

NGĀ KŌRERO HAUORA O NGĀ TAIOHI

A community-powered report on
conversations with 1,000 young
people about wellbeing



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FOREWORD

Ara Taiohi and ActionStation have collaborated on Ngā Kōrero Hauora o Ngā Taiohi because we are keen to ensure that the perspectives of New Zealanders who are between 12 and 24 are woven into New Zealand's national priorities around wellbeing. Wellbeing is a state that all New Zealanders should enjoy, but it is a culturally specific concept that can and is interpreted in lots of different ways.

This report gathers more than a thousand young New Zealanders' voices and views about wellbeing. These young people speak from their own experience, but their collective perspectives paint an incredibly hopeful picture of a more peaceful, participatory and inclusive Aotearoa for all its people.

We are putting Ngā Kōrero Hauora o Ngā Taiohi out into the world in the hope that it will grow conversations about a future where more New Zealanders are able to access wellbeing, and about what will make a difference to young people's wellbeing.

We share it as an encouragement to decision makers to engage with young people in the redesign of our communities, democracy and economy in ways that support all New Zealanders' wellbeing.

Anya Satyanand
Executive Officer
Ara Taiohi

"Ko Ki Te Kōrero Hauora O Nga Taiohi Ka Pu Te Ruha Ka Hao Te Rangatahi"

Ko Ki – It is full and complete
e Kōrero Hauora – the talk, resilience, and narration of wellbeing
O Ngā Taiohi – by, of, for, and from the young people

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

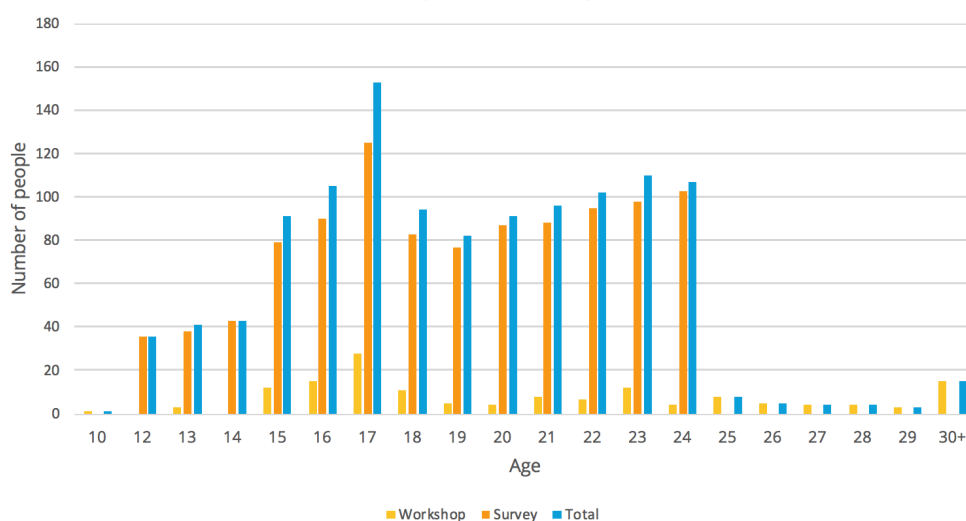
Between 20 July and 7 August 2018, ActionStation gathered the views of more than 1,000 young people (aged 12 - 24) and a handful of youth workers and policy experts about what youth wellbeing looks like in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We gathered these insights in three ways:

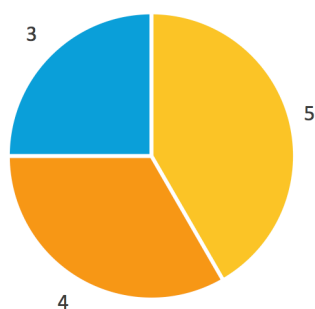
1. A 28 question online survey answered by 1,045 young people
2. 12 interviews with a diverse range of young people, youth workers and researchers with expertise
3. 16 rapid-fire workshops with 149 young people and youth workers

More females took part than males or gender diverse and non-binary people. Survey respondents came from all around the country with the largest numbers of people coming from Auckland (183), Wellington (151) and Christchurch (117). Workshop participants came from all around the country, with the greatest representation from Wellington (34), Auckland (10) and Whangārei (9).

Number of young people engaged through workshops and the survey and their ages



Interview Participants



■ Young person ■ Youth worker ■ Policy advisor or academic researcher

Our interviews ranged from 23 to 51 minutes long and were conducted mostly via Zoom, an online video conferencing technology. We spoke to 12 people. A mixture of young people, youth workers and policy advisors or academic researchers with knowledge in this space.

The nine broad themes that rose to the top from the young people and professionals we spoke to in this research are:

1. The young people we spoke to want better, more accessible mental health services, education and support specifically for young people
2. Young people we spoke to highlighted economic insecurity, unaffordable housing, student debt and insecure low paid work as significant contributors to their anxiety and stress. Many want a kinder, fairer economy and meaningful secure work
3. Almost half of the young people we surveyed chose "body image" as one of their biggest concerns. We think this should concern us
4. The young people we engaged want to see an end to oppression of all kinds - no more racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or ableism
5. The young people we spoke with love Aotearoa New Zealand's natural environment, and they're worried we're not doing enough to protect it or our planet
6. The young people we spoke to value accessible and affordable education, but they worry they are not being equipped with the life skills and knowledge they need to be flourishing in the 21st century
7. Young people have grown up in the era of the individual, but the taiohi we spoke to carry an innate desire for community and communal spaces
8. Young people need more great role models in their community, on TV and in positions of power and leadership
9. Young people should be taught about how to go about making change in their community and country, and people in positions of power need to get better at listening and being responsive



WHY YOUTH WELLBEING?

*Mō te oranga o ngā taiohi me ngā kaitiaki e mahi ana mō rātou.
For the wellbeing of young people and the people who support them.*

In 2018, the coalition government announced plans to develop a Child Wellbeing Strategy to make New Zealand the best place in the world to be a child.

While this is an admirable and excellent goal, we wondered what it would look like for Aotearoa New Zealand to be the best place in the world to be a tamaiti (child), a taiohi (young person), a pāke (adult) or a kaumātua (elder).

What if the goal was wellbeing for all?

Through this research we aim to help answer at least part of that question.

First, we identified key elements of wellbeing informed by three reports and one framework:

1. Children and Young People: Indicators of Wellbeing in New Zealand (2008);
2. Ministry of Youth Development Issues Survey Report (2010);
3. Tama-te-rā Ariki: Voices of tamariki and rangatahi Māori (2018); and
4. The Māori health model Te Whare Tapa Whā.

Then, we asked more than 1,000 young people for their perspectives on those elements of wellbeing so that those in the worlds of policy, philanthropy and service provision for young people can weave these voices into decision making.

Our report is intended to have multiple audiences: young people, the youth development sector, policy makers and philanthropic funders.

We hope it inspires everyone who reads it, as much as it has inspired us putting it together.

We also encourage those in positions of power to ensure that, as should be the case with children, the voices, participation, and lived experiences of young people inform any and all policy decisions made about them.

HOW DID WE CONDUCT THE RESEARCH?

Ara Taiohi, the peak body for youth development in Aotearoa New Zealand, commissioned this report from ActionStation at the beginning of July 2018. From the brief:

"Wellbeing is a contested and culturally specific concept, and Ara Taiohi are keen to ensure that young people's perspectives are woven into policy making and philanthropic and provider sector priorities around young people's wellbeing."

The engagement process was designed by ActionStation, and supported by Ara Taiohi's stakeholder network.

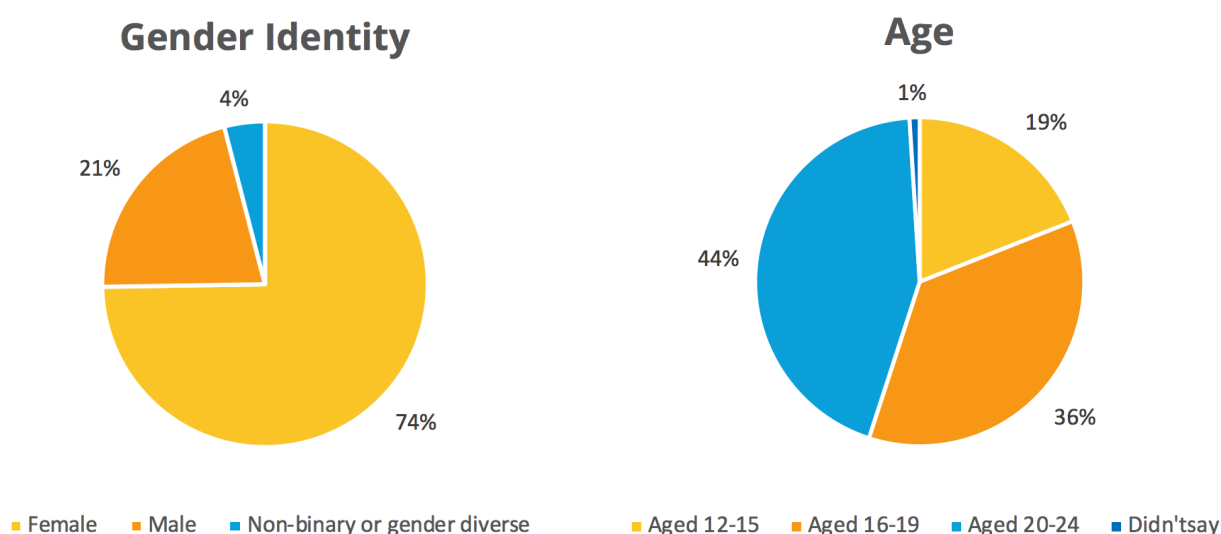
Between 20 July and 7 August 2018, ActionStation gathered the views of more than 1,000 young people (aged 12 - 24) and a handful of youth workers and policy experts in this space about what youth wellbeing looks like in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We gathered these insights in three ways:

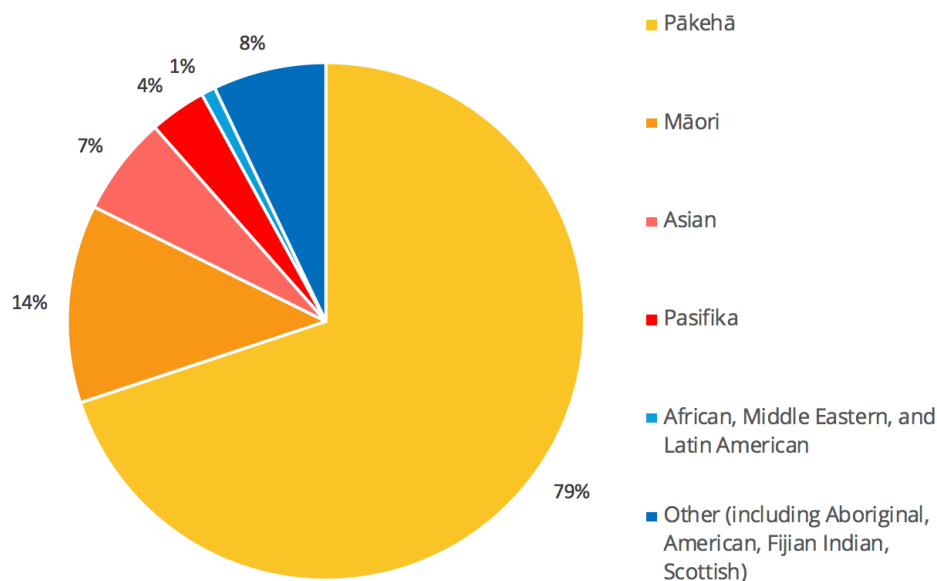
1. A 28 question online survey answered by 1,045 young people
2. 12 interviews with a diverse range of young people, youth workers and researchers with expertise
3. 16 rapid-fire workshops with 149 young people and youth workers

Who we spoke to:

Of the three methods of engagement, we have the most demographic data available from our survey respondents. They were:



Ethnicity



Survey respondents came from all around the country with the largest numbers of people coming from Auckland (183), Wellington (151) and Christchurch (117).

At our workshops we spoke to 149 people and while we did not record their gender identity or ethnicity, we did capture their ages and hometowns.

Participants were aged 10 - 54 with 17 year olds making up the largest cohort at 18.8% (28 people). The majority (109) were in our target demographic of 12 - 24. 15 participants were over the age of 30, but those people either worked with young people, or were the guardian of a young person present at the workshop.

Workshop participants came from all around the country, with the greatest representation from Wellington (34), Auckland (10) and Whāngarei (9).

The 12 interviewees consisted of:

- A youth worker in sexual health
- An English teacher who has experience teaching in the Far North and Auckland
- A president of a student union in a small town, aged 19
- A 23 year old artist and retail worker from Auckland
- Victoria Trow, Support Manager of Rainbow Youth
- A 23 year old community organiser with a disability
- A youth worker with experience merging creative arts and youth wellbeing
- Wumi Omokeodo, age 20, queer, migrant, Nigerian/Pākehā creative and activist
- A policy advisor with expertise relating to youth, drugs and alcohol
- A university student who lives in a small city
- Two academic researchers with expertise in youth, civic engagement and wellbeing

Who we missed

As you can see from the survey results, we have more work to do to ensure we are hearing from young males and young people of colour, particularly those of Asian and Pasifika descent.



Due to the nature of the online survey, we think there is more work to be done to reach young people without internet access or those with lower levels of literacy and/or digital competency.

It is likely that the participants at the Festival For The Future workshops were young people who already have some sense of agency, because the event is pitched towards “future leaders and change-makers”. That said, organisers of Festival For The Future have been working hard to make the event accessible to a diverse range of young New Zealanders for many years. This year they gave 250 scholarships (ticket, accommodation, travel) to young people who otherwise wouldn’t have been able to attend from the Far North, Kawerau, Opotiki, Whangārei, Whakatāne, Palmerston North, Kāpiti and Greymouth. The ethnic breakdown for the festival as a whole in 2018 was:

- African - 1.4%
- Arabic - 0.3%
- Asian - 7.2%
- European - 10%
- Māori - 18.4%
- Pākehā - 51.4%
- Pasifika - 5%
- Not listed / Other - 5.7%

Many of these young people were participants in our workshops.

As with any research there were limitations, such as budget and time constraints that meant we could not reach a representative sample of the population.

You can read more about the methodology later in this report.





Please note:

All direct quotes from people who participated in our survey, workshops or interviews are used with permission, and anonymised where preferred by the person.

Where appropriate, we have also edited quotes for brevity, correct spelling and ease of understanding.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The young people we spoke to want better, more accessible mental health services, education and support specifically for young people.

Serious concerns about mental health came up in every workshop, interview and more than any other response (372 times) in the open-field survey question, "What do you think are the biggest issues or challenges facing young people in New Zealand?"

Many of the young people we engaged with believe that mental health services need more funding.

"The mental health system needs funding. I spent last night at a 21st having conversations [about] mental health. Out of the eight people I spoke to, six had some form of depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder, only four were on medication and only one had managed to have therapy and one had made a suicide attempt in the last month. We were all under 21." - Bee, 20, Female, Wellington

They also believed mental health workers should be looked after, and well-trained.

"Mental health services should be both accessible and available, and mental health support staff should not be overworked and underpaid." - Zak, 17, Gender Diverse, Stratford

"Mental health services should be accessible to everyone and these services should be fully trained in LGBTQIA+ specific issues so it's not a hit-and-miss scenario of whether or not they're homo/transphobic when you see a health professional." - Sophie, 18, Female, Nelson

There was also a strong desire from young people for better mental health education to be available in schools.

"The NCEA system puts too much pressure on college students and takes the fun out of being a teenager, when this time of your life is meant to be fun and more carefree than when you are an adult. School students are not built to deal with so much stress and long hours of school and then homework. I would like to see more counsellors and mental health help in schools. I would not even know how to go about finding a counsellor at my school. Being a teenager - trying to figure out what you want in life and what your place is in the world - combined with NCEA is perhaps one of the most stressful and crucial times in your life, but mental health support is fundamentally lacking in schools." - Eva, 16, Female, Wellington

"We have literally had no mental health education at school and we need it. We also need more emphasis and from a younger age on different sexual and gender identities being okay." - Anon, 16, Gender Diverse, Nelson

We interviewed a teacher who has experience teaching young people in the Far North and Auckland, and they agreed with what we had heard from young people through the survey.

"You've got kids from a whole range of different backgrounds, even high decile kids going to school super stressed and anxious all the time or under a huge amount of pressure but who aren't given tools to manage. Parents put pressure on the kids and it exacerbates it.



It's hard because if you look at the New Zealand curriculum, there are these key competencies that are designed and written to teach people skills like relating to others, but that all gets compromised in favour of teaching maths and science so we can generate data for assessments so students get good grades.

I think we need to get better at identifying systems that will support development of the soft skills that promote all round wellbeing." - Anon, Teacher, Auckland

This teacher went on to say:

"Teachers have become [de-facto] social workers in a way. I guess teachers have always been social workers but now they are overworked social workers that are told they need to generate data for assessments. We now teach to assessment rather than teach to enhance learning or develop skills which has a huge impact on young people's wellbeing"

Many of the young people expressed a desire for better mental health services specific to different sexualities and gender identities.

“The issues for our [rainbow] community are an extension of the needs that everyone has, which is to be understood, to have our diversity valued. All young people need that, it’s just that our young people need that more so. It’s something they are less likely to have.” - Victoria Trow, Support Manager at Rainbow Youth

“Gender diverse youth often find that teachers, peers, parents, health and social services do not adequately understand or respond to them appropriately, and this can be compounded when overlaid with diverse cultural and language identities, and socio-economic demographics. This creates isolation and prejudice which leads to bigger issues.” - Anon, Youth worker in drugs and alcohol space

People also spoke about their desire for safe and non-judgemental spaces where young people can be free to explore themselves and their identities.

“I think youth are really time poor and resource poor. The youth that I see in schools talk about how there are so many expectations put on them. By the time they are in senior level, almost every lunch time is taken up with meetings, clubs, team stuff. That’s true in the lower and higher decile schools.”

“I’ve heard lots of school counsellors say that there’s been a massive shift in the burden being put on young people but they don’t see young people as being less resilient than they were 10 or 15 years ago. They see them as being directly under more pressure and that makes me really sad. There’s a lot of competition and pressure and communities are a lot less connected and empathetic. There’s not enough space for young people to do meaningful inner work. I see how anxious they are, not really coping to contextualise the pressure they are under.”

“There’s a window in emotional maturity and development when you’re young that they are not really getting the space to explore. I’m seeing kids that are 11 or 12 and they are thinking, ‘Oh my god, I’ve got to make a decision about my future and I’ve got





to excel at something.' They're not getting given time and space to reflect and grow."
- Anon, Youth worker in sexual health

"There are just not enough opportunities and spaces for rangatahi to grow into healthy adults." - Jordan, 23, Male, Timaru

"There is a lot of pressure from society, social media to be perfect - imperfections that are characteristic of growing up and being human are rarely exalted or even encouraged." - Aleisha, 18, Female, Paraparaumu

Many young people spoke about a lot of parental, societal or peer pressure.

"The world that's been made for teenagers is hard. Young people are already going through enough biological changes in their body, brain and feelings of personal identity, then we make them balance grades, earn money while doing community work or volunteering for scholarships, leadership, after school activities to be involved so they are well-rounded. As well as actually sleeping, exercising, eating, having a social life, actually relaxing, as well as dealing with the social pressure of social media? Why is there so much on their plate when figuring out themselves is enough already? It just seems so dumb to me and the fact depression and anxiety and suicide is so prevalent in teenagers honestly doesn't even surprise me with what we expect teenagers to be able to handle." - Anon, 17, Female, Wellington

"Young people today are facing depression, mental illness, the toxic rape culture, pressure to do as well as past generations in dramatically different circumstances (i.e in the age of social media, climate change, not being able to afford a house, etc.). And at the same time, we're being told we're the generation who will have to solve the world's problems." - Isobel, 15, Female, Tawa

There was also a desire for young people to get the tools they need to help other people struggling with mental health or other issues.

"I want more opportunities to speak about my personal problems and opinions, as well as opportunities to help others with theirs." - Joshua, 16, Christchurch

"I want to see a bigger move for people to get involved in their communities. Some of the mental health problems we are seeing could be resolved if we were given space and time to live for others and understand how sometimes their situation is worse off." - Hadassah, 19, Christchurch

Young people we spoke to highlighted economic insecurity, unaffordable housing, student debt and insecure low paid work as significant contributors to their anxiety and stress. Many want a kinder, fairer economy and meaningful secure work.

In our survey, young people were asked to choose from a list of 18 worries and concerns. These were lifted from research into issues facing young people commissioned by the Ministry of Youth Development in 2010.¹

44% of survey respondents (461 people) chose 'Lack of money, not enough to pay bills' as a major concern. 50% of the survey respondents who identified as Māori chose this as a top concern, as did 43% of Pasifika respondents and 37% of survey respondents who identified as Pākehā. Demographic samples in all other ethnic groups were too small to be included in this analysis.

We know that median net wealth differs across ethnic groups. In 2015, the median Pākehā had an individual net worth of \$114,000; median Asian \$33,000; median Māori \$23,000; and median Pasifika person \$12,000.²



However, we also know that in 2015 young people (aged 15–24) had the lowest individual median net worth of any age group – just \$1,000. Most young people have not yet accumulated assets, but do have debt – most commonly, student loan debt.

From the similarity of the responses across different

1 Youth Issues Survey Report, Ministry of Youth Development, 2010

2 Household Net Worth, Statistics New Zealand, 2015

ethnic groups reporting 'Lack of money, not enough to pay bills', we can infer that regardless of ethnicity, young people do not have enough money to feel safe or flourish.

"I am an 18 year old female who flats, works, and studies in Porirua. I sometimes struggle to cover my regular bills and expenses, however, the biggest financial blows come from necessary costs that occur irregularly. I have been putting off getting new glasses, which I need in order to effectively study and work, because it's \$60 for an eye exam and a few hundred dollars more for the actual glasses. I've avoided the doctor because \$56 for an initial check up, costs for medication and payment for follow ups = not eating properly for a couple weeks because the money has got to come from somewhere and it can't be taken from bill payments, which leaves food money as the sacrifice. Now the solution is obvious, right? I need more money, so all I have to do is work more... Wrong! I already study Monday - Thursday, and work after class Thursday - Saturday which is a contract of 18.5hrs at minimum wage (and I quite often work Sunday as well). Therefore, the only time available to work more is at night, which requires reliable transport to and from work at ungodly hours, which would be fine if I had a car. So get a car, right?... Nope, wrong again! That won't work because I don't know how to drive and with nobody to teach me I would have to pay for lessons, which cost at least \$75 through the AA, or one and a bit doctor's appointments for context."

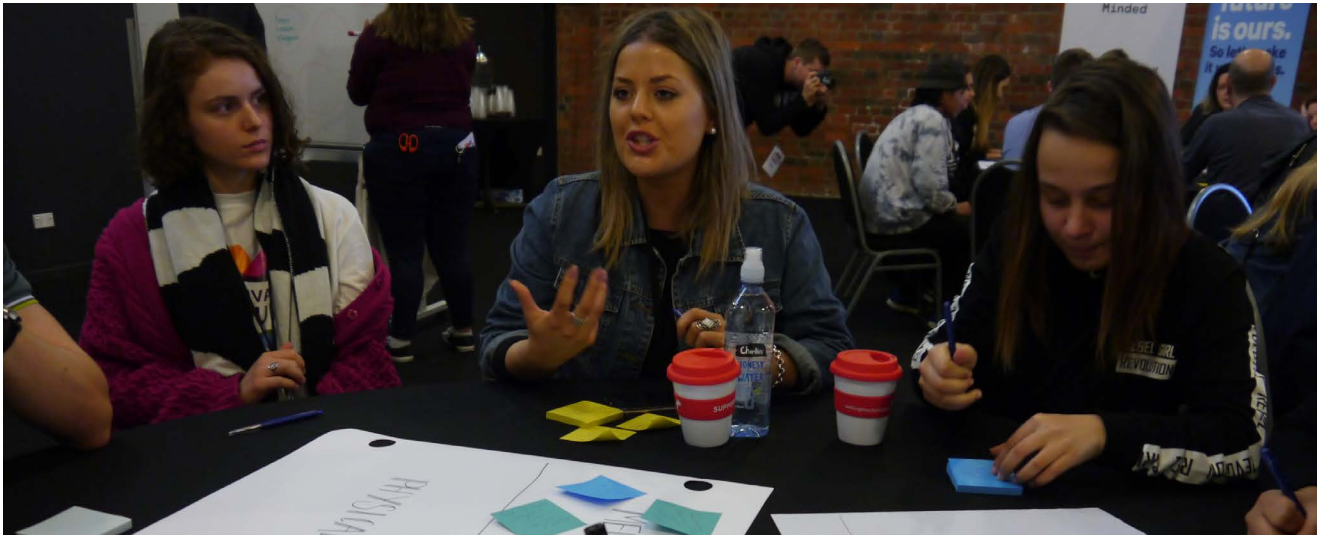
"Imagine now hundreds of young people all trying to figure out how to survive off of the change left over after paying for everything from the wage they've earned at their minimum wage job that is squished in around studying full time, and abracadabra you now see the issue." - Grace, 18, Female, Porirua

In the open-field survey question, "What would you like to see changed in New Zealand to support your happiness and wellbeing?" 201 respondents wrote answers that can be grouped under the heading 'A fairer economy'. This includes comments that spoke to a desire for:

- More financial freedom
- Lower cost of living
- An end to poverty
- A more economically equal society
- Higher wages
- A better welfare system

'A fairer economy' was spoken about most often after the need for better mental health services and support (though it's clear the two are interconnected).





"We need cheaper living costs, such as food, electricity, petrol, a home. People with student loans or debt struggle to pay these things." - Emily, 18, Female, Paraparaumu

A lot of young people expressed their dreams for a more economically equal society. Some suggested we can do this through tax.

"I want to see a more progressive tax system, that redistributes money from the wealthy and back to the poor. This will allow more relief for hard working, but ultimately poor, families and individuals." - Josh, 24, Male, Dunedin

Others would like to see this happen through better wages and jobs.

"Everyone should have a living wage and job opportunities for all different kinds of people including differently-abled and mentally-unwell individuals. There needs to be a focus on community-led development and empowerment.

"There should be education opportunities in many equally-valued forms such as apprenticeships, diplomas or social enterprise training instead of our cultural obsession with academic tertiary study. Ideally, there should also be a smaller socio-economic gap and more investment into preserving our environment." - Maddy, 22, Auckland

"Make new jobs creating things that don't harm the planet." - Anon, 12, Female, Pakuranga

Others thought it could be achieved through a more generous welfare system, and an end to punitive policies and behaviours toward the poorest among us.

"Stop welfare shaming, stop systemic racism, better support for ex prisoners. Civics education, safe spaces for gender minorities and queer people, people of colour, women and disabled people. Support for my friends and my community that are struggling." - Teri, 20, Female, Wellington

"Better and more well-rounded social welfare and services that support all people in need." - Therese, 23, Female, Canterbury

We interviewed Victoria Trow, Support Manager at Rainow Youth and she added this:

"Because I work in the rainbow sphere, the wellbeing issues I see are very specific to the marginalisation and discrimination against queer, gender diverse and intersex young people. Many of them do not not feel safe to access the services they need."

"I talk regularly with a young trans woman who is struggling with accessing the benefit but shes scared of going to [name of social service omitted] because they misgendered her last time she went in and it was very traumatic."

"A lot of the young people we talk to have unstable housing situations and trouble accessing the benefit because employment for them is difficult."

A desire for 'Accessible, affordable and secure housing' also ranked highly among survey participants in two of the open-field questions. 212 participants wrote comments that were coded under this field.

"We should change the housing prices so that more New Zealand families have a roof over them and can feel joy in with their kids and can have a better life child or adult."
- Anon, 12, Female, West Auckland

Some young people were concerned about home ownership.

"I think the biggest concern facing young people is getting a stable income and saving enough for a mortgage on a house." - Caleb, 20, Male, Palmerston North

Some felt they had inherited a raw deal from generations before them.





"Young people have to figure out how we deal with the mess we have inherited. How do we ensure quality of life for everyone, pay for people not saving for retirement, and ensure everyone has secure affordable, reasonable, housing in appropriate areas?" - Callum, 20, Male, Wellington

Others noted that the cost of living and rents are increasing but salaries are not.

"Rising living and housing costs are not necessarily being matched by openings or increased salaries in the job market." - Theo, 22, Male, Wellington

Some expressed a view that if home ownership is impossible, then renting needs to be better.

"I will never own a house - and renting sucks. If renting wasn't so terrible, the fact I will never own a house wouldn't bother me so much." - Anon, 22, Female, Wellington

"We should have affordable housing – not necessarily buying however we need to restructure renter's and landlord's rights." - Maddy, 22, Auckland

"As a renter in Auckland money can be a real issue and the lack thereof is detrimental to my peace-of-mind as I find it hard to believe that I will ever be able to own a home in the future. Changing this is not as simple as having a wage increase as taxes, housing and amenities all increase in price faster than the pay increases. To have a house for my future family seems like an unattainable dream if I am to remain in Auckland. The choice at hand is either family and friends or permanent renting. I would like see this changed and would be happier day-to-day if this were a reality." - Anon, 22, Male, Mt Roskill

Others identified debt, particularly student debt, as a source of stress, anxiety and unfairness.

"I think young people need more volunteering opportunities - ways to help less fortunate people in New Zealand and the rest of the world. We should promote these within schools a lot more. Another thing would be to decrease the cost for university so students don't start adult life already in massive debt." - Anon, 17, Female, Christchurch

"We should make housing cheaper. The first year of uni being free is a great step in the right direction and affordable housing would have a similar result. A lot of problems

people face are always to do with money. When we are able to afford homes and have cheaper education etc it means less time is spent in debt and in a hard place. This would increase the happiness and wellbeing of our communities.” - Emily, 16, Female, Mt Eden

“A good life for me would be being accepted fully in my community and work life and not constantly stressing about money and debt.” - Mars, 16, Gender Diverse, Blenheim

The survey responses made it clear that many young people want to enter fulfilling careers in supportive workplaces with work-life balance.

Comments in relation to ‘fulfilling career, stable income, career opportunities, work-life balance’ were made by 58% of survey respondents (610 people).

“I would like to see secure, well-paid and meaningful job opportunities in a variety of sectors - so that I can be sure I will find work which I feel is meaningful and which I feel valued in.” - Chennoah, 24, Female, Wellington

“I would like to be comfortable economically, have time to spend outside in nature, doing a job/anything that makes me feel happy and valued.” - Anon, 16, Female, Oratia

“Financial security and a good career, surrounded by people who can help me learn more about the things that go on around me.” - Oskar, 19, Male, Chartwell

One of the academic researchers we interviewed had this to say about the economic insecurity young people face:

“The levels of inequalities in society are very deep seated and very systemic inequalities that are perpetuated, reinforced and reproduced through all sorts of different structures, whether it’s institutional, whether it’s compounding intergenerational poverty, and so on. The only way forward I can see is a very deep seated long-term approach. It won’t be fixed in the short term.”

“I take an intergenerational approach to researching how economic inequality compares between families. Privileges are often hidden in New Zealand to intergenerational wealth transfers and support that some other families don’t have.”

“What it would take to really fix this would require a very deep seated attempt to redistribute levels of wealth, which would take a very bold government because it probably related to things like tax structures.”

Almost half of the young people we surveyed chose “body image” as one of their biggest concerns. We think this should concern us.

“Even with all of the body confidence campaigning, young people still struggle



with seeing their self worth." - Emma, 17, Female, Cambridge

Survey participants were asked to choose from a list of 18 concerns, including an 'Other' option. 46% of respondents (479 people) chose 'body image' as a top concern just after 'Succeeding in studies and getting good grades' (chosen by 49% of respondents, or 514 people).

Young people of all ages from 12 - 24 cited body image as a worry from the list provided. 82% of the respondents (395 people) who chose 'body image' as a major concern identified as female.

"I'm worried about mental health and the negative power of social media influencing youth regarding body image, relationships etc." - Merekara, 22, Female, Cambridge

This is not to say this is an issue that only affects young females, as young males were underrepresented in our survey overall. However the large number of young females who chose this as a major worry should be of concern to anyone interested in ensuring youth wellbeing.

"I have a friend who has anorexia to the point where she was hospitalised, another who is depressed and has had serious suicidal episodes, another who had a period of regular panic attacks, another who is afraid to come out to her parents because she doesn't think they will accept her, another who self harms, and another who regularly struggles with body image and self worth. All 16 or younger, all normal, high functioning, wonderful people." - Anon, 15, Female, Christchurch

The young people we engaged want to see an end to oppression of all kinds - no more racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or ableism.

Concerns about racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and transphobia were chosen by 62% participants in the survey (648 people).

186 people also wrote comments we have grouped under the heading 'No more oppression' in response to the open-field question, "What would you like to see changed in New Zealand to support your happiness and wellbeing?" Specifically, many of the comments were about

the need for government and institutions (such as schools, universities, health providers) to dismantle systems of oppression e.g. institutional racism, sexism, homophobia, islamophobia, transphobia, ableism and encourage inclusivity.

Some spoke about broad changes needed across society.



"I want to see living wages for all, equal opportunity in action, the tackling of inequalities in communities and especially in trying to transform communities who for generations have been the most oppressed, ignored and reduced. I want a kinder, healthier and more generous society. I want to see a process of decolonisation of minds, systems, processes, organisations and thoughts. Acceptance of diversity and valuing te ao Māori and te reo Māori as well as all contributions from migrants and immigrants. We need to shift away from a Pākehā-centric mindview." - Anon, 24, Female, Waikanae

Others named education as an important starting point to teach young people to be more inclusive and welcoming towards difference.

"We need to increase awareness and education around internalised homophobia, sexism and transphobia where people are discriminatory but aren't aware of it." - Danica, 16, Female, Auckland

"I recognise that it is difficult to shake some people's stigma around LGBTQ+ youth, but more education and support around the subject could combat people's homophobic views." - Julia, 14, Female, Wellington

"We should learn about the Māori culture in schools because there's not much of that anymore. That would create less racism between cultures." - Shaun, 15, Male, Weymouth

All of the gender diverse people who participated in our research mentioned changes that could be made to support their wellbeing specifically.

"We should make non-binary a recognised gender identity, along with they/them pronouns." - Sam, 15, Gender Diverse, Levin

"We need more support for trans people. Less waiting time for hormone replacement

therapy, and funding for surgeries. Free rainbow-friendly counselling and accessible information to access it. Protection and discrimination laws to keep trans and queer people safe.” - Anon, 20, Gender Diverse, Wellington

“We need appropriate and LGBTQ inclusive sex ed in schools.” - Zak, 17, Gender Diverse, Stratford

And Victoria Trow, Support Manager of Rainbow Youth added this:

“All schools should be required to have gender neutral bathrooms. Small changes like that could have a huge impact for our young people”

She also spoke about the role of government in leading cultural change.

“Marriage equality hasn’t fixed homophobia but its made it much harder to be homophobic. That sort of policy signals a change in social attitudes. It makes it harder for people to discriminate. It bypasses the people who’s norms aren’t going to change, whose norms are detrimental to young people and it diminishes their capacity to harm young people.”

Some young people also spoke about the lack of representation of Asian, Māori and Pasifika people and language in media, education and government.



“I would like to see Māori and Pacific island culture and language to be represented and more encouraged to be spoken and learnt.” - Anon, 23, Female

“Te reo Māori should be a compulsory class to take at every college and intermediate. I want to see more Māori in the more popular political parties so they can make bigger decisions.” - Anon, 14, Female, Nelson

“Māori language and culture should be more widely respected, accepted, acknowledged, displayed, and just generally more prevalent.” - Grace, 18, Female, Porirua

“I would love if I could see Asian females working in diverse fields and leadership roles.

Diversity and multiculturalism are an intrinsic part of New Zealand society.” - Abby, 18, Female, Auckland

“I want to see I mana motuhake realised for iwi Māori” - Merenia, 21, Female, Whakatāne

Others talked about how this lack of positive role models in media can contribute to internalised racism.

“I feel like even though New Zealand is extremely diverse and multicultural, I’m finding that I am becoming racist to my own race. For example, my parents are immigrants but I was born and raised here. I should stick up for everyone no matter what race but then I find myself criticising (in my head) others of my race for being ‘cringe’ or something absolutely ridiculous like that. I’m not really sure where these feelings have come from, but perhaps the way my race is portrayed on television or how I feel most people judge my race.” - Bonnie, 17, Female, Milford

The disability activist we spoke to had this to say:

“The government needs to create more entry-level positions for young people and take employment equity including for disabled people seriously. They can also play a significant role in terms of affecting attitude change in the private sector.”

“On a purely selfish level, I’d like there to be a functional regular bus from close to my house to get to the main bus station (which is about a 6-minute drive no traffic, and a walk with two treacherous roundabouts to cross with no lights that I can’t do independently). On a systems level, regulation ensuring audio bus stop announcements nationally would be great. Also in various parts of Aussie not sure if the whole country, they have this system where you can call ahead to say you’re getting off such and such bus or train at such time, and someone can come meet you and help you with the transfer. It’d be great if we could have that here. Blind people get the supported living payment which basically functions like a disability allowance here. Which is fabulous but WINZ forms still come in hard-copy in the mail - online options would be good.”

And finally, some of the young people who answered our survey believed we needed to do more for refugees.

“We should open our borders to more refugees and immigrants and ensure support structures for the vulnerable.” - Damien, 24, Male, Grey Lynn

“We need better support for refugees and New Zealand citizens living in poverty to be provided the tools and education to better their situation without bureaucratic hoops and financial band-aids.” - Dani, 23, Female, Dunedin

The young people we spoke with love Aotearoa New Zealand's natural environment, and they're worried we're not doing enough to protect it or our planet.

When asked the question, "What do you like most about New Zealand?" 41% of survey respondents (438 people) wrote answers that can be grouped under the heading, 'Clean, green nature'. For context, the next closest answer was 'Friends, whānau, connections, community' as chosen by 21% of respondents (220 people).

Some of the young people spoke about how wellbeing and the health of our natural world are intrinsically linked.

"Spiritual wellbeing for me is time in nature and care for Papatūānuku." - Workshop participant

"I think that looking after our country and keeping it "green" is one of my greatest desires. I feel that the environment is a key part to my wellbeing." - Paris, 13, Female

Many spoke to their desire to see more action on climate change, conservation, liveable cities, better public transport and an end to plastic pollution.

"I would like to see stronger environmental protection. Many kiwis don't know how special New Zealand is. Lets keep it pure." - Mila, 22, Female, Takaka



"More and more people are moving to the cities and they need to be designed with people in mind. We need spaces for people to gather and socialise, we need strong communities and happy spaces. We also need to care for our environment more. Stop city sprawl and instead go up. Stop plastic pollution and clean up our waterways and natural bush." - Kate, 24, Female, Grafton

"I want to see more action on environmental issues, especially marine pollution, overfishing and climate change." - Imogen, 18, Female, Remuera

106 of the survey participants also wrote comments about the stress and anxiety they experience due to lack of action on climate change and other environmental issues.

"With climate change, I'm worried about our survival." - Anon, 23, Male, Nelson

"I get increased anxiety and problems with mental health carrying what feels like the weight of having to solve the world's problems." - Anon, 24, Female, Carterton

The young people we spoke to value accessible and affordable education, but they worry they are not being equipped with the life skills and knowledge they need to be flourishing in the 21st century

When asked to choose from a list of 10 options (including 'Other') identifying "the single most important thing to you in the world right now", the majority of respondents 25.4% (263 people) chose 'Education/school'.

When asked, "What things are causing you to worry?" 49% percent of respondents (514 people) said, "Succeeding in studies and getting good grades."

However, another common theme that came up in our interviews, the open-field survey questions and the workshops was that some young people (143 in our open-field survey) feel underserved by the education system, which they do not believe is preparing them for the 21st century.

Some young people felt under huge amounts of pressure with exams, homework, and deadlines.

"Having to think about what subjects you need to take throughout NCEA in order to set you up well for a career that you may potentially be in for your whole life is stressful. Being 15-16 is far too young to begin to decide what you want to do for the rest of your life." - Lucas, 18, Trans Man, Thames



Others talked about how the education system adds unnecessary stress and does not teach young people the skills they need.

"NCEA in high school doesn't help students learn, it's more like memorising to pass and I wish the education system taught us to learn about skills and information that would help us in life." - Jenny, 17, Female, Mt Roskill

"The education system isn't preparing us for the future as well as other countries. And I also think that something needs to be done to show the purpose of everything because sometimes at school it can all get a bit too much and stressful and it's hard to see the bigger picture. It can make you feel lost and without a purpose, but it's so important not to feel that way so that you feel like life is worth living." - Anon, 17, Female, Christchurch

"I don't even trust that our schools are preparing us for the future of work. I know it's going to be a gig economy and I'll probably work 10 different jobs in my lifetime. It's different from when my parents were young." - Workshop participant



Some people also mentioned a lack of student support services.

"I want to see better wages, more community support, better student services." - Anon, 20, Female, Dunedin

The teacher we interviewed is concerned about the lack of sexuality, healthy relationships and consent education in schools.

"There are very endemic, very entrenched wellbeing issues around sexual health and consent and relationships which young people are very unaware of often. That has flow on impacts in terms of what they think of as normal as adults and how they treat others.

"I see it from sexual aggression, to just misunderstandings, to a complete absence of knowledge about certain areas. Alternatively young boys for example are not learning

decent social skills because as teenagers they communicate and socialise mostly through video games or sport for example. They aren't actually learning these very useful soft social skills and interactions, like being vulnerable, communicating clearly, understanding your emotions and being able to process them and talk about it." - Anon, Teacher, Male

This was supported by what we heard from young people too.

"Things I'm worried about: Mental health, bullying, suicide, cyber-safety. The fact young people are not educated enough on sexual safety in terms of consent and manipulation and in some cases one person will do something to another person and then go brag about it but other people encourage this and congratulate them so the victim feels that they were in the wrong. Often guys think its cool to have done sexual things to girls even if the girl didnt want it and then they tell all their mates about it. I saw it happen a lot at school; people encouraging things that shouldn't have happened." - Anon, 19, Female, Lower Hutt

Young people have grown up in the era of the individual, but the taiohi we spoke to carry an innate desire for community and communal spaces.

"I see a lot of young people who hold a belief about self responsibility that 'it's all down to me to ensure my wellbeing and my future security.'"

"This idea of personal responsibility has become so prevalent and I hear it come through really strongly when I speak to students about debt. 'It's my own fault that I've come into debt, it's my own responsibility to come out of it. I'm absolutely terrified for the future but it's up to me and it's my problem.'"

"Young people are talking about debt as such an individualised issue but this is a collective issue. It's affecting their generation as a whole and each student has very different experiences of debt but those different experiences are different facets of the same overall problem."

"I think we have a responsibility to think about and respond to these issues from a more sociological or political perspective and not just as individual wellbeing type responses." - Anon, Academic researcher on youth and civics

This idea that young people perceive collective and societal problems to be the responsibility of the individual came across frequently in the workshops too.

One clear example from previous research conducted by ActionStation is the high youth suicide rates in Aotearoa New Zealand, due, in part to an underfunded, insufficient and strained mental health system.³

³ <https://www.peoplesmentalhealthreport.com/>

Some young people referred to the need for “a positive mindset” or “journaling” to tackle mental distress such as anxiety and depression. And while this may be helpful for certain individuals, the findings of this research indicate that a lot of young people’s stress and anxiety stems from economic insecurity, pressure to succeed and body image. These are societal problems, not individual ones.

“People’s mental health really suffers in New Zealand and this is getting worse as the importance of the family is taken over by the importance of the individual. I want to see this balanced out, and see both wider communities and family communities grow closer. I also know for a fact that when people are suffering the systems in place tend to do nothing and often avoid helping the victim. I want to see New Zealand show love to all, not just to those who it’s easiest to help or who “look” like they deserve it. But to those really do need help - those who have grown isolated from their communities.”
- Anon, 19, Female, Hataitai

Many of the young people we spoke to, both in the workshops and in the open-field survey responses, expressed a desire for more community spaces to connect across generations and to people their own age.

“More teen hangout places. Where parents can leave their kids and feel safe about it.”
- Sophie, 15, Female

“More local areas for teenagers to hang out but not like a youth group as I feel like they attract one specific group of friends and anyone not in that group won’t be involved. It could have food and drink as well as things like pool tables and games and couches bowling music gear just fun stuff.” - Allie, 15, Alexandra

“I want to see acceptance around historical conflicts so that we can move on and



embrace our diversity as a nation. Safer streets creating more initiatives and support centers (sporting/gym, music hubs, art hubs etc) for the youth to get them off of the streets. Teachers that will help encourage self belief, determination, strong work ethic and gratitude into the mindsets of New Zealanders from the get go.” - Te Punawai, 19, Dunedin

"I really like to join groups that help me connect with other generations. I find that's really good for my wellbeing." - Workshop participant

"In ensuring youth wellbeing, I think the main thing is giving them space and autonomy. In the sense of giving them space, sometimes that literally looks like a safe space and letting them know that their concerns and problems are valid. For the young people I talk to, almost the best thing you can do for them is be like 'Yeah 100%' and let them feel that they are being seen, that even if you don't perhaps understand or have the knowledge that you're there to learn from them. Making space for them to have the autonomy over what happens to them, they are given a space to let you know what they want and what they need and you can help them explore that but you don't take over but instead you're working with them to map out what they want their journey to look like." - Victoria Trow, Support Manager Rainbow Youth

For some young people, safe community spaces are a refuge from home - and from loneliness.

"There is a lack of community where I live. So many of us have broken homes, and don't have healthy means of communication and attention when it comes to our lives at home. Many of us go home to mostly empty homes - and those who don't often isolate themselves at home to use their computers/internet to socialise rather than spending time with real people/friends. Young people are really facing a lot of isolation and loneliness." - Anon, 19, Female, Hataitai

"Having spaces in the Hutt Valley where young people can hang out any time would be good for the people who feel like they have nowhere to be. People like me." - Anon, 19, Female, Lower Hutt

Other young people spoke about how social media can generate more isolation than connection.

"It's funny because social media was designed to connect us, but instead we just get sad and compete with each other." - Workshop participant

"I feel there is little to no understanding from older people about what life is like for a young person. We live a globalised world without meaningful interaction (hey look, global bullying and anxiety! And a complete lack of the old community supports and bonds)." - Anon, 18, Female, Waikato

"I've never had a problem with it, but I know lots of my friends have had to delete Instagram because it was increasing their anxiety. There is so much pressure to be fit/spo and it contributes to eating disorders and unhealthy body image ideas." - Workshop participant

It's interesting to note that when survey respondents were asked, "What do you like most about New Zealand?", the second and third most popular answers after 'Clean, green, nature' were:

- Friends, whānau, connections, community
- Kiwi culture, friendly, relaxed and open-minded people

At the same time, themes of 'bullying, cyber-bullying, peer pressure, loneliness, discrimination, not feeling heard' were mentioned 376 times in the open-field text answers.

More research is needed but perhaps we can ascertain that while young people appreciate the friendliness of other New Zealanders, many lack safe spaces online and in real-life to connect with others.

"The biggest challenge facing young people today is feeling disconnected from friends and community, resulting in poor mental health. There are few safe, free spaces outside of school for us to interact with others." - Anon, 22, Gender Diverse, Christchurch

"There is a lack of open, mental health communication with people just a little bit older - face to face not just on the phone." - Anon, 23, Female, Ōtahuhu

"There is a lot of insecurity, alienation, obsession, trying to attain 'perfection'. Young people have a lost social connection because of social media, bullying." - Anon, 24, Female, Parnell

Young people need more great role models in their community, on TV and in positions of power and leadership.

Survey respondents were asked to identify how strongly they agreed with the statement, "I see people that look like me in leadership roles (e.g. politicians, principals, professors)" on a Likert scale with 0 being 'strongly disagree' and 5 being 'strongly agree'. The average answer chosen by 1,043 people was 2.78. Only 34% of respondents agreed with, or strongly agreed with this statement. 57% of the survey respondents who identified as Asian chose a score of 2 or less, as did 50% of the Pasifika respondents and 48% of the Māori respondents. This is compared to 30% of Pākehā respondents who chose 2 or less.

77% of the gender diverse young people who took our survey also chose 2 or less when answering the statement.

In short, a majority of the young people we spoke to do not see people in positions of power and influence who look like them - but it's worse if they are gender diverse, Māori, Asian or Pasifika.

"I would love to see more Māori and female role models. I also want to see change



in mental health, and less discrimination towards disadvantaged people, families, youth, children, gangs, the LGBT community, and people from other countries e.g. refugees - Whaiora, 23, Female, Kawerau

"We need more exposure to different cultures, sexualities, disabilities, gender identity etc. within the media." - Lucas, 22, Trans-Man, Thames

"We need more female representation in politics and more LGBTQ representation

in media." - Danica, 21, Female, Mt Roskill

When asked to rank how strongly they agree or disagree with statement "I see people that look like me on TV and in movies", the average response was 2.67, and the breakdown in demographics is very similar to the above.

One of the academic researchers we interviewed also had this to say:

"It's really important for any young person's wellbeing that connections through whānau, and communities are made to give people their sense of place their turangawaewae, their ability to stand on a place and know that they are represented, loved, welcomed and have a voice.

"We know that significant adult role models and particularly community members play an incredibly important role in increasing the ability of young people to succeed. The role modelling for their education, for their sport, extracurricular, music, everything.

"Adult mentoring is so incredibly powerful and often underestimated because sometimes people can overcome an extremely difficult home background and they [the role models] can provide a level of stability. That is the role of youth worker. Sometimes the teachers and school play that role and get people from the place that they are to a completely different place due to the the strategic influence they have in their life.

"Schools have a role to play in terms of creating a zone of stability. A school can play an incredibly powerful role in ensuring wellbeing."

Young people should be taught about how to go about making change in their community and country, and people in positions of power need to get better at listening and being responsive.

"I would love to see brave political leadership where young people and children have a real voice. System change and better recognition of the Treaty that moves into our social structures and beyond lip service. A move towards collectivism and more power for local community. Disability accessibility of all services, public spaces, including education, justice and politics." - Anon, 24, Female, Wellington

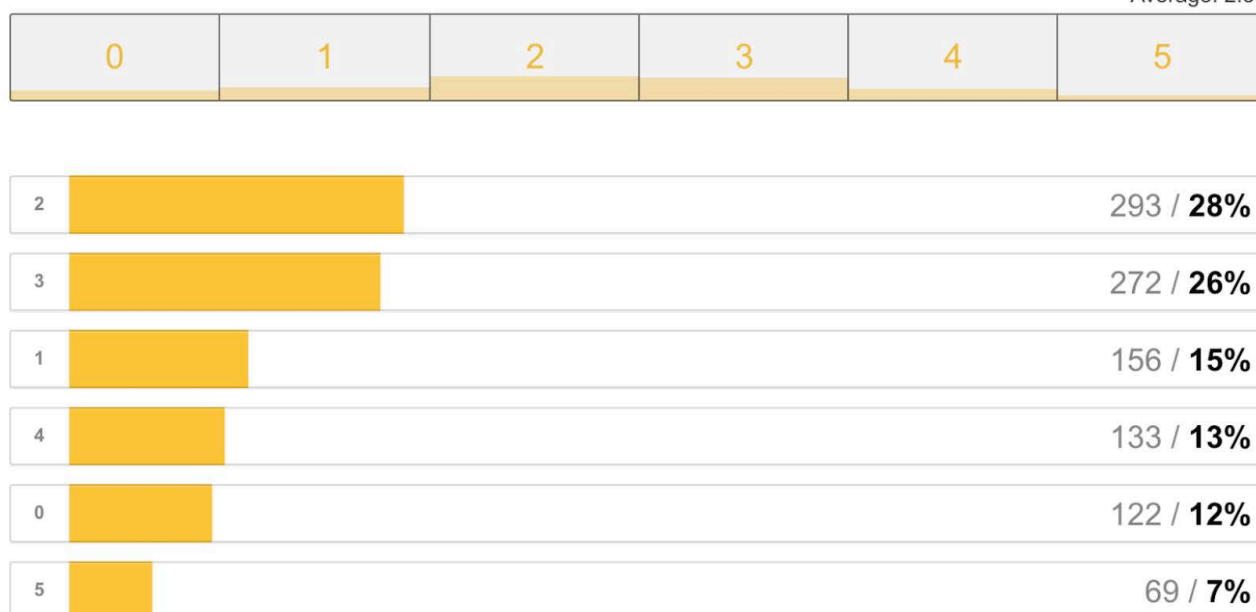
Survey respondents were asked to rank how strongly or not they agreed with 12 statements on a Likert scale of 0 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Of the 12 statements, the one that ranked the lowest among participants was, 'I know how to change things I don't like in my community'.

I know how to change things I don't like in my community

1045 out of 1064 people answered this question

Average: 2.33



55% of respondents (571 people) chose 2 or under. While only 20% of respondents (202 people) said they strongly agreed with, or agreed with the statement.

In the open-field survey responses and in the workshops, some young people felt like their voices were dismissed or ignored by people older than them, or people in positions of power.

"There should be more trust in young people. I feel a huge negative stereotype towards us millennials." - Valerie, 24, Female, Rangiora

"I personally feel a lot of the older generation/s don't listen to us and dismiss our voices. We need more encouragement and support by these people so our voices are heard and our problems are brought to the attention of those who could potentially solve them. It's also hard when you're studying (either in school or uni) and working and getting into debt and trying to have a social life and being an activist etc etc - it

can lead to burnout very easily, and we need more support.” - Sophie, 18, Female, Nelson

“Young people are consistently undervalued and unheard in workplaces.” - Maddy, 22, Female, Auckland

Some also felt that those in positions of power had not been very responsive when young people did try to make themselves heard.

“I want to see a better minimum wage, a living wage, better bicycle infrastructure, more focus on environment, the housing crisis solved, more power to communities, council and government who really listen to what people want and make changes, no matter how small.” - Sam, 19, Male, Nelson

“Young people have a lack of a voice in the future of New Zealand. We rarely get to influence political policies for things that affect us such as the curriculum.” - Dana, 19, Female, Christchurch

Here’s what one of the academic researchers we interviewed had to say:

“One quite obvious example of where young people are being left out is how we think about our planning and political processes. Especially those young people who are not voters because they are under 18. I think we should lower the voting age to 16. That’s one of the things that we can do to support young people.

“Young people tend to get sidelined in the policy process and I think a lot of our urban space and infrastructure is a great example. Our cities are not built to support young people’s wellbeing. We’ve got cities that are built entirely around cars and the use of cars but when you’re asking young people how do you get around they’re going to be biking, busing, walking. They need transport that is affordable and is safe and a lot of our planning processes aren’t allowing for that. We are constructing cities that basically require the use of a car in many cases because it’s just thinking about policy from the perspective of what works for your average middle age New Zealander.

“We should be thinking about our policy from the perspective of young people, how they engage in these spaces and how they will use them.”

Some young people expressed a desire for a different type of politics.

“More action from politicians, and less time spent trying to score points against the ‘other team’. We should all be on the same side here, and it would be great if New Zealand was better at working constructively with others.” - Anon, 24, Male, Wellington

“I want more opportunities in the Arts and Politics which don’t require people to conform to ideologies, parties or identities.” - Michael, 16, Male, Hamilton

Others identified the need for stronger citizenship and historical education in schools.

"There is not enough education around politics, handling money and taxes." - Emily, 24, Female, Palmerston North

"More teaching about our history, values and culture that we can be proud of, like the fact that we were the first country in the world to give women the vote." - Timothy, 22, Male, Geraldine

It's important to note here that young people are not well-represented in government. At the time of writing, there are only two MPs under the age of 30, despite that age group making up roughly 34% of the population.⁴

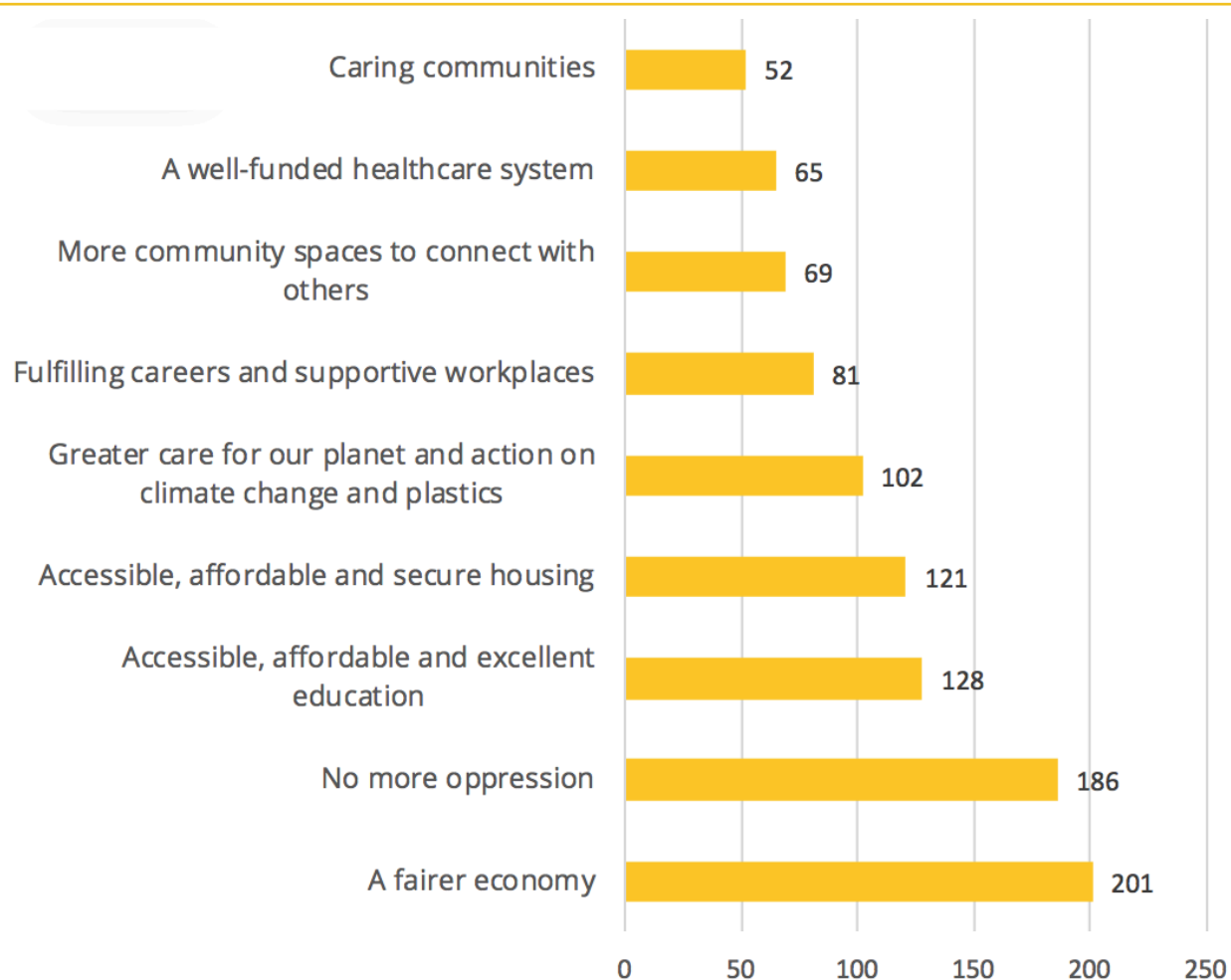
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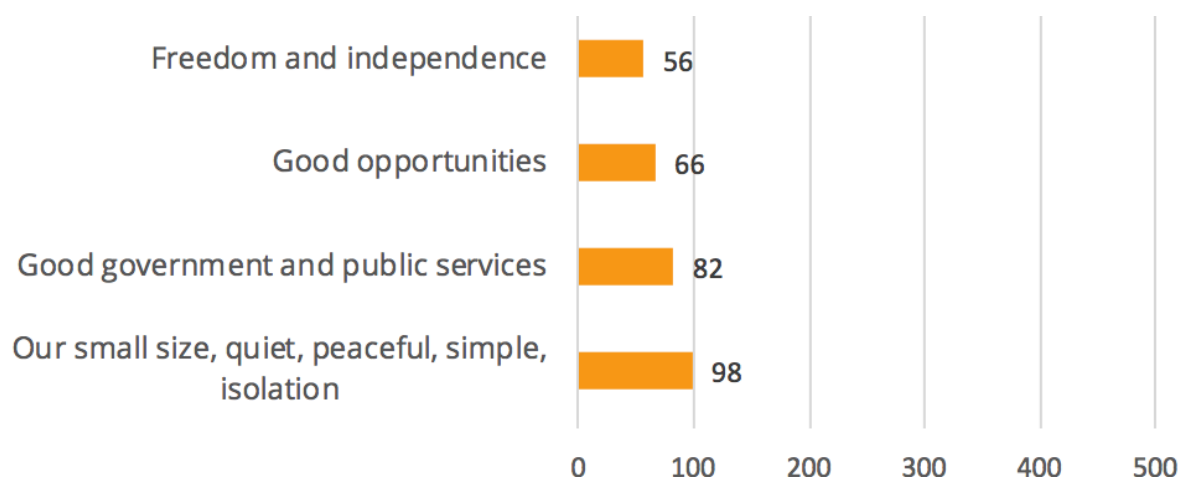
CONCLUSION

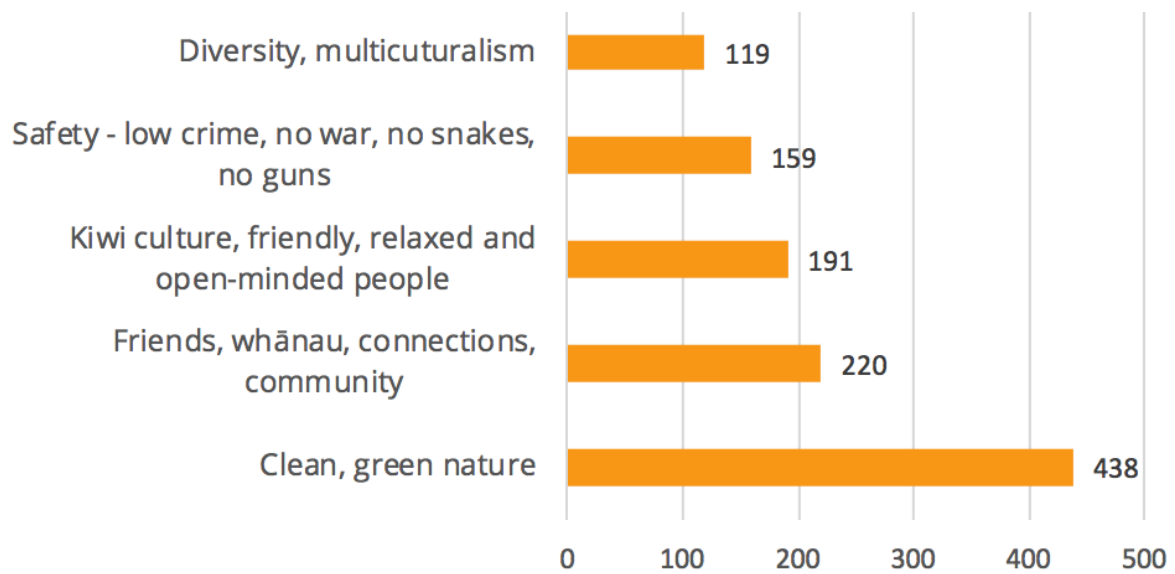
Due to the time constraints on this research project and the overwhelming call we had from the young people we spoke to to hear more from them and involve them in decision making, we will not be making any specific policy recommendations at this time.

However, we do want to share what the young people we spoke to said they would like to see changed to support their happiness and wellbeing in our survey:

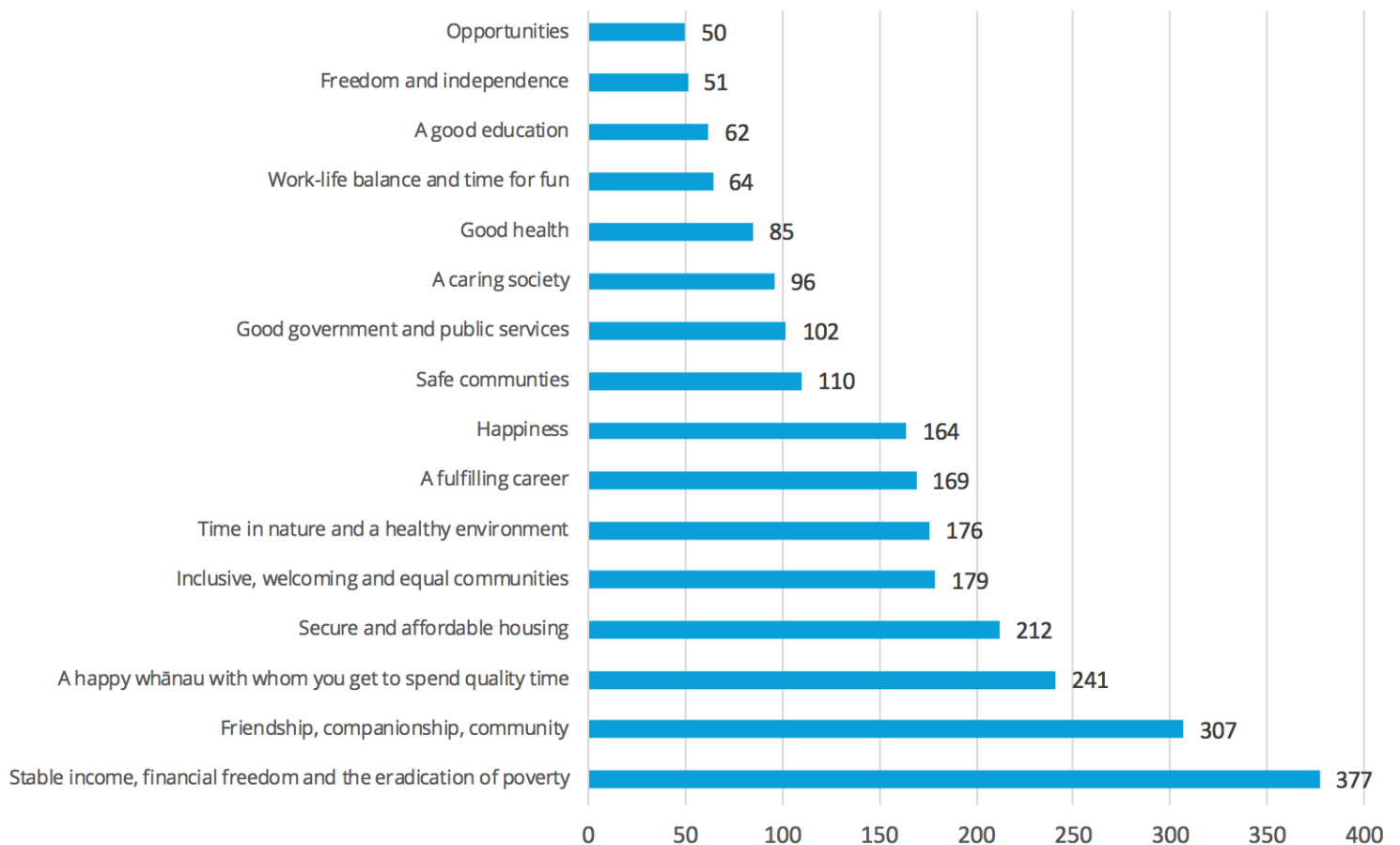


When asked what they love most about Aotearoa New Zealand, young people said:





When asked what a good life looks like, they said:



Please note: Answers with less than 50 responses have not been included.

If we take those responses and the insights we gathered from the workshops and interviews, we could summarise the collective hopes and aspirations of the young people who took part in our research process in the following vision statement:

We want an Aotearoa New Zealand that is clean, green and beautiful. We believe New Zealand should be a country that values diversity, kindness, inclusivity and looking after one an-

other. A country that nurtures life and nature, and takes action on climate change.

We believe every person should have access to great mental health services; affordable, accessible and excellent education; secure fulfilling work with supportive colleagues and employers and warm comfortable secure housing. Our economic system should be fair. Everyone should have enough money to flourish.

People should be able to spend quality time with friends and whānau, and quality time in nature. We should have well-resourced community spaces where we can come together to connect across generations and to people our own age. Places where we can have fun.

We like that New Zealand does not have guns, snakes, high levels of crime or war. We also want an end to racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, xenophobia and homophobia.

We believe young people should be supported to explore their identity, gain a sense of belonging and purpose without feeling pressured. We should learn about other cultures, sexualities and gender identities as a way to build understanding.

We want great role models. We want authentic and consistent people in our lives that encourage us to believe in ourselves and love our bodies.

We want to be taught life skills that will help us succeed in the 21st century, participate as citizens, engage in healthy relationships while also learning about our historic past.

We need people, processes and systems that support our mental, physical, spiritual, economic, cultural and social wellbeing.

When our tamaiti (children) and our taiohi (young people) are living their best lives, Aotearoa is a better place for pāke (adults) and kaumātua (elders) too.

We ask those with the power to make this vision a reality to please do so.

METHODOLOGY

Between 20 July and 7 August 2018, ActionStation gathered the views of more than 1,000 young people (aged 12 - 24) and a handful of youth workers and policy experts in this space about what youth wellbeing looks like in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We gathered these insights in three ways:

1. A 28 question online survey answered by 1,045 young people
2. 12 interviews with a diverse range of young people, youth workers and researchers with expertise in this space
3. 16 rapid-fire workshops with 149 young people and youth workers

SURVEY

The online survey was hosted by ActionStation. It was open for 10 days from 19 July - 29 July 2018. It was promoted to the ActionStation and Ara Taiohi networks via email.

2601 people visited the survey and 1045 people filled it out. The average time to complete the survey was 14 minutes and seven seconds.

We offered participants the opportunity to go in the draw for a \$150 supermarket voucher and a \$150 donation to a charity of their choice for filling it in.

The survey had 28 questions:

- Five demographic (name, age, location, gender identity, ethnicity)
- One for contact information (email)
- Three multi-choice
 - What is most important to you in your life right now?
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Education/school
 - Job/career
 - Sports
 - Future career
 - Having fun
 - Money
 - Hobbies
 - Other [open-field]
 - What things cause you to worry?
 - Succeeding in studies and getting good grades
 - Making parents proud, parental or family pressure
 - Lack of money, not enough to pay bills

- Family getting hurt, sick or dying
- Crime in your neighbourhood
- Finding a good job
- Homework and deadlines
- Problems with friends
- Friends getting hurt, sick or dying
- Bullying and/or peer pressure
- Body image
- Dating, sex, relationships
- Racism
- Sexism
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Discrimination towards people with disabilities
- Other [open-field]
- Where do you feel most connected to others?
 - When I'm with my family
 - When I'm at school
 - When I'm online
 - When I'm with friends
 - When I'm spending time with the local community
 - When I'm at work
 - Never
 - Four open-field
- What do you like most about New Zealand?
 - What does a good life in New Zealand look like for you?
 - What would you like to see changed in New Zealand to support your happiness and wellbeing?
 - What do you think are the biggest issues or challenges facing young people in New Zealand?
- 12 Likert scale (0 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree)
 - My community is a safe place
 - A healthy diet and regular exercise are really important to me
 - I / my family always have enough money to pay the bills
 - I see people that look like me in leadership roles (e.g. politicians, principals, professors)
 - I have people in my life that I can trust with my honest thoughts and feelings
 - I know how to change things I don't like in my community
 - I know where to get help if I or one of my friends are struggling with mental health
 - I believe I can be whatever I dream when I'm older
 - Adults listen to me and they take me seriously
 - I see people that look like me on TV and in movies
 - I know a lot about my culture
 - I feel comfortable and positive about my identity
- One option to be anonymous
- Two related to the prize for filling in the survey (charity, postal address)

The multi-choice questions and answers were based on research from the Ministry of Youth in 2010.

53% of people who chose to participate in the survey chose to remain anonymous.

We can see from backend data that 660 of the survey responses were filled out on a smartphone and 377 were on a PC or laptop. 48 were filled out on a tablet or 'other' device.

There were more than 4,000 open-field text responses and each one was manually coded by two different people.

INTERVIEWS

12 interviews were conducted between 31 July and 7 August. The majority were conducted via Zoom, an online video conferencing tool. They ranged from 23 to 51 minutes. Three of the interviews were submitted via written text - one for accessibility reasons, two due to time constraints on the part of the interviewee. A wide-range of interviewees were approached via email and Facebook to ask if they would be part of the research. All interviewees signed an informed consent form.

All of the interviews were conducted by the same person, Ella Rose Shnapp - a contractor to ActionStation. Questions were standardised for each interview.

Analysis of the transcribed interviews was done by Laura O'Connell Rapira.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops were 15 minutes in duration and were held at Festival For The Future at TSB Centre in Wellington on 28 and 29 July 2018. 149 people participated in the workshops in total.

The format of the workshops was a roundtable discussion with post-it notes and pens available for people who preferred to contribute to the kōrero by writing. Each table discussion had between four and 14 participants who were aged 10 to 54, with the majority (109) falling into our target demographic of 12 - 24.

Each table had one host and one note-taker who captured the insights on a laptop. Participants were asked to go around the circle and share their name, age and hometown. An open conversation was then held on the topic of youth wellbeing using the hauora model (e.g.

spiritual, physical, mental and social wellbeing) as the basis for starting conversation.

Our approach to this research has strengths but we recognise areas for improvement - which we have outlined below.

STRENGTHS OF THE RESEARCH

- The interviewer followed an informed consent process
- Analysis of the transcribed interviews was done by a different person than the interviewer
- The questions were standardised across both the interviews and the online survey
- Three methods of engagement and insight gathering were used to enable a large number of participants
- The full data set from the workshops, interviews and survey are available online for further analysis
- The interviewees spanned a wide range of experiences and expertise
- Two different people manually coded all 4000 of the open field text answers on the survey
- Participants in the research came from all around the country with a good mixture of rural and suburban representation

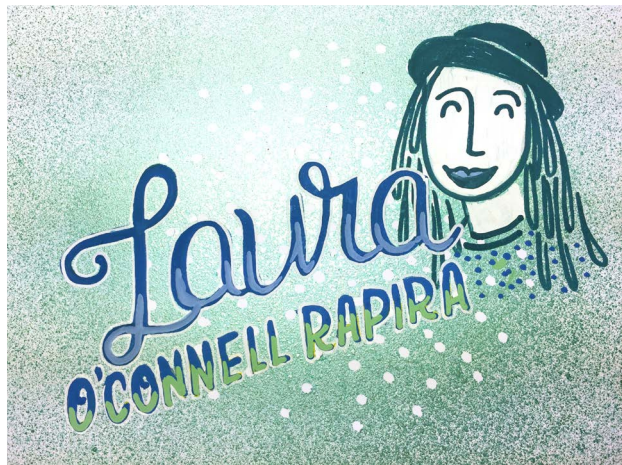
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- There was no independent oversight, though external stakeholders with experience interviewing young people were engaged through the design process
- The first interview recording on Zoom failed, however the interviewer did take note
- Multi-choice answers in the survey means potentially prescribed responses, though an 'Other' option was always available and these answers were manually coded and included in analysis
- Males, people of colour, and young people from smaller towns were under-represented in the survey responses
- Because the survey was online, we can't validate respondents are who they say they are, and the prize incentive may have influenced their responses
- The online survey mechanism also excludes young people without access to the internet or high enough levels of literacy to participate
- The entire research and report writing was conducted in a very short timeframe of five weeks

It should be noted that ActionStation is a small, not-for-profit, community-powered organisation with limited reach and resources. We would encourage agencies with more resources to conduct more in-depth research and engagement with young people about their wellbeing. We found the young people we engaged in this process to be intelligent, articulate, thoughtful and conscientious. We would be more than happy to assist anyone

wanting to undergo further research or engagement in this space, or provide the raw data for further analysis.

ABOUT US



This report was written by Laura O'Connell Rapira, Director of ActionStation. It was commissioned by Anya Satyanand, Executive Officer of Ara Taiohi and designed by Tamatha Paul. Research assistance in survey analysis was provided by Madeleine Ashton-Martyn and Eliot Pryor, who are both campaign staff at ActionStation. Interviews were conducted by Ella Rose Shnapp. Ruby Sands, a volunteer for ActionStation, took notes at eight of the workshops at Festival For The Future. Two volunteers proofed the report - Jessica and Alex.

We wish to also pay special thanks to the crew at Inspiring Stories Trust who organised Festival For The Future and enabled us to run workshops there.

ActionStation is an independent, crowdfunded, community campaigning organisation. Our mission is to tautoko (support) and whakamana (uplift) everyday New Zealanders to act together in powerful and coordinated ways to create what we cannot achieve on our own: a society, economy and democracy that serves all of us - everyday people and Papatūānuku, the planet we love. We have a proven model of member-driven, digitally facilitated, multi-issue, rapid response, grassroots campaigning with a focus on shifting public opinion and driving the media agenda in order to influence political decisions so they are better for people and planet.

actionstation.org.nz

Ara Taiohi is the peak body for youth development - the beating heart of a vibrant sector who put the rights and strengths of the young people we work with at the centre of this work. We are a membership organisation focused on sector development, with over 1250 members spanning the diversity of youth development in Aotearoa. Since our inception in 2010, Ara Taiohi has delivered against our strategic priorities of connecting the sector, raising the standards, championing youth development and promoting sustainability for people and organisations working with young people across the motu. We are working to realise our collective vision for Aotearoa as a nation where ALL young people flourish.

arataiohi.org.nz

