

Tomorrow's Workforce Award Entrant: Get In2 Life

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/141144465>

Serious Play: How the In2It Programme is empowering the workforce of tomorrow.
"Play: pure, simple and unrestricted"

This is the driving force behind the In2It Programme, to provide a safe environment for kids to be kids: to create, learn, and to imagine. This in turn, allows children to develop into empowered young adults who are equipped with the skills to influence the outcomes of their local neighbourhoods.

The In2It programme was created and delivered by the GetIn2life Youth Development Trust, a small not-for-profit originally developed as a North Shore Council backed programme in partnership with the New Zealand Government Sports and Recreation Agency in 2006. Since its conception, the Trust has grown and evolved into an independent organisation that works with sponsors, corporates, local and central governments to engage Auckland City's youth population.

The programme functions on the premise of creating better and safer communities by inspiring children and young people through unstructured and creative play. By giving children the opportunity to play, the In2It Programme seeks to develop their social skills, creativity, curiosity, and problem solving skills. It's safe to say that the people at GetIn2Life Youth Development Trust take play very, very seriously!

The goal of youth empowerment has contributed to the way that the GetIn2Life Youth Development Trust have structured their team. The organisation has successfully mirrored their values in their progression from provider to employer; moving from providing children with opportunities to play to now offering inclusive and meaningful employment to those same children who have now developed into young adults.

The importance of demonstrating youth engagement at all levels of the organisation has not escaped the programme developers and board; the GetIn2It Youth Development Trust has always worked within a youth led development framework to achieve its outcomes and the In2It Play Sessions have become a programme for youth delivered by youth.

Through their engagement with children and youth, the In2It Programme has developed its greatest recruitment tool, their play sessions. The majority of the organisations' staff and crew members have come through the programme as participants first and then gone on to be a part of the In2It Crew.

The programme is delivered across a variety of socioeconomic neighbourhoods to ensure that all children have the right to play and can, in turn, learn to see the potential of any space as a play space. It is through these play experiences that the In2It programme has recruited a culturally diverse team that has helped develop a cultural approach to play that can be embedded into all sessions. The cultural diversity of the young In2It crew has contributed to the success of its delivery.

By creating opportunities for young people through employment, the In2It Programme has given their young employees the opportunity to influence the outcomes in their Local Neighbourhoods and Communities. This flexible and culturally diverse work environment has allowed young people like Tala Reweti, the current operations coordinator of the In2It Programme, to grow professionally and culturally. In his own words, Tala says "I love In2it. This job gives me the freedom to explore who I am as a Māori male, and who I want to be".

Youth engagement has translated from the frontlines on the In2It Programme all the way to organisational governance. At a recent stakeholder's meeting, Doug Cole, GetIn2It's Chairman acknowledged "...it's no longer good enough to talk about our youth as being our future. We need to provide something for them now that will sustain them into the future".

It is from this conversation and the organisation's recent SWOT analysis, that the Board has undertaken a structural review in order to ensure youth representation at all levels of the GetIn2It Youth Development Trust. As a part of this innovative restructuring, the organisation is creating two advisory positions for youth within the Board Structure. The creation of these roles not only consolidates the youth engagement principles at the leadership level, it also offers youth the opportunity to engage in the social profit sector at a governance level and to gain understanding of the roles and responsibilities of being a board member.

Through their innovative approach to youth engagement, GetIn2Life Youth Development has created a model for educating and empowering not only tomorrow's workforce, but tomorrow's leaders. By providing creative unstructured play, adapted games, and employment opportunities, the GetIn2Life Youth Development Trust has made a true commitment to empowering the youth of today and creating the workforce of tomorrow.