Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Key College, A School for Homeless Youth: A Follow-up of Ex-students.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MEdPsych

in

Educational Psychology

at Massey University, Albany,

New Zealand.

Abby V. F. Martin

2013
Abstract

Homelessness has a detrimental impact on health, social, and economical outcomes. Although homelessness affects all groups, young people have the highest rates and are the age group most at risk of experiencing homelessness. Interventions which seek to address youth homelessness are varied and many have not undergone rigorous evaluation. One approach to intervention is to improve homeless youths’ ability to engage with society and through employment. Employment improves economic resources which in turn supports housing stability. However homeless youth may lack the skills to obtain and maintain employment and therefore education and training is an important step towards this goal. This study sought to follow up ex-students of an alternative education programme for homeless youth located in Sydney Australia. Thirty one participants consented to their involvement and were administered an online survey. The survey examined ex-students’ current situations in terms of employment/education, housing, finances, life satisfaction, and their perspectives of their time at Key College. The results show 38% of those surveyed are still homeless, 64% are unemployed, 55% are living below the poverty line, 73% are satisfied with their lives overall, and almost all participants expressed positive perspectives of Key College. The results were compared to data sets of comparable populations. It was concluded that although the ex-students remain disadvantaged, they have made considerable progress towards stabilising their lives.
Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank the participants of this study; without whom this research would not have been possible. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the staff at Youth off the Streets and Key College. In particular I would like to thank Ms. Min Bonwick and Ms. Shan Short for their support and on-going efforts towards this project. Lastly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Tom Nicholson, for his advice and contribution towards this study.
Table of Contents

Abstract..............................................................................................................................................ii
Acknowledgements............................................................................................................................iii
Contents Page......................................................................................................................................iv
List of Tables.......................................................................................................................................vii
List of Abbreviations.........................................................................................................................viii
List of Appendices..............................................................................................................................ix
Introduction.........................................................................................................................................1
  Description of Key College.............................................................................................................2
  Key College Philosophy..................................................................................................................3
  Differences among homeless youth...............................................................................................4
  Definitions of homeless....................................................................................................................7
  Definitions of youth..........................................................................................................................9
  Characteristics of participants in the present study.................................................................10
  Summary and outline of thesis.....................................................................................................10
Literature Review...............................................................................................................................11
  Description of homelessness: prevalence, characteristics, causes, and consequences. ................11
    What is being done about it? The Australian government’s response to homelessness..................28
  Interventions..................................................................................................................................30
  Summary of literature review.........................................................................................................50
  The present study............................................................................................................................51
List of Tables

Table 1. Demographics 53
Table 2. Further Education and Training Completed Since Key College 70
Table 3. Ex-students’ Perspectives of the Influence of Key College on Their Current Lives 71
Table 4. Ex-students’ Perspectives of the Best Things About Key College 72
Table 5. What Ex-Students Think Could be Improved on at Key College 74
Table 6. Ex-Students’ Employment 77
Table 7. Housing Status of Ex-students 78
Table 8. Ex-students’ Total Weekly Incomes 80
Table 9. Average Life Satisfaction Scores: Sub-Scores and Total score 82
Table 10. Ex-students’ Comments Regarding Their Lives and Experiences at Key College 84
Table 11. Comparisons Between Ex-students and Comparable Groups 94
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EET</td>
<td>Employment, Education, and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHCSIA</td>
<td>Family, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIAESR</td>
<td>Melbourne Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAHA</td>
<td>National Affordable Housing Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>National Youth Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOTS</td>
<td>Youth Off The Streets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix 1.</th>
<th>Online Survey for Ex-Students of Key Colleges</th>
<th>124</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2.</td>
<td>Qualitative Responses Collected From the Online Survey</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>