

Tender Bridge™ *Quarterly*

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Tender Bridge email tenderbridge@acer.edu.au

Phone 03 9277 5553



Welcome

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Tender Bridge Quarterly. Since our last edition, we have completed the LLEAP-Leading Learning in Education and Philanthropy 2012 Survey, with another terrific response - 506 surveys were returned from philanthropic foundations and trusts, not-for-profits working in education, and schools. Never before has Australia paid so much attention to improving philanthropy's connection to, and engagement with, education.

The LLEAP project, a partnership with The Ian Potter Foundation and the Origin Foundation, is committed to building the knowledge base to better inform developments such as the Australian Government's response to the Gonski Report Recommendation 41. In this edition, read more about LLEAP activities, including the forthcoming Special Event, Creating an Engaged Society, an event you truly won't want to miss!

Also, get some powerful insights into growing and developing your project ideas from our special feature on The Song Room, as well as another Tender Bridge case of success—the partnership between Armidale High School in New South Wales and not-for-profit organisation Backtrack.

I hope you enjoy reading about what we've been doing. We welcome hearing about what you've been doing, too. As always, we value your support, your feedback, and remember, we love to hear your stories!

Warm regards,

Michelle Anderson

Project Director, Tender Bridge

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The Song Room

Caroline Aebersold, 14 August 2012

The Song Room conducts free, tailored programs in the creative arts in schools where these are not currently offered. Programs are delivered to over 200 school communities each year to around 20,000 children every week. Over 700,000 children in the most marginalised communities right across Australia benefit from The Song Room programs. Tender Bridge team member Leanne Eames caught up with The Song Room CEO Caroline Aebersold.

How do you connect with schools?

The schools find us, or we find the schools; we don't market widely and we're not fee for service so it's mainly a word-of-mouth process. We target those areas or schools most in need based on the composition of the school cohort. In regional areas we might run a program across a cluster of schools in a community, which means that a Song Room Teaching Artist can be employed across multiple schools. The Song Room employs the Teaching Artist in a partnership arrangement with the school. The model is tailored to suit each school's needs, the art forms they want, and any other requirements. We engage an artist who is already based in the region they will be working in.

How would you gauge a school you are considering running a program in?

We use a range of information sources, which might include the SES (socioeconomic status) scores of the school and the MySchool website, and we look at areas of high need, marginalised school populations. The level of need is determined by a set of factors we use that includes a high percentage of non-native English speakers or indigenous or special needs students.

How does it actually 'work'?

The relationship with the school is important. We engage with the school and the program management team to identify the needs and interests and ascertain what kind of program would be the most appropriate for them. Strong commitment by the principal is key, so we need their support as well as all of the teaching staff. The next step is to employ the artist, who goes into the school to meet the teachers and the principal and go through the program objectives. The Song Room Teaching Artist does a consultation to ensure the program meets the school's needs. It's a genuine partnership based around a model that's tailored to get the best outcomes for that particular school. The Song Room provides the structure, and supports the collaboration process needed to get the program off the ground in the school.



Students in the bilingual Richmond West Primary School have shown improvements in numeracy and literacy through engagement with The Song Room's tailored music and arts programs.

Only then does the Song Room Teaching Artist go into the classroom, usually one day a week at a school, maybe two if it's a big school, or maybe five days if the Teaching Artist is working across a cluster of our schools.

What is the capacity of not-for-profits for making connections between philanthropics and schools?

Capacity building is a strong focus for The Song Room. The Song Room provides a free program that is funded from a number of different sources. We source the funds, liaise with the school, and then deliver the program to the school. We like Tender Bridge because we like to support schools in sourcing funds. We like to build the capacity of the schools we work with, and build the capacity of the teachers within the school so that the program is sustainable. Teachers see the value of having a creative arts specialist in the school after they've had The Song Room program. We've tried a number of different models to help

schools fund programs, and we use a range of different models in our endeavour to really embed the capacity within the school. One issue is that disadvantaged schools can be challenged in terms of their capacity to both source funds and to write grant applications, and they sometimes want The Song Room to help in this way. We help them to access funds directly, and we've helped drive the process in a number of successful partnerships, some of which have led to securing NAB Schools First funding. We like to look at how we can skill up schools.

Do you take advantage of Artists in Residence funding provided by the Federal government?

No, that funding isn't appropriate to our needs, because we are not about the artist bringing their own thing into the school, but about implementing a Song Room-designed program that uses arts as a means to improve social and educational outcomes. An 'artist-in-residence' type outcome is one component of that, but only one. Our program is based on independent research commissioned in 2009 that led to a report called 'Bridging the Gap in School Achievement Through the Arts'*. There were three main findings that came out of that research: children who participate in The Song Room program are more likely to attend school; achievement levels improve by a year both in terms of NAPLAN results and right across the curriculum; and there are documented improvements in students' social and emotional wellbeing.

The Song Room Teaching Artist becomes a source of inspiration to the students. He or she is constantly in the classroom with the teacher and in that way helps to build the capacity of that teacher. It also helps the classroom teacher to see a different side of the students; they get to observe the student behaving in a different way with the teaching artist than in the classroom. This can help the teacher to view the capacity of the student differently. Classroom teachers report that they see a different side of students. A change in the culture and dynamics in the classroom are key sustainability outcomes.

What are your funding requirements?

About one-third of our funding comes from the Federal Government, some from state governments, and a third from corporate and philanthropic foundations. The mix is changing as we grow. Originally we were Victorian-based, but now that we are national we can approach different funding sources, including national organisations or companies. The partnerships approach is important.

From a Song Room perspective, how are you building a bridge between funders and schools?

We broker funding and support, and then deliver the funding in



Independent research has shown that The Song Room's programs lift school attendance, grades and social and emotional wellbeing in students of all ages.

to schools. We've started to bridge this connection, partly by raising funds to connect philanthropics with the schools, and we encourage the schools to seek funding.

How did you get so connected?

One reason we've become successful in building our diverse funding relationship is that we have a focus on strengthening our connections both within The Song Room and with other organisations.

How 'engaged' is philanthropy in your program?

More and more funders are interested in seeing their funds at work, they are looking for 'meaningful' philanthropy. What we want is a 'win-win-win' (school-The Song Room-funder) situation that gives value to all participants, and we are looking more and more at how we can effect this.

What do you see as the role of the school in developing partnerships?

For The Song Room to be successful, we rely on principals and schools having a strong commitment to the partnership. While they are not paying, we ask for their full commitment to their partnership with us. For the program to be sustainable, for teachers to be engaged, and to properly evaluate the programs, we need the schools to work with us. Everyone has to be 'on board'.



A student from Fitzroy's Sacred Heart School performs an original composition written in The Song Room's Harmony in Strings program.

Given you've been so successful, do you have any tips for schools when applying for funding?

Ensure that resources, including time, are targeted so that it's a good fit with your needs and what you're asking for. It's not

just about chasing the dollars; it's about finding what's most appropriate for your needs. There is value in making sure you get the messages right. Put time into making your key message what you want it to be.

What else would you like Tender Bridge readers to know about The Song Room?

We're moving more into online creative arts resources and aligning what our programs do with the Australian Arts Curriculum. We've been working with Education Services Australia and the Federal Government on this, and we're currently in the testing phase of *SongRoom:Live!*, our new online classroom that will incrementally go live from the end of 2012. Stay tuned!

**The research that resulted in the report "Bridging the Gap in School Achievement Through the Arts" (Vaughan, Harris & Caldwell, 2011), was commissioned by The Song Room and conducted by Educational Transformations with the generous support of the Macquarie Group Foundation and cooperation of participating schools. The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.songroom.org.au/research/the-songroom-research>*

Transforming Education Through the Arts, by Brian Caldwell and Tanya Vaughan, (ISBN 9780415687027, December 2011, 170 pages) is available from the ACER Bookshop, tel: 92775490

To find out more about The Song Room, go to <http://www.songroom.org.au/>

From the Mouths of Funders

Lisa George, Head of Macquarie Foundation

The primary focus for the Macquarie Group Foundation is to support and encourage staff in the communities where they live and work.

"Our funding is directly through staff involvement in not-for-profits, and our lens is on staff leadership within educational organisations."

Through an association with a Macquarie Group staff member in the company's Melbourne office, the Foundation saw that supporting some long-term research would help The Song Room strengthen its case to government for funding.

"Our funding also focuses on capacity building for not-for-profits. We saw that The Song Room was building their research and evaluation capacity, and that this was critical for them to grow their program. This was in line with our broader philosophy to contribute to skilled and sustainable capacities of not-for-profits."

The Foundation is keen to develop partnerships for the long term, and rarely funds on a one-off basis, which is why staff involvement becomes critical. Relationships are all-important.

"We can't fund schools directly, but of course many staff are involved with local schools, and we are very much committed to the schools in communities where our staff live and work. We try to support where we can through in-kind support and volunteering such as our Big Buddy program where hundreds of Macquarie staff globally read to children in local schools every week."



Leading Learning
in Education and
Philanthropy

Survey update

The LLEAP - Leading Learning in Education and Philanthropy survey is now closed, and we received 506 responses from schools, not-for-profits and philanthropy. Thanks to all of you out there who contributed! The LLEAP report for 2012 will be out later this year – stay tuned!

The findings from this year's survey are making a contribution to the thinking around the Gonski Report Recommendation 41, that "The Australian Government should create a fund to provide national leadership in philanthropy in schooling, and to support schools in need of assistance to develop philanthropic partnerships."

Models of Collaboration workshops

LLEAP 'Models of Collaboration' workshops were held in Sydney (7th June 2012) and in Melbourne (18th July); a third is planned for the 20th November in Perth.

A key purpose of these workshops is to create a dialogue around the different scenarios of engagement across education and

philanthropy, building on what we discovered in Year 1 of LLEAP. (See page 34 of the LLEAP Dialogue Series: A guide to grow your ideas in education for maximum impact via: <http://www.acer.edu.au/lleap>).

The workshops in both Sydney and Melbourne included a good even mix across philanthropy, non-profits and education, with about forty participants attending each event. Group and facilitated discussions during the workshops revolved around: What are the models of engagement? Why, when, with whom, for whom and how are the models used? What are the benefits and impacts of different models? What are the challenges (and for whom) of developing and implementing different models?

Using the results from these discussions in all workshops, we are seeking to:

- *Develop some guiding principles for the various models.*
- *Identify examples of these models (or variations of them) in practice so we can develop some cases of support to accompany the guiding principles.*
- *Identify new or variations of the models; and possibly challenge current ways of thinking about engagement.*

If you would like to participate in the November workshop in Perth, please email Leanne at tenderbridge@acer.edu.au to be notified when workshop details have been confirmed.

TENDER BRIDGE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

Following the enormous success of both our **Building a Culture for Partnering** (run in collaboration with Victoria's Business Working with Education Foundation) and **Grantseeking for Success** professional learning programs in 2012, both programs will be run again in 2013. Dates will be published in the December edition of the Tender Bridge Quarterly.

Creating an Engaged Society

18 October, 2012

The LLEAP 2011 findings showed that '**student engagement**' was a key area of focus for schools, not-for-profits working in education and philanthropic foundations and trusts. So the Tender Bridge team is very pleased to offer this **LLEAP Special Event**.

Drawing on current research and innovative practices, Professor Bill Lucas will explore the topic of student engagement, illustrating his session with examples of collaboration involving different combinations of philanthropic, not-for-profit, government, education and business. (click here for flyer or email Leanne on tenderbridge@acer.edu.au)

Registration: 9.00 am

Session: 9.30 am – 12.30 pm with a light lunch to follow

Venue: Trilogy Room, Park Hyatt Melbourne, 1 Parliament Square, off Parliament Place

Cost: \$66.00 (GST inc)



*Caitriona Fay (in green) from The Ian Potter Foundation talks about how philanthropy connects with education during Day 2 of the **Building a Culture for Partnering** program.*

TENDER BRIDGE CASE OF SUCCESS: CASE 6

Armidale High School, NSW/Backtrack Community Partnership

Armidale High School has been a Tender Bridge subscriber since December 2010. The school has had an ongoing partnership with not-for-profit BackTrack Youth Works since 2006. The partnership has been so successful that Carolyn Lupton, the school's Deputy Principal, has recently been seconded out of the school to look at developing the partnership as a regional model.

Armidale High School (AHS) and BackTrack Youth Works (BYW) have had a strong partnership since 2006, when BackTrack first started working with young Indigenous people in Armidale.

AHS, established in 1921, is a comprehensive, partially-selective high school situated on the south side of Armidale in NSW. The school has about 90 Aboriginal students out of a total school population of just over 600. The school has a range of community partnerships that have been initiated to cater for a wide variety of student career transition programs.

BackTrack Youthworks is a not-for-profit organisation based in Armidale NSW. BackTrack's mission is "to offer young people who have lost their way

an opportunity to reconnect with their education and training, to become work ready, find jobs, lead happy and productive lives and participate fully in the community."

Four established BackTrack programs are available to Armidale High School. These are:

- **Iron Man Welders**, focussing on metal engineering skills and qualifications,
- **Ag Lads**, providing necessary agricultural based skills, qualifications and employment in areas of rural skills shortage,
- **Paws Up**, where young people work with dogs to improve relationships, communication skills, and
- **Imagine This**, an innovative girls program.

Since BackTrack began running programs at AHS, there has been a documentable increase in the number of young people who have been successful in achieving improved schooling outcomes whilst attaining industry qualifications and experience. There has also been a considerable reduction in suspension rates

and increases in attendance rates within the school.

How does it work?

The school selects the most appropriate students for the BackTrack programs based on Learning Support and Welfare team recommendations and quantitative data on behaviour referrals, suspensions, attendance and academic performance within the school. Depending on their age, students are enrolled in a Certificate II in either Agriculture or Primary Industries at Tocal Agricultural College delivered through the school. The formal learning is structured around a successfully trialled model that is a combination of "on the job" learning at four identified "training properties" around the region and various real work placement opportunities, and formal learning on site at AHS. Formal



Engagement and attendance has been greatly enhanced as a result of the program.



Hands on skills are key to the success of the program.

qualifications in the safe use of chemicals and chainsaw operations as well as OH&S training are also externally delivered. The school counts attendance at BackTrack as attendance at school.

Who benefits?

Currently there are 51 young Indigenous people involved in the BackTrack programs, 36 boys and 15 girls (this includes students from AHS and Duval High School). Among the 51 participants there are two Indigenous trainee youth workers who have come through the BackTrack program and currently three school-based trainees in Primary Industries. "However, the figure of 51 participants does not accurately reflect the large number of people who benefit from the BackTrack programs" says Carolyn. "The level of engagement of these young people and the outstanding outcomes benefit the whole community, such as through flood relief work and community service activities. There have also been significant reductions in youth crime rates in the Armidale LGA that can be

partly attributed to the program. Parents of young people are constantly arriving at the shed and/or school with a plea to 'take on' their son or daughter. Community attitudes have begun to change owing to the outcomes of this program. Local graziers who have never had real contact with Indigenous people are welcoming these young people onto their farms to work side by side with them. Word of mouth is spreading like wildfire and some weeks three crews of young people are out working on farms accompanied by youth workers."

How did AHS develop a relationship with BackTrack Youthworks?

Carolyn goes on to explain how the partnership got off the ground.

"The partnership grew out of a prior existing relationship and identification of the school by Regional support staff as a focus to target improved attendance, particularly by those most at-risk. I knew BackTrack's founder when I was Head Teacher of welfare at the other high school in town and used to send students

to a program one day a week. Once I moved to AHS as Deputy Principal, I could see a real need to do something different for those students who were caught up in the cycle of suspension from school. With the majority of these young people, I knew we were trying to fit square pegs into round holes and it was a no-win situation. I had always been a supporter of Bernie [BackTrack's founder] and BackTrack and knew that his approach to working with young people was and is unique. So I approached him, and BackTrack were more than happy to help". BackTrack and AHS worked together to identify students who were in need and maintained regular contact. Since that time it has developed into a very successful partnership.

How is the partnership funded?

The majority of funding for BackTrack comes from philanthropic sources of funding. "Most of the staff at BackTrack had little or no experience in preparing funding submissions so I took on this role as something I can do to ensure that the partnership is sustained. This is how and

why we found Tender Bridge. We applied for and were successful in obtaining a Schools First Impact Award in 2010 and for the last two years have been successful in obtaining partnership funding through the Youth Attainment and Partnerships initiative. We have also received smaller amounts of funding through the NRMA, Commonwealth Bank, local government and so on. Obviously we are always on the lookout for sources of funding and Tender Bridge has become invaluable in simplifying the process."

The program seeks funding from every and all avenues. BackTrack is a partially-funded model as the organisation makes goods and provides services for sale. At the moment there is a promotional push to secure funding for more school-based trainees. The local community has shown significant support for BackTrack and a new method of funding will see individuals or organisations 'sponsor' a trainee.

Why do you think the partnership is so successful?

Carolyn is passionate about the partnership. "I think the overwhelming reason for the success of the partnership is because the participants are motivated.

For many of them they are experiencing success at something for the first time in their lives. They are coming through the program with recognised qualifications and recognition from the wider community. They are beginning to develop a sense of where they fit within society, and to see that they do have the potential to make a positive contribution. Support from the school's senior executive has ensured the flexibility of the program and a shared vision of what can work for these young people."

The program responds to circumstances and issues that are locally identified and works as a community organisation in a most innovative fashion. The personal development aspect is seen by all stakeholders as the key component contributing to the long-term success of the program over the years. "I have become such an advocate for developing partnerships that can benefit not only students but the entire community. This is probably why I have been seconded to work as a project officer for 12 months to assist other schools with the development of partnerships and programs such as BackTrack."

What key lessons have you learnt in building this partnership?

Don't lose sight of the fact that the young people are the key stakeholders in the process.

They need to be consulted at every stage of the process.

Communication is critical to the success of such programs.

If school staff are not aware of what is going on for students they can become quite critical – good communication is vital.

Support from the Principal and other executive staff is essential.

There must be a shared vision between the school leadership and what the organisation is trying to achieve.

Don't try and go too big too soon.

This organisation grew steadily from a handful of boys in a welding shed on a Sunday.

No one is going to throw money at your cause, you have to get out there and find it.

You win some, you lose some, but you have to keep knocking on doors and writing those submissions.

For more information about BackTrack Youth Works, go to:

<http://www.backtrack.org.au>

Our 2013 events calendar will be published in the December 2012 edition of the Tender Bridge Quarterly.



Leanne Eames,
Senior Project Officer,
Tender Bridge

- Are you a school with a story to share about how you have identified a local need and then successfully sought support to address that need?
- Are you a funder or a not-for-profit who has some tips or information you'd like to share with schools?
- Do you want others to learn more about what your school, business, foundation or trust or not-for-profit is doing in the space of 'school-community relationships'?

Then the Tender Bridge team would like to hear from you!

Please contact Leanne about being featured in a future edition of the Tender Bridge Quarterly, on 03 9277 5543 or tenderbridge@acer.edu.au