

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Bridging the Gap: empowering locationally disadvantaged young people

Professor Rhonda Craven and a team from the Centre for Educational Research and The Benevolent Society are examining an intervention program, *Bridging The Gap*, for locationally disadvantaged young people in areas of NSW. This research is funded through an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in partnership with The Benevolent Society.

'The area and community where we grow up has a significant impact on our lives and social well-being' explains Professor Craven. 'Our research focuses on those areas and communities that are "locationally disadvantaged" within NSW and how these disadvantages can hinder the psychosocial development and socioeconomic outcomes of young people. The *Bridging the Gap* program aims to produce positive social and educational benefits, allowing young people to develop strong self-concepts and social capital'.

Two communities have been selected as research locations. Students and their parents will be asked to participate in a number of different interventions over a three year period. The focus will be on issues surrounding the ideas of "bonding", "linking" as well as "building bridges", and participation will be through a variety of campaigns that will be initiated across the three year period. The strength and impact of these interventions will be measured at the end of each year through surveys, focus groups with students and parents, as well as large community forums.



This program offers both social and economic benefits to Australian young people who are locationally disadvantaged and flow on benefits to their communities. The research will allow real solutions to be developed and implemented at the community level, allowing young people to use their strengths to achieve their goals.

Project Title: Bridging the gap on locational disadvantage: Impact of community-identified interventions on social capital, psychosocial and socioeconomic outcomes

Funding has been set at: \$665,000

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