



FOLDING OUR
FUTURES

UNITED FUTURES

INSPIRE | EMPOWER | ENGAGE

'United Futures' Program: *Fostering Creative and Community-Minded Changemakers*



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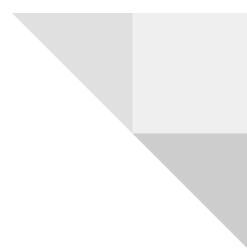
Situation

Young people are increasingly recognized as critical actors in matters of global importance. "I place great hope in their power to shape our future," Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon famously told leaders and dignitaries at UN Headquarters in New York.

However, disenfranchised and disengaged youth often lack the resources and motivation to explore their potential and take control of their life. Additionally, **community involvement opportunities are limited at a young age** and are often difficult to find.

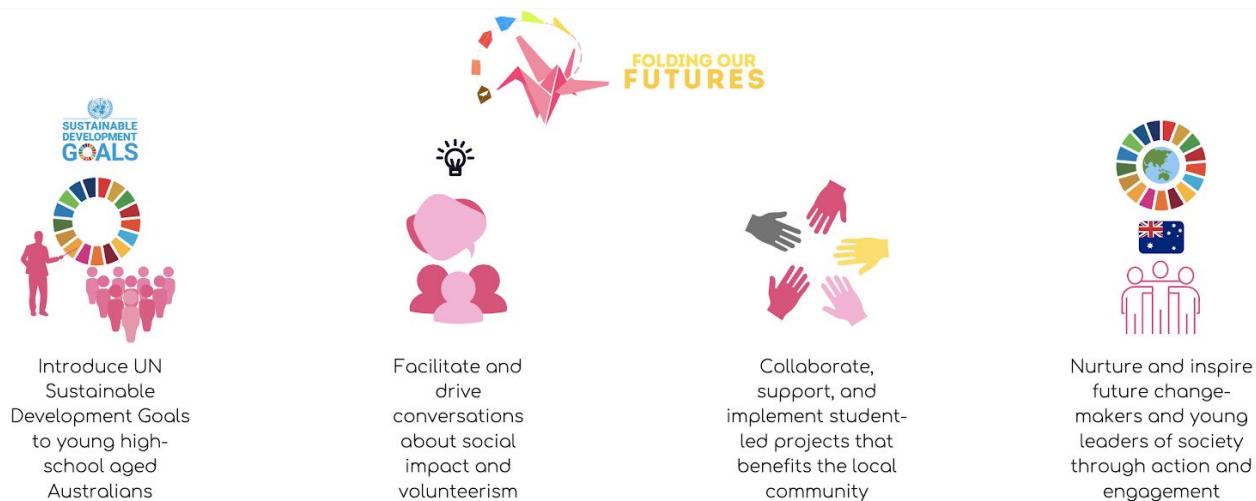
To be able to thrive in a world of constant change we now live in, young people need opportunities to dream, lead, and initiate change in and out of school, applying it across all aspects of their lives.

When our youth are empowered to change their community, this causes a paradigm shift within community dynamics that eliminates the incumbent view of youth as being inept or inward-looking. Furthermore, youth that view themselves as changemakers are more likely to be positive contributors to society in the future, leading the way for philanthropy in the community.



Our Value Proposition

We exist to inspire the next generation of changemakers through our “United Futures” in-school program, which seeks to foster creativity, engagement, and community-mindedness in Victorian secondary aged students.



Our program is unique in the sense that it does not only provide a safe space for collaboration, but provides our youth with the resources and support to actually create change, in action and impact based community projects. Each cycle of these youth-led social impact projects not only fosters empathy and engagement with the greater community, but also develops important 21st Century skills of leadership, problem solving, teamwork, and communication.



Folding Our Futures activates youth as changemakers by working with educators, schools, parents, and organisations to create an environment where young people can lead and practice the following skills:

1. Internal Motivation and Integrity
2. Empathy
3. Collaborative Leadership
4. Creativity and Innovation

We founded Folding Our Futures by identifying a key insight, often overlooked by seasoned social entrepreneurs and the community as a whole. One of the most effective ways to improve our communities and the lives of young people is to put youth in charge.

We strive to create opportunities for youth that unlock their creative ideas; cultivate spaces for empathy, leadership, teamwork and changemaking; and consequently, create positive change for the many, not the few.

Our program is a transformative, exciting opportunity for Year 7-9 students to shape their thinking, goal set for their high school journey, explore their passions, engage with their community and create positive change for their local area.



Our Aims

*"The world needs **thinkers**, the world needs **doers**, but above all the world needs **thinkers who do**."*

1. To inspire and develop students' self-belief and motivation and to elicit their potential for initiating positive change
2. To engage students with the greater community through meaningful, impact-based projects
3. To empower and equip our youths with valuable societal skills to support their growth into future leaders of our communities

Mission Statement

Folding Our Futures provides young secondary aged students opportunities to engage with their community through the development and delivery of social impact projects. Centred around the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals with a particular focus on environmental sustainability and health and wellbeing, we aim to inform high school students about prevalent issues and support them in their own local projects. Our mission is



to inspire and motivate the next generation of changemakers in local communities.

Why the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all." The SDGs, set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and intended to be achieved by the year 2030, outlines 17 goals in order to achieve a prosperous and peaceful future for the world. The UN encourages these goals to be implemented on a local, national, and international scale. Our focus will be on a local scale, making positive impacts to local communities through projects designed and led by your students!



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>



Program outline

Please see below for a brief description of each stage of the 'United Futures' workshop program. We are always happy to tailor our program to suit the needs of your school, please let us know if there are any special values/themes for us to highlight in our workshops.

Initial Visit

We will begin with a brief introduction of who we are, and our aims for this session. We will then introduce the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as highlighting their significance in the greater society.



Initial workshop presentation with Macleod College Year 7 students, August 2019



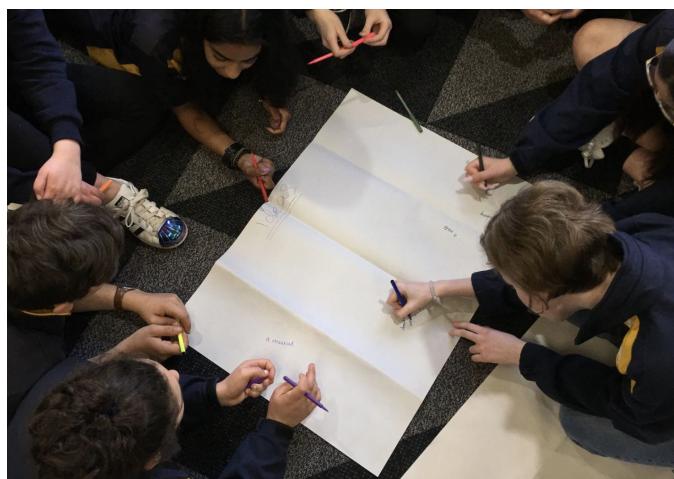
Initial workshop presentation with Coburg High School Year 8 students, August 2019

FOF facilitators will lead a short interactive presentation outlining the impact of youth-led community leadership. In addition, there will be an introduction to the community project workshops and the commitment required. The presentation attempts to help everyone involved understand the program timeline and expectations for subsequent workshops, should they be interested in the next phases of our program.

While the initial session will be delivered to all students attending the session in the partner school, follow up sessions to build upon and complete the community project is voluntary. Teachers can identify those who will benefit most from the program and encourage them to participate.

Idea formation

We guide youth to use their passions and creativity to bring attention to issues they care about, in the form of a group brainstorming session (may be split into smaller groups depending on size). FOF facilitators will describe the Sustainable Development Goals and examples of our previous youth-run community projects to kickstart discussion. As we want to encourage creativity and to provide students with full autonomy and freedom to choose their own projects, any projects that are in line with the UN 17 SDGs and are beneficial to the local community can be implemented.





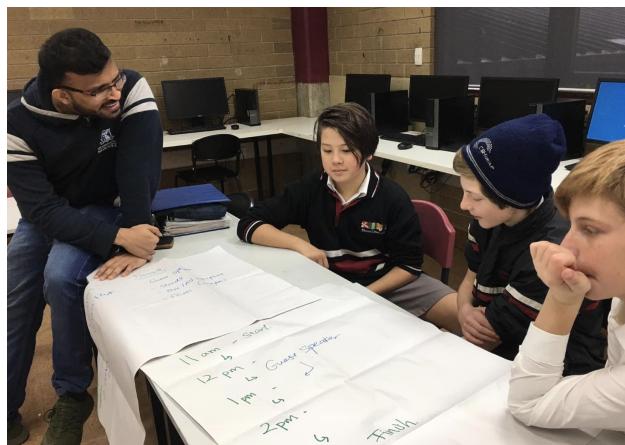
Project brainstorming with Coburg High School Year 9 students, August 2019

Project planning and progression

FOF facilitators will assist the participants in planning their project by showing them how to collaborate in a team and problem-solve various project issues, such as marketing, logistics, how to get external help, etc. Participants are expected to develop their teamwork and problem-solving skills, as well as their critical thinking skills as they navigate and progress through the project.



Project planning with Coburg High School Year 9 students, September 2019



Project planning with Mount Clear College Year 7 students, July 2019

Project Implementation

We support youth in implementing their project once they feel they have come up with a good strategy. Allowing them to carry out their vision with regular encouragement and coaching will be an empowering experience and allow them to feel supported in the process. Participants are allowed (and encouraged) to draw from the help of others (such as peers, families, businesses, community organisations, etc.) even if they are not directly participating in the program. We will assist students to source materials/equipment required for their community projects, and often receive support from our generous community sponsors and businesses.



Clean up event implementation with Macleod College, October 2019 (left)



University volunteers packing care packages with Mount Clear College students, July 2019 (right)

Youth displaying empathy can change the perception of the greater community, therefore building trust among community members. Through this process, students pool local resources, people and businesses into their solution, creating a supportive network within the community. Our program is not necessarily about the cause the students choose, but rather the process they go through to put their idea into action and the skills they develop throughout their journey.



Community Care Box with essentials with Macleod College students, November 2019

We hope that with our program, the children who are involved can be inspired to do good in the future, and to share in their passion for positive change in the community to their peers.



Program Timeline



FAQs

What is the cost for this program?

Our core values are to empower, inspire, and engage, and we would like to provide this program to you, **free of charge**, as we believe all students from all schools should have the opportunity to truly engage and embrace their communities. However, we will prioritise schools based on low SES region on



our waitlist. If you are able to, we would appreciate any donation made to support other disadvantaged schools participating in our program.

How long will the program run for?

Our initial workshop will be a 1hr long session, preferably presented to the entire year level cohort.

Follow-up workshops to work on community projects can be flexible. Most schools prefer to run them during lunchtimes/after-school sessions to minimise class disruption, however some schools may prefer to run an intensive program where project development/completion may be done within the same day, or the same week as initial presentation.

How do I sign up my school?

Please fill our our expression of interest form for 2020 and submit to us your availabilities through the form below. Please also email us your Certificate of Currency (public liability) to info@foldingourfutures.org as we need to comply with insurance/university policies.

Expression of interest form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZEJ3g8sv89U_FgLw9kR2SGK1iOSnzDIQ6EySnqgwqd0Q-cA/viewform

Who runs these workshops?

We are a university student-led organisation, and all events are run by university student volunteers based in the University of Melbourne. All



workshop volunteers have valid Working With Children Checks and have volunteer insurance covering every workshop.

Contact Us

For more information and should you have any queries regarding our program or our organisation, please don't hesitate to reach out to us!

Email: info@foldingourfutures.org

Website: <https://foldingourfutures.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/foldingourfutures/>