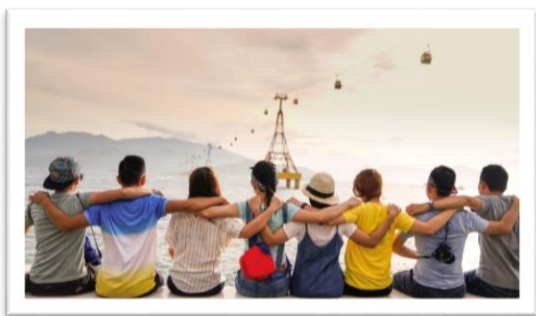


Figure 6 shows the key cultural, structural and policy elements that enable diverse relationships leading to outcomes in social participation.

3.5.1 Diversity and belonging



TRY Build's relationships with stakeholders who referred young people into the program allowed for greater diversity in the student group. A culturally diverse student group helps young people build problem solving skills and develop an appreciation of diversity itself (Denson and Zhang, 2010). We spoke with a Community service provider who felt that TRY were not only able to support diversity but also intervene in cycles of generational disadvantage:

"[W]hen you look at our cohort, the makeup, a lot of our students, there's generational disability, there's generational poverty, there's English as a second language, we're in a very multicultural, and often there is generational unemployment too. So, it's often hard to break that cycle.

... I think TRY Build are very good at keeping in contact with the students too. I think the students build a really good rapport with the trainers. So, I think there's that - We get it here, where our students like to come back and tell us what they're doing, which is great, when they're doing good things, it's great." (Community Stakeholder)

However, there was limited gender diversity within the student group, reflecting the gender balance of the industry, barriers for marginalised groups seeking pathways into the building industry, and other social influences like the impact of normative gender roles. Half of the young women we spoke to were interested in pursuing an apprenticeship in Building and Construction.

A sense of belonging in the program was created by a culture of acceptance, with young people expressing different cultural norms within the boundaries and parameters set out by the trainers and program staff (see Figure 6).

Young people working at TRY UnContained who had completed their time at TRY Build felt that completing the program with a peer group they could relate to enabled them to form lasting friendships and a sense of community.

"It is a bit difficult, because when you're entering a new country, everything is new, especially if you can't talk well to the people..."

It [TRY Build] is like a community, because at the first time when we started, the classmate that we had is all from different ethnic groups, like from different communities, different people, like the people who came from - they kicked out of school or they were on drugs and stuff, they're disabled or something like that. You're getting involved in a lot sort of people, you know, different sort of people."

(Apprentice)

3.5.2 Workspaces and program activities

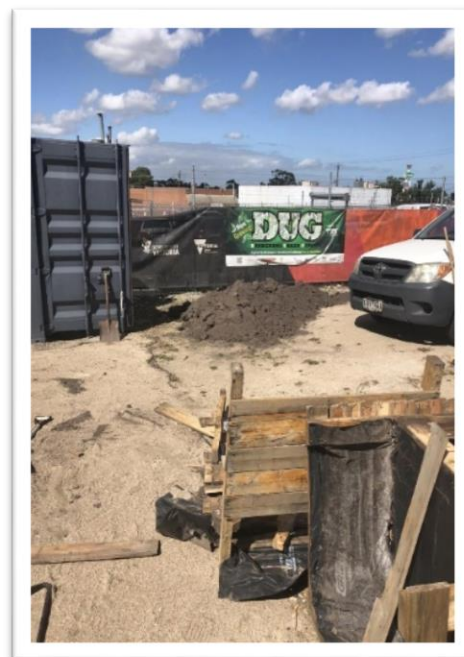
There were two main work areas at TRY Build—the Warehouse area and the indoor Classroom area. Both were located under one roof. Indoors there were two classrooms, one equipped with computers. These rooms neighboured the staff offices and were used to socialise when winter set in and the weather became cooler.

In the Warehouse there was a designated break area with a table tennis table and benches. Young people used this space for casual conversation and games; it was not usually used for lunches or socialising as many preferred to go outdoors during breaks. Behind the warehouse was an outdoor

area with a basketball ring and seats. This was a commonly used social area and sometimes a place to find solitude. The workbenches in the warehouse where young people learn, were sectioned off from the break area. They were a space for directed socialisation, for example discussing class projects in working teams or with the Trainers.

During our research, young people spent some time working offsite on the 'DUG Community Garden' project⁶. The Dandenong Urban Community Garden originally contained garden beds and a converted shipping container created by previous TRY Build participants. Activities involved levelling the site and removing the tables and benches. While the work was physically demanding, many of the young people participated and worked as a team to complete the task with the program staff. Many young people felt that it was good to be working on-site and get work experience:

"Yeah, it's good because it's different. It's not like the same thing over again. You're out somewhere different and outside instead of being in the factory. It's close to Dandenong Station, so it's just a two minute walk. Everyone gets their own way there" (Program participant).



A small number participated sporadically due to the physical nature of the work and were supported in their decision. The site was accessible by public transportation which participants considered an added bonus.

3.5.3 Building a diverse and cohesive student group

TRY Build supported a diverse student group which was built during the intake process. This process involved:

- Liaising with community referral partners regarding individual candidates. Young people were referred into the program from educational institutions, justice system services, and community services;
- Gathering background information about each student, including, where available, clinical information and psychosocial information;
- Interviewing young people to understand of the personality of the student and how they get along with others;
- Identifying shared interests among candidates to help build supportive and healing peer relationships; and
- Understanding the personal and professional goals of the young person, for example: if they would like to work in the Building industry, or if they are aiming to change aspects of their personal life and whether this can be supported at TRY Build.

This process was extremely lengthy and time consuming for staff; however, it allowed for the provision of correct support and helped maintain participant retention in the program. In ideal circumstances there would be a dedicated FTE resource to perform a clinical intake function.

⁶ For more on the DUG project see: <https://try.org.au/dug/>

3.6 How TRY Build supports transitions: Apprenticeship based employment

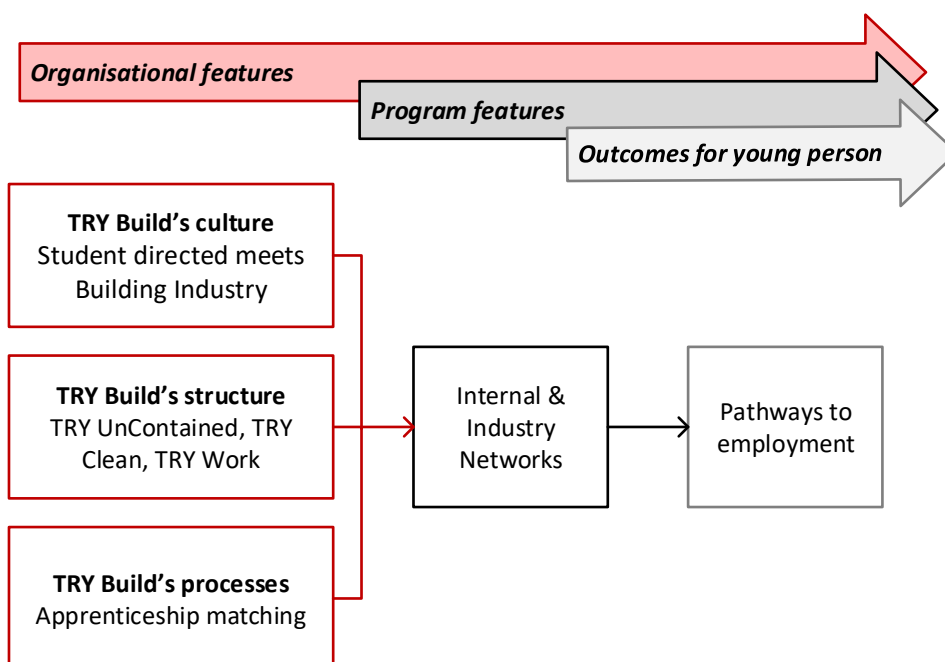


Figure 7 shows the key cultural, structural and policy elements that create meaningful, holistic support with outcomes in employment.

3.6.1 A student-centred building culture

The TRY Build staff practised a student-centred approach to learning and education. Staff with a background in the building industry and construction provided insight into the ways young people were required to work and learn in a professional setting; while staff with a background in youth and student services focused on the individual experience of young people in the program. This skill combination introduced young people to the demands of the building industry in a supportive environment.

"Industry contacts that we have who sort of have the same ethos as we do; other foundations who I have dealings with I would always reach out to them. They may have young people who are looking for an opportunity like we've got. And we do support each other through that, which I think is good. But it can be tough."

(Staff member)

While the program was tailored to provide for the student cohort, the rules of a 'regular job' still applied. That means participants were encouraged to turn up on time, treat fellow students and trainers with respect, and not play inappropriately with any of the tools or equipment. If young people could not get transport to work, there were alternatives available (eg calling the Youth Support Worker). Or if young people were experiencing conflict with another student, staff would assist (eg the mentor). Trainers reminded young people that they would be cautioned if they did something wrong with the equipment. In each of these cases the staff response secured the engagement and trust of the student. This formed part of the internal network which supported student participation and retention in the program.

3.6.2 The TRY Australia employment network

TRY Australia operates the social enterprises TRY UnContained and TRY Work, both of which provide pathways into employment for young people. Both social enterprises leverage the Victorian Social Procurement Framework to partner with large infrastructure projects, including the Level Crossing Removal Project.⁷

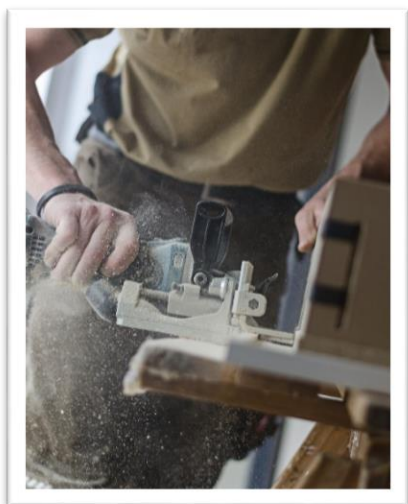
TRY Uncontained: While connected by location, the workspace of TRY Build was divided from the TRY UnContained workspace. Many of the young people we spoke to hoped to continue their training or work at TRY UnContained but were unsure of how to navigate this transition. Young people from previous student groups had transitioned into TRY UnContained to undertake further training and employment as apprentices.

TRY Work: Young people are supported to write up their resume and apply for external employment opportunities in labour hire and cleaning services. TRY Work Stakeholders in the Community Sector were keen to support young people's transitions and upskilling by utilising TRY Work services:

"I make a point of introducing myself to the young person... So that I build that relationship with them and give them good feedback and whatever. I can say, "Where's such and such?" "They've got a job. They've moved on somewhere else. They've got a job." I don't know what the stats are in terms of bringing young people through and then getting them into jobs but –." (Stakeholder)



3.6.3 Apprenticeship matching for employment outcomes



TRY Build and UnContained have assisted 12 young people with transitioning into internal apprenticeship positions and externally with partners at the Builders Academy and Simonds Homes.

We spoke with young people who had finished their course at TRY Build and were now apprenticing at TRY UnContained. One student reflected on the benefits of completing the TRY Build program:

"I hear now once they're finishing their course, they got a job. Even from the course that I had finished, there are so many students that they are working now and they've got apprenticeship so soon they're going to be a carpenter.

Some of the carpenters have got apprenticeship in different thing - electrician. Yeah, I had this student that also was helping me with the community connection. And sometimes seeing them in train station, say "Hi" and again, sharing the information what they're doing? How is their life?"

⁷ For more on TRY Build and the Level Crossing Removal project see: <https://try.org.au/2018/02/02/kick-starting-careers-in-the-building-and-construction-industry/>

TRY UnContained's off-site projects have provided young people with meaningful work. One young person commented on the Windana community project which involved build accommodation for people living in the Windana community in Maryknoll, Victoria.⁸ He described what the project meant to him:

"They're like homeless people that they don't have anywhere to live in. We've done a big project with Windana. We made actually houses for them. Once you're seeing them, you're feeling proud of yourself, like supporting the community, supporting the disadvantaged people, like disabled people, the people that they are out of - kicked out of community. You're supporting them. I'm feeling proud." (Apprentice)

The impact of the transition into work also has extended benefits for participants' family and can be life changing:

"I'm seeing, yeah, there is some students that are success now so they're really happy because they've got their job, they're helping their family. Sometime even they don't have job so 'Try Build' and 'Try Uncontained', they come over and help us and that's good.

It does make a lot of difference in your life. It affects a lot in your life. It's not just here to work with TRY. It's everywhere that you have got jobs. It does affect your life." (Apprentice)

⁸ For more information see: <https://windana.org.au/services/markyknoll-therapeutic-community/>

4 Conclusion

This case study report discussed findings primarily related to **Research Questions One and Two** of the broader study, and as such has focused on organisational features—contextual and characteristic—that support the social determinants of health outcomes of the enterprise.

TRY Build's therapeutic and targeted approach to education and training evolved between 2018 and 2019. The Therapeutic Communities approach provided a new direction for youth support services. The program was responsive and student centred, putting protective factors in place through the use of external support services and internally adapting to the learning style and psychosocial support needs of participants. This approach enabled young people to feel supported and safe, to build meaningful relationships with staff and peers, work on personal goals or challenges and pursue further training and employment. The targeted approach to wraparound support created opportunities for young people to focus on their individual strengths, goals and pathways and to address psychosocial risk factors.

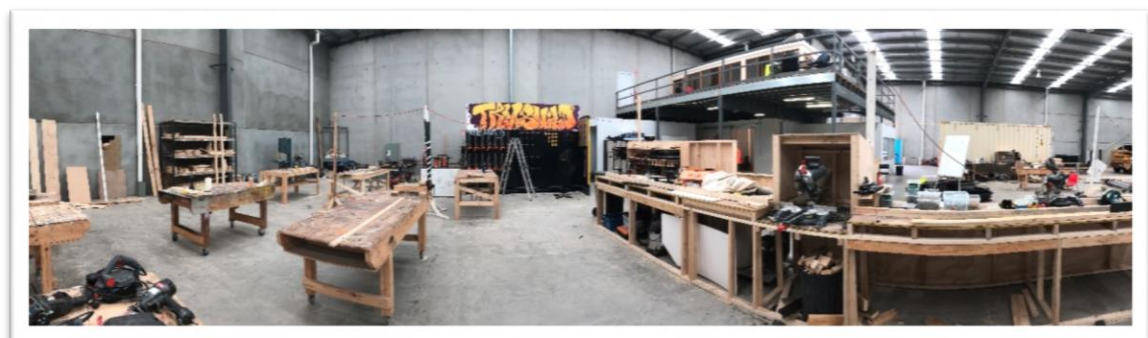
Health equity outcomes were pronounced among the TRY Build participants, as many had complex backgrounds and experienced significant barriers to education and employment. TRY Build was seen as a rare opportunity to develop skills that significantly enhance employability and provide employment pathways, for instance, in the building industry. TRY Build's relationships with external stakeholders were being built with the building industry and local community during our fieldwork.

TRY Build was initially established with a small operations team who were also responsible for other TRY Social Enterprises. In the initial phase workload impacted on a small number of staff members, leading to exhaustion in some cases. The workloads required to establish and operate social enterprises are described by some staff members as 'heavy and emotionally intense'. The impact of the program on staff wellbeing had changed under new management. Staff wellbeing and mental health were prioritised by new management and a strong team dynamic was formed. Staff we interviewed reported feeling safe and more supported at TRY Build than they had been in previous jobs in other industries.

The closure of TRY Build was difficult for staff who had committed energy, time and passion in order to support participants and engage in strategic planning. Many viewed the closure as premature and believed that the issues TRY Build faced could be addressed through long-term investment in developing a suitable course curriculum, in addition to strategic high-level partnerships.

What we're trying to do here really aligns with what government are trying to do; social procurement, all these things. We didn't really have the proper strategy or discourse with government...

One of the things government could do is somehow mandate that there's a margin there for social enterprises to be competitive. Because, social enterprises, ultimately, to thrive need to be able to invest in their health and wellbeing resources. (Staff member)



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Appendix A

This case study was developed via ethnographic data collection methods including two focus groups, 22 interviews, analysis of organisational documents and two weeks of participant observation.

Focus groups

To kick-start data collection, CSI facilitated a 90 minute workshop at TRY Build on 17 January 2019. The first workshop focused on TRY Build's ultimate goal as outlined in their Theory of Change, to: *increase the educational skills and employment pathways for disadvantaged young people*. TRY Build aim to: *build more equitable communities with skilled and resilient young people*, and have the following sub-impacts:

- Stronger more equitable communities
- Break intergenerational poverty
- Young people will be happy, healthy, employed, well rounded, adaptable, educated, confident, have social skills and qualifications

The workshop was attended by seven youth program staff and members of the executive.

Participant observation

One member of the research team participated in two weeks of the 26 week TRY Build program and its day-to-day activities. The two weeks of participant observation occurred over five months between February and May 2019. This time was spent in different areas of TRY Build, including: the Classroom, Warehouse, and at the DUG Community Garden Project.

The researcher wrote extensive field notes at the conclusion of each day.

Interviews

One member of the research team interviewed 22 of TRY Builds stakeholders between May 2019 and November 2019, including:

Stakeholder	Number
Participants of TRY Build and Apprentices (young people)	9 interviews
Program Staff	6 interviews
Managerial staff	4 interviews
Executive staff	1 interview
Board members	0 Interview
Youth service providers (external)	2 interviews
Host-Employers (organisations)	0 interviews
RTO (organisations)	0 interviews