

***NEW ZEALAND ACTION PLAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS –
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS COMPONENT***

STOCKTAKE REPORT

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Stocktake Report provides evidence to support the children's rights component of the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights (NZAPHR). It also provides data regarding children and young people's views on human rights in general. It comprises five parts; Part One is a background paper which draws together existing research relating to children's rights in New Zealand, Part Two summarises data from a series of focus groups held around the country and Part Three provides the results of an online survey about children's rights. The focus groups and the online survey were part of the NZAPHR process and were designed to enable young people's participation in the NZAPHR, although adults were also able to complete the online survey. Part Four summarises feedback from those who attended the Children's Commissioner's Symposium in February 2004, while Part Five draws conclusions from the Background Paper, Focus Groups, Online Survey and the Symposium.

The New Zealand Human Rights Commission is currently developing the NZAPHR. The Children's Rights component has been jointly co-ordinated by the Office of the Commissioner for Children and the Human Rights Commission, both of whom contracted the Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, to provide this Stocktake Report. A Children's Rights Sector Advisory Group comprising young people and adults has been established to advise the Commissioner for Children and the Human Rights Commission of human rights issues relevant to New Zealand children. Its task has also been to assist with achieving the broadest possible participation by children and young people in the NZAPHR. Its members are people with a particular interest in children and their rights.

Background on children's rights

Children and young people in New Zealand are entitled to the same basic human rights that adults enjoy, outlined by the following international laws:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)

They also have the benefit of additional human rights that recognise they have a special need for protection. In 1993 the New Zealand government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) which applies to young people under 18 years of age and contains a comprehensive set of rights which the government agreed to make efforts to deliver to all New Zealand children. The New Zealand government has to report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years on the steps it has taken to ensure that all children enjoy the rights promised by UNCROC. In response, the Committee makes recommendations about what government action is needed by New Zealand to meet its Convention obligations.

Rights on paper are of little assistance to ordinary people. The main purpose of an Action Plan for Human Rights is to ensure that human rights principles are given practical effect.

(Please note that for simplicity, the rest of this document will use 'children' or 'young people' to mean 'children and young people'.)

PART ONE: BACKGROUND PAPER

This Background Paper synthesises existing research regarding New Zealand children and young people's rights. Chapter 2 discusses issues that potentially affect all groups of young people and Chapter 3 focuses on issues for specific groups of young people, drawing primarily on the Government's *Youth Development Strategy* (2002)¹.

CHAPTER 2: ISSUES AFFECTING ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

The rights provided in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) can be broadly considered in the following categories:²

- provision rights (for example, the right to an adequate standard of living),
- protection rights (for example, the right to be protected from abuse) and
- participation rights (for example, the right to freedom of expression).

Traditionally, adults have focused on provision and protection rights for young people. However, young people themselves are very concerned about their participation rights across all areas of their lives. For this reason, the first section looks at how well young people enjoy participation rights in New Zealand. The remaining sections discuss provision and protection issues for children and young people within the following areas of their lives: At Home, At School/Early Childhood Centre, Out and About, Employment, Health, and Legal and Social Services.

2.1 Participation

Articles 12 and 13 of UNCROC state that young people are entitled to receive information and to have a say, to be listened to and have their opinions respected. Further, New Zealand research indicates that ensuring that young people are able to contribute to decision-making is an important part of their development (Smith, Nairn, Sligo, Gaffney and McCormack, 2003; Taylor, Smith and Nairn, 2001).³ Information and participation are important across all aspects of young people's lives, including at home, at school, in the community, at work and when accessing health, legal and social services.

The Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs' *Agenda for Children* (2002)⁴ states that:

¹ Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

² From Lansdown, G. (1994). 'Children's rights' in B. Mayall (Ed) *Children's Childhood: Observed and Experienced*. London: The Falmer Press, pp 33-4.

³ Smith, A., Nairn, K., Sligo, J., Gaffney, M. and McCormack, J. (2003). *Case Studies of Young People's Participation in Public Life*. Dunedin: Children's Issues Centre, Otago University.

Taylor N, Smith A and Nairn K. (2001). 'Rights important to young people: Secondary student and staff perspectives', *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 9, 137-156.

⁴ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 20.

Many children who responded to the Agenda for Children: Children's Discussion Pack told us they felt adults did not ask for their opinions, listen to them, or take them seriously. Young people who responded to the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa consultation documents emphasised that they wanted to be involved in decision-making in all aspects of their lives. They also stressed the need for participation methods that recognised the diversity of the youth population, avoided tokenism, and had meaningful results for the young people involved.

Additionally, those who attended the *Global Voice*⁵ conference for young people held in Christchurch in 1999 and those in the focus groups contributing to *Whakarongo Mai* (2003),⁶ a youth video presented to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, gave a clear message that receiving relevant information and increasing their participation in decisions regarding their own lives is very important to them.

The *Agenda for Children* expressed an aim to increase opportunities for children's participation, particularly in government and community decision-making processes that affect them. The *Agenda* maintains that children's participation includes recognising and supporting children's contribution to their community, involving and listening to them and giving due weight to their views. By involving children in decision-making the *Agenda*⁷ proposes to:

- *improve our understanding of their ideas, issues, interests, and needs*
- *develop more responsive, efficient and effective policies and services for children generally and for individual children in specific circumstances*
- *provide them with greater 'ownership' of those policies or services*
- *provide those involved with new learning experiences, practical civic education and the chance to contribute to their own community, and*
- *improve New Zealand's compliance with UNCROC*

The *Agenda* identified existing work around children's participation in decision-making:⁸

- *the Law Commission's review of Family Court disputes resolution processes – includes suggestions for improving children's involvement*
- *a number of local authorities also consult regularly with children. Some have established youth councils, and others have done major consultation exercises to find out what children think about their local environment*
- *many schools have school councils, and secondary schools are required by law to have a student representative on their Boards of Trustees*

The *Agenda* said that the Ministries of Social Development and Youth Affairs are currently working with a range of government and non-government agencies to develop resources on participation. These will:⁹

- *include 'best practice' principles, guidelines and examples of specific tools to improve opportunities for children and young people to participate in decisions that affect them*

⁵ Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

⁶ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – United Nations Video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

⁷ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 19.

⁸ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 20.

⁹ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 20.

- *focus on ways to enhance the participation of Maori and Pacific children and young people, those from ethnic minority groups and those who are disabled, and*
- *be developed in partnership with a range of organisations and tailored for their use*

The two Ministries have also been working on projects to improve opportunities for children's and young people's participation in three areas:¹⁰

- *assessing the effectiveness of national and political participation models for children, young people and young adults. This will include assessing the effectiveness of the current Youth Parliament initiative*
- *work with the Department of Internal Affairs, Local Government New Zealand, and a number of local authorities and community organisations to increase opportunities for children to have a real say in decisions that affect them in their local communities, and*
- *work with the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office to identify current practice and let others know of examples of good practice and positive ways of increasing children's participation in the governance and life of primary and secondary schools in New Zealand*

Possible future developments and directions outlined by the *Agenda* are:

- *develop specific guidelines and mechanisms for enhancing the participation in decision-making processes of Maori and Pacific children, children from ethnic minorities and children with disabilities*
- *develop a website to share resources with government agencies, local authorities and community organisations on the benefits of and issues surrounding children's participation in decision-making. This could include a database of relevant contacts in organisations*
- *look at ways of raising awareness of the contributions children make and the value they can add to their communities*

Fourteen organisations working in areas related to children's wellbeing published a collective response entitled *Making It Happen*¹¹ to the Government's *Agenda for Children*. While welcoming the vision and principles of the *Agenda for Children*, the collective view of the organisations was that the *Agenda* did not propose sufficiently extensive actions, and that the Government had not yet committed funding in principle to ensure its effective implementation. In order to increase children's participation, the organisations therefore urged the following in order to properly implement the *Agenda for Children*:

- *a systematic review of all government/local government systems that involve children to ensure that their participation rights are being fully respected*
- *an active programme to promote children's right to participation within the Government and non-government sectors*
- *the development and promotion of education resources, guidelines and other tools to assist organisations involve children in decision-making and information giving processes*
- *the development of processes to monitor and report on implementation of children's participation rights*
- *in compliance with articles 13 and 17 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, promoting the development of non-violent, quality children's media which facilitates children's participation and citizenship development*

¹⁰ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, pp 20-1.

¹¹ Institute of Public Policy - Auckland University of Technology, UNICEF NZ, Save the Children NZ, Barnardos NZ, Child Poverty Action Group, Children's Agenda, Children's Issues Centre, Public Health Association, Plunket, National Council of Women, Paediatric Society, Children's Television Foundation, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2002). *Making it Happen: Implementing New Zealand's Agenda for Children*. Wellington: Institute of Public Policy (AUT), Children's Agenda and UNICEF NZ, pp 6-7.

- *the development of processes to hear children's complaints about failure to ensure they can access / fully participate as they are entitled to.*

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child also made some comments with respect to this issue in its concluding observations to the New Zealand Government in 2003:¹²

Respect for the views of the child

25. The Committee notes with appreciation the efforts to include children in decision-making processes at the national and local levels, for instance through the Youth Parliament. However, it is concerned that the right of individual children to be heard and have their views taken into account in administrative or judicial processes affecting them is not systematically included in legislation and regulations.

26. The Committee recommends that the State party undertake a review of legislation and regulations affecting children, including proposed legislation such as the Care of Children Bill, to ensure that they appropriately integrate and apply the right of each child to be heard and have his or her views taken into account according to article 12.

Summary

An active programme to promote children's right to participation within the Government and non-government sectors is desirable, along with the development and promotion of education resources, guidelines and other tools to assist organisations to involve children in decision-making and information giving processes. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has highlighted the need for a mechanism to ensure that the right of young people to have their views taken into account in administrative or judicial processes affecting them is systematically included in legislation and regulations.

2.2 At Home

2.2.1 Provision rights

Poverty

Poverty can be defined in terms of absolute or relative poverty, where absolute poverty is a lack of resources for even a bare minimum existence. UNICEF defines relative poverty as affecting those in households with income below 50% of the national median income (UNICEF, 2000)¹³. Even if children in New Zealand have a bare subsistence, they need more than this for their normal health, growth and development. The extent to which relative poverty exists, and its causes and effects, must therefore be addressed in the New Zealand context, according to a number of recent analyses.¹⁴

¹² United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

¹³ UNICEF. (2000). *A League table of child poverty in rich nations (Innocenti report card issue no 1 June 2000)*. Florence: United Nations Children's Fund.

¹⁴ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Childrenz Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10.

Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy (2nd ed)*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

Although New Zealand has no official poverty line, relative poverty levels established by a Ministry of Social Development Report on *New Zealand Living Standards* (Krishnan, Jensen and Ballantyne, 2002)¹⁵ and the Ministry of Social Policy (*The Social Report 2001*)¹⁶ indicate that approximately 3 out of 10 young people in New Zealand live in poverty, based on a poverty threshold of 60% equivalent net-of-housing costs median income.

Blaiklock, Kiro, Belgrave, Low, Davenport and Hassall (2002)¹⁷ report that children – particularly Maori, Pacific and Asian children, and children in low income and single parent families – have been disproportionately affected by poverty, a view supported by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in its recent recommendations to the New Zealand Government. Recommendations 41 and 42 state:¹⁸

Standard of living

41. *The Committee is concerned that a significant proportion of children in the State party live in poverty, and that single parent families headed by women as well as Maori and Pacific Island families are disproportionately affected.*

42. *In accordance with article 27.3 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party take appropriate measures to assist parents, in particular single parents, and others responsible for the child to implement the child's right to an adequate standard of living. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that assistance provided to Maori and Pacific Island families respects and supports their traditional extended family structures.*

The long reaching and inter-related effects of poverty on children are well documented. There is a clear relationship between poverty and housing, and children's health and wellbeing, education, development, social and family relationships.¹⁹

Institute of Public Policy - Auckland University of Technology, UNICEF NZ, Save the Children NZ, Barnardos NZ, Child Poverty Action Group, Children's Agenda, Children's Issues Centre, Public Health Association, Plunket, National Council of Women, Paediatric Society, Children's Television Foundation, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2002). *Making it Happen: Implementing New Zealand's Agenda for Children*. Wellington: Institute of Public Policy (AUT), Children's Agenda and UNICEF NZ.

Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

UMR Opinion Survey (2003). Commissioned by the Human Rights Commission.

¹⁵ Krishnan, V., Jensen, J. and Ballantyne, S. (2002). *New Zealand Living Standards 2000*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, pp 119-120.

¹⁶ Ministry of Social Policy. (2001). *The Social Report*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Policy, p 79. Cited in Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 10.

¹⁷ Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, p 47.

¹⁸ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

¹⁹ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Childrenz Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10.

Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy (2nd ed)*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group. Institute of Public Policy - Auckland University of Technology, UNICEF NZ, Save the Children NZ, Barnardos NZ, Child Poverty Action Group, Children's Agenda, Children's Issues Centre, Public Health Association, Plunket, National Council of Women, Paediatric Society, Children's Television Foundation, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges,

Blaiklock et al (2002)²⁰ concluded that,

The effects are inter-related: for example, low household incomes are exacerbated by high housing costs, and overcrowding and poor nutrition can lead to ill-health and lower educational achievement which limits opportunities for future employment and income.

Specifically, children in poverty are less likely to have basic needs met, such as adequate and nutritional food, clothing, health care or a home that is not crowded (Krishnan et al 2002)²¹. For example, there is evidence that the situation for some families is so dire that lack of food can cause fighting between siblings (Williams and O'Brien, 2003).²²

According to a Best Evidence Synthesis published in 2003²³ by the Ministry of Education, children's educational achievement can also suffer:

As a group, the achievement of these low socioeconomic status children is significantly below that of children from middle and higher socioeconomic status homes in all curriculum areas, according to national data from SEA, NEMP, TIMSS and PISA, and data from the Wellington-based Competent Children Study. The lower achievement of children in low socioeconomic status homes is evident on entry to school, and extends right across primary and secondary school and into tertiary education.

Easton and Ballantyne (2002)²⁴ found the likelihood of a child being sick was about three times higher for those in the bottom household income quintile (i.e. bottom 20%) in comparison to those children in the top quintile. Almost half of sick children were in the bottom quintile, and three quarters in the bottom 40%.

Research also shows that young people living in poverty are less likely to have a bike, books at home, or to have their friends over for a meal, birthday party or to stay the night. Further, they are less likely to have cultural lessons or involvement in sport, art or music (Krishnan et al, 2002)²⁵. A full discussion of the impact of poverty is beyond the scope of this paper. For a more detailed discussion see, for example, reports by Blaiklock et al

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2002). *Making it Happen: Implementing New Zealand's Agenda for Children*. Wellington: Institute of Public Policy (AUT), Children's Agenda and UNICEF NZ.

Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

UMR Opinion Survey (2003). Commissioned by the Human Rights Commission.

²⁰ Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, p 47.

²¹ Krishnan, V., Jensen, J. and Ballantyne, S. (2002). *New Zealand Living Standards 2000*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

²² Williams, L. and O'Brien, M. (2003). *The Dynamics of Debt for Low Income Families*. Wellington: New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, p 61.

²³ Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J. and Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, p 80.

²⁴ Easton, B. and Ballantyne, S. (2002). *The economic and health status of households*. Wellington: Wellington School of Medicine. Cited in Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy (2nd ed)*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group, p 11.

²⁵ Krishnan, V., Jensen, J. and Ballantyne, S. (2002). *New Zealand Living Standards 2000*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

(2002),²⁶ Child Poverty Action Group (2003),²⁷ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (2003),²⁸ and the New Zealand Network Against Food Poverty (1999).²⁹

Williams and O'Brien (2003)³⁰ identify insufficient income, debt and housing costs as key factors contributing to poverty for New Zealand families. Insufficient income may be due to casualised, irregular and low-paid employment. It may also result from people on social assistance not receiving their full benefit entitlements from Work and Income New Zealand. People presenting to crisis centres, food banks, budgeting agencies and other social services frequently name 'unmanageable debt' as a major issue in their lives. Given that over half of those coming to these foodbanks are from households with children (under 18 years of age) undergoing vital years of development, Williams and O'Brien (2003)³¹ conclude that this situation needs to be urgently addressed.

The Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs' *Agenda for Children* (2002)³² has now put in place a programme of research on child poverty which is intended to inform the development of effective policies. Intended research projects include investigating:

- *the effectiveness of various policies in alleviating and preventing child poverty*
- *the ages at which children are most affected by low family incomes*
- *the effects of family income assistance in reducing negative outcomes*
- *improved measures for monitoring poverty levels for children*

The *Agenda for Children*³³ also states that in order to end child poverty, future work will focus on:

- *improving the social assistance system, including family income assistance, so that it provides families with secure and adequate financial assistance when it is needed*
- *better incentives and ways of assisting parents to move into paid work, and to improve their work opportunities through education and training*
- *addressing barriers to work that make it difficult for some parents to improve their family income, for example, lack of childcare*
- *improving the ability of accommodation assistance to adequately meet families' housing costs and needs*
- *improving families' access to hardship assistance and making it more responsive to their needs*
- *further measures to address benefit debt to help parents improve their family income*

The fourteen organisations working in areas related to children's wellbeing who published *Making It Happen*³⁴ as a response to the Government's *Agenda for Children* urged that

²⁶ Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, p 47.

²⁷ Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy* (2nd ed). Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

²⁸ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, pp 176-183.

²⁹ New Zealand Network Against Food Poverty. (1999). *Hidden Hunger: Food and Low Income in New Zealand*. Wellington: New Zealand Network Against Food Poverty.

³⁰ Williams, L. and O'Brien, M. (2003). *The Dynamics of Debt for Low Income Families*. Wellington: New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, p 61.

³¹ Williams and O'Brien, *Ibid*.

³² Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 23.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ Institute of Public Policy - Auckland University of Technology, UNICEF NZ, Save the Children NZ, Barnardos NZ, Child Poverty Action Group, Children's Agenda, Children's Issues Centre, Public Health Association, Plunket, National Council

with regard to child poverty, the following actions be taken in order to properly implement the *Agenda for Children*:

Required immediately

- *Extend the Child Tax Credit of \$15 per child per week to all low-income families (Cost: around \$250m)*
- *Adjust Family Support and the income levels from which Family Support starts to reduce, to cost of living changes of the past decade (Cost: up to \$250m)*
- *Place an obligation on the IRD to ensure families access their tax credits*
- *Give all children under 18 access to free health and dental care including after hours services and prescriptions*
- *Index all family-related payments, including health subsidies*
- *Adopt the 60%, after-housing costs, equivalised household disposable income as an official measure of poverty*
- *Monitor poverty on a regular basis to ensure progress is being made to eliminating child poverty*
- *Raise the threshold that can be earned by each beneficiary before losing their benefit almost dollar for dollar, from \$80 to \$130 to compensate for inflation*

Required in the medium term:

- *Make part of Family Support a universal payment to recognise targeting inevitably leads to low levels of assistance and high clawback rates*
- *Begin a major increase in state house acquisition to at least 1000 houses per year*
- *Institute a program of state-backed lending to low-income families, including state house tenants to enable them to own their own homes and reduce state house waiting lists*
- *Provide lending or loan guarantees to third sector housing providers such as housing trusts, housing co-operatives and iwi based housing agencies to enable them to offer further housing alternatives to low income families*
- *Evaluate all monetary and fiscal policies in terms of the impact on families and young people, not just their impact on inflation, debt and annual growth of GDP*
- *Monitor and report on changes in poverty levels and poverty incidence*

In October 2003, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child also urged immediate action by the New Zealand Government.³⁵

Resources for children

14. The Committee is concerned that despite the persistence of poverty, the State party has not undertaken a comprehensive study of the impact of its economic reform policies on children as previously recommended. The Committee is further concerned about the lack of available data on budgetary allocations for children.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party pay particular attention to the full implementation of article 4 of the Convention by prioritizing budgetary allocations to ensure implementation of the economic, social and cultural rights of children, in particular those belonging to economically disadvantaged groups, "to the maximum extent of... available resources". The Committee further recommends that the State party gather disaggregated data on budget allocations for children and systematically assess the impact of all its economic policy initiatives on children.

of Women, Paediatric Society, Children's Television Foundation, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2002). *Making it Happen: Implementing New Zealand's Agenda for Children*. Wellington: Institute of Public Policy (AUT), Children's Agenda and UNICEF NZ, pp 6-7.

³⁵ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

Summary

Research indicates that 3 out of 10 young people in New Zealand live in poverty. Consequently they do not necessarily have their basic needs met and are significantly disadvantaged in terms of their growth and development. This particularly affects Maori, Pacific and Asian children, and children in low income and single parent families. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that New Zealand take appropriate measures to assist parents, in particular single parents, and others responsible for the child to implement the child's right to an adequate standard of living.

2.2.2 Protection rights

Abuse and neglect

Article 19 of UNCROC entitles children to protection from abuse and neglect, yet a number of recent analyses suggest that some young people in New Zealand continue to suffer from abuse and neglect of all types.³⁶ According to the Department of Child, Youth and Family (2002)³⁷, there were 27 507 notifications of abuse or neglect to the year ended June 2002, with 23 805 of these requiring further action - and these are only the ones we know about. Further, a recent UNICEF (2003)³⁸ report states that New Zealand has the third worst child death rates of 26 countries.

The Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs' *Agenda for Children* (2002)³⁹ lists a number of existing initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence in children's lives. They are:

- *Crime Reduction Strategy*
- *Te Rito: The New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*⁴⁰
- *Care and Protection Blueprint*
- *Child, Youth and Family's public education strategy*

³⁶ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Children's Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10.

Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy* (2nd ed). Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

Institute of Public Policy - Auckland University of Technology, UNICEF NZ, Save the Children NZ, Barnardos NZ, Child Poverty Action Group, Children's Agenda, Children's Issues Centre, Public Health Association, Plunket, National Council of Women, Paediatric Society, Children's Television Foundation, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2002). *Making it Happen: Implementing New Zealand's Agenda for Children*. Wellington: Institute of Public Policy (AUT), Children's Agenda and UNICEF NZ.

Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2000). *Children in New Zealand: Second Periodic Report of New Zealand*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

UMR Opinion Survey (2003). Commissioned by the Human Rights Commission.

³⁷ Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (2002) *Annual Report for the Year ended 30 June 2002*. Wellington, Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

³⁸ UNICEF (2003). *A League Table of Child Maltreatment Deaths in Rich Nations*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. Available at www.unicef.org

³⁹ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 24.

⁴⁰ www.msd.govt.nz

- *Building Tomorrow: Paths to Prevent Child Abuse (website)*⁴¹
- *Youth Offending Strategy*

However, the *Agenda for Children*⁴² identifies its focus as mainly on reducing bullying, since consultation feedback from children frequently highlighted bullying as a negative aspect in their lives. Bullying will be addressed in greater detail in the section 'At School/Early Childhood Centre'.

Although the *Agenda*⁴³ does not propose any immediate additional strategies to address child abuse in general, it identifies some possible future developments:

- *Develop a public education process to let people know about alternatives to physically disciplining children and to lead changes in attitudes and behaviour*
- *Upskilling people who work with children (for example, teachers, health professionals, programme providers) so that they are better able to support children to understand that the violence they are experiencing is not their fault, that violence is not an appropriate way of solving conflict, and what to do to keep safe*

The collective response to the Government's *Agenda for Children* entitled *Making It Happen*⁴⁴ urged the following actions with regard to addressing violence and abuse in children's lives:

- *Quality implementation and evaluation of Te Rito: The New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy. This includes putting in place:*
 - *Outcome-focused, community-building initiatives to prevent violence against children*
 - *Further early intervention programmes and services including parent education and support*
 - *Child intervention services to ensure that children witnessing domestic violence have their needs addressed*
 - *More early childhood education and school-based violence prevention and family support services and programmes*
 - *Evaluation of programmes to learn what works, for whom, and in what circumstances*
 - *Extending professional education about family violence and ensuring that those working with family violence are well supervised and supported*
- *Increased support for children traumatised by violence and neglect. This includes:*
 - *Increased funding to the front-line of the Department of Child Youth and Family Services so that highly skilled social workers have the time to respond to neglect as well as incidences of abuse, and can sustain relationships with abused and neglected children, their siblings and their carers for as long as is necessary*
 - *Increased support for quality carers, to ensure that children are safe from being abused again and are helped to recover from abuse*
 - *More specialised therapeutic services available for traumatised children*

⁴¹ www.buildingtomorrow.org.nz

⁴² Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 25.

⁴³ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 26.

⁴⁴ Institute of Public Policy - Auckland University of Technology, UNICEF NZ, Save the Children NZ, Barnardos NZ, Child Poverty Action Group, Children's Agenda, Children's Issues Centre, Public Health Association, Plunket, National Council of Women, Paediatric Society, Children's Television Foundation, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2002). *Making it Happen: Implementing New Zealand's Agenda for Children*. Wellington: Institute of Public Policy (AUT), Children's Agenda and UNICEF NZ, pp 6-7.

**Culturally appropriate quality services to meet the needs of tamariki Maori and their whanau*

- *Repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act to discourage parents from using physical punishment to discipline children and ensure that children have the same rights to protection from assault in law as adults. A well-resourced, widespread education programme to promote positive parenting should accompany this. This could include extension of the CYF 'Everyday Communities' programme*
- *Reduce children's exposure to violence on television, other media and computer games. This would include:*

**Extending the monitoring requirements of the Broadcasting Standards Authority*

**Requiring TVNZ and NZ on Air to develop guidelines on use of violence for producers and programmers, and encouraging TV3, SPADA, and Sky TV to also adopt these guidelines*

**Providing parents with information about guiding their children's watching of videos and playing video games*

**Promoting information about safe use of the internet*

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child also expressed its concern about violence and abuse in its concluding observations in 2003.⁴⁵

Violence, including ill-treatment

27. The Committee shares the State party's concern about the prevalence of child abuse, and notes with regret that services aimed at preventing abuse and providing assistance with recovery do not have sufficient resources and are insufficiently coordinated.

28. The Committee recommends that the State party:

a) Expand services and programmes aimed at assisting victims of abuse, and ensure that they are provided in a child-sensitive manner which respects the privacy of the victim;

b) Increase programmes and services aimed at the prevention of child abuse in the home, schools and in institutions and ensure that there are sufficient numbers of adequately qualified and trained staff to provide these services;

c) Continue to improve the coordination of services for vulnerable families and victims of abuse.

Corporal punishment

29. The Committee is deeply concerned that despite a review of legislation, the State party has still not amended section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961, which allows parents to use reasonable force to discipline their children. While welcoming the Government's public education campaign to promote positive, non-violent forms of discipline within the home, the Committee emphasizes that the Convention requires the protection of children from all forms of violence, which includes corporal punishment in the family, and which should be accompanied by awareness-raising campaigns on the law and on children's right to protection.

30. The Committee recommends that the State party:

a) Amend legislation to prohibit corporal punishment in the home;

b) Strengthen public education campaigns and activities aimed at promoting positive, non-violent forms of discipline and respect for children's right to human dignity and physical integrity, while raising awareness about the negative consequences of corporal punishment.

⁴⁵ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

Summary

A number of recent analyses suggest that some young people in New Zealand continue to suffer from abuse and neglect of all types. Further, a recent UNICEF report states that New Zealand has the third worst child death rates of 26 countries. Although there are a number of existing government initiatives, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends the Government repeal section 59 of the Crimes Act, expand services and programmes aimed at assisting victims of abuse, and ensure that they are provided in a child-sensitive manner which respects the privacy of the victim. In addition, the Committee suggested the Government increase programmes and services aimed at the prevention of child abuse in the home, schools and in institutions and ensure that there are sufficient numbers of adequately qualified and trained staff to provide these services and continue to improve the coordination of services for vulnerable families and victims of abuse.

2.3 At School / Early Childhood Centre

2.3.1 Provision rights

Although UNCROC provides the right to free education (Articles 28 and 29), the evidence suggests that some families have significant difficulty paying associated costs such as school fees, exam fees and activity fees. Further, it appears that some young people who have been expelled from a school may find it difficult to find another school to accept them.⁴⁶

Several factors are important in order for young people to feel a sense of connectedness, well-being and to reach their full potential at school. Research indicates that the following factors are crucial, but not always provided for young people in New Zealand.⁴⁷

- quality educational help from trained staff (at early childhood centres and school)
- a chance to discover their own identity and feel as though they are part of their culture (for example, the opportunity for Maori rangatahi to learn te reo Maori and tikanga Maori)

⁴⁶ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Childrenz Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10.

Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

⁴⁷ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Childrenz Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy (2nd ed)*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Smith, A., Nairn, K., Taylor, N. and Gaffney, M. (2003). 'Staff and student perspectives on children's rights in New Zealand secondary schools', *Childrenz Issues*, 7 (1), 9-16.

UMR Opinion Survey. (2003). Commissioned by the Human Rights Commission.

- trustworthy people (such as counsellors or peer support) to talk to, who listen properly and provide help if necessary (there is a more extensive discussion of this in the section below on 'Health')
- time, space and resources for sport, leisure, cultural, musical and artistic activities
- opportunities to be with friends

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its 2003 concluding observations addressed most of the factors raised above:⁴⁸

Education, leisure and cultural activities

43. The Committee welcomes the development of bilingual education for Maori, however it notes with concern the persistent disparities in enrolment and drop out rates among children of different ethnic groups. The Committee is also concerned that the policy on exclusions as well as increasing hidden costs of education are limiting access to education, particularly for Maori children, pregnant girls, children with special educational needs, lower income families, non-citizens and new immigrants.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all children in the State party have access to free primary education; enforce legislation on compulsory education and prohibit exclusions on arbitrary grounds such as pregnancy, and ensure that students of the age of compulsory education that have been legitimately excluded from a school are enrolled elsewhere; take effective measures to address disparities in enrolment and drop out rates between ethnic groups, including by strengthening programmes for bilingual education take all necessary measures, including the provision of quality counselling programmes in schools, to address behavioural problems of students while respecting their right to privacy.

Summary

The evidence suggests that some families have significant difficulty paying associated costs such as school fees, exam fees and activity fees. Further, it appears that some young people who have been expelled from a school may find it difficult to find another school to accept them. There are certain factors which assist young people to feel a sense of connectedness, well-being and to reach their full potential at school/early childhood centre but these are not always provided for young people in New Zealand. The factors include quality educational help from trained staff, a chance to discover their own identity (e.g. being able to learn te reo Maori), trustworthy people (such as counsellors) to talk to, time, space and resources for sport, leisure, cultural, musical and artistic activities and opportunities to be with friends.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child suggested the government take effective measures to address disparities in enrolment and drop out rates between ethnic groups, including by strengthening programmes for bilingual education and also to take all necessary measures, including the provision of quality counselling programmes in schools, to address behavioural problems of students while respecting their right to privacy. The UN Committee also commented on the need to ensure adequate programmes for teenage parents.

⁴⁸ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

2.3.2 Protection rights

Bullying

Children who responded to the *Agenda for Children*⁴⁹ highlighted bullying as a negative aspect in their lives. Similarly, young people involved in *Global Voice*,⁵⁰ *Whakarongo Mai*⁵¹ and the *Youth Development Strategy*⁵² have indicated that bullying at school is a significant issue for them.

According to the *Agenda for Children* the Ministry of Social Development is working with a range of government agencies to look at current approaches that aim to reduce bullying in schools and the community. A large number of activities already underway in schools target bullying by creating a safe school culture where:⁵³

- *Positive student and staff behaviour is modelled and supported, and*
- *School pupils, caregivers and community members are all involved in preventing and managing bullying.*

The *Agenda for Children* aims to strengthen current approaches to reducing bullying by:⁵⁴

- *Looking at ways to improve the co-ordination between specific anti-bullying initiatives, and improve their links with wider education and violence prevention strategies, for example, the New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy, and*
- *Working with the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office to explore 'best practice' approaches to creating a positive school culture and environment with a particular focus on reducing bullying.*

The *Agenda* also identifies some possible future developments with regard to preventing bullying:⁵⁵

- *Develop resources that draw together research and knowledge on the bullying of children with disabilities*
- *Develop resources that draw together research and knowledge on the bullying of children because of their ethnicity, in particular their experiences of racial harassment and other forms of discrimination*

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its 2003 concluding observations, did not specifically address bullying but it did make a general statement urging increased programmes and services to prevent abuse, including at school:⁵⁶

28. *The Committee recommends that the State party:*

⁴⁹ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 25.

⁵⁰ Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

⁵¹ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

⁵² Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

⁵³ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 25.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 26.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 26.

⁵⁶ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND, CRC/C/15/Add.216*, 3 October 2003.

(b) Increase programs and services aimed at the prevention of child abuse in the home, schools and in institutions and ensure that there are sufficient numbers of adequately qualified and trained staff to provide these services

Summary

Bullying is still a problem for a significant number of young people. Evaluation of existing programmes is required to learn what works to prevent bullying, for whom, and in what circumstances. On the basis of this evaluation, more early childhood education and school-based violence prevention and support programmes can then be established.

Discrimination

Various different groups of young people, including those with disabilities, experience discrimination in New Zealand. Some young people, especially those who are Maori, Pacific, Asian or other migrants, have mentioned that racism continues to significantly affect them at school (and elsewhere).⁵⁷

Addressing discrimination was not a key action area in the *Agenda for Children*, although it was stated that in particular, Maori and Pacific children and children with disabilities strongly articulated their experience of being bullied, teased and picked on by other students at school.⁵⁸

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child had some recommendations however:⁵⁹

Non-discrimination

22. The Committee is concerned that, as acknowledged by the State party, discrimination persists against vulnerable groups of children, such as Maori children, minority children, children with disabilities, and non-citizens. The Committee is particularly concerned by the comparatively low indicators for Maori, Pacific Island and Asian children.

23. The Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to ensure implementation of existing laws guaranteeing the principle of non-discrimination and full compliance with article 2 of the Convention, and to adopt a proactive and comprehensive strategy to eliminate discrimination on any grounds and against all vulnerable groups.

Summary

Discrimination is a problem that continues to affect young people in New Zealand, both at school and elsewhere. It is suggested that a comprehensive strategy is needed to address this issue, perhaps starting with a programme in schools to cultivate understanding and awareness of other children's rights to be free from discrimination.

⁵⁷ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 26.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

⁵⁸ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p 25.

⁵⁹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, 3 October 2003.

2.4 Out and About

2.4.1 Provision rights

Certain factors are necessary in order for young people to feel a sense of connectedness and belonging to their community. The following factors are similar to those identified in the 'At School' section. Research identifies them as important factors, but ones that are not always provided for young people in New Zealand:⁶⁰

- space and sufficient resources for sport, leisure, cultural, musical and artistic activities and other entertainment – all these activities need to be affordable

*More and more houses are being built but they are forgetting about putting in parks for children and other places like swimming pools and skateboard places etc.*⁶¹

*Provision of a range of sports for people with disabilities.*⁶²

*GIVE US SOMETHING TO DO!! Really, just let us have a fun exciting time without a mindless substance.*⁶³

- places to hang out with friends

*U could bring in more things which do not do harm such as social teen clubs where they can drink and socialise without parents worrying over where they are...and breakdancing/skating/turtable rinks/graffiti etc to influence the kidz talent around the rohe (Maori for 'area').*⁶⁴

*This place is mediocre when we are seen on the streets, people judge. There are not enough youth centres or places we can go to look for help.*⁶⁵

- a chance to discover their own identity and feel as though they are part of their culture (for example, the opportunity for Maori, Pacific or Asian young people to take part in cultural groups)
- more places to seek support from trustworthy people (not just at school)

⁶⁰ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

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Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Smith, A., Naim, K., Taylor, N. and Gaffney, M. (2003). 'Staff and student perspectives on children's rights in New Zealand secondary schools', *Childrenz Issues*, 7 (1), 9-16.

⁶¹ Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Childrenz Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10, p 9.

⁶² Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council, p 18.

⁶³ Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council, p 8.

⁶⁴ Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council, p 9.

⁶⁵ Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council, p 9.

*More support places that are designed for young people. Places where we can talk about things anonymously and get help from people IN PERSON! Young people need to know that there are people out there who do care about your feelings and opinion.*⁶⁶

Although the *Agenda for Children* did not specifically address this area, the *Youth Development Strategy* states that 'healthy development is shaped by young people having positive connections with many social environments'.⁶⁷

Summary

Young people's healthy development is shaped by having positive connections with many social environments. As such, providing more space and resources for sport, leisure, cultural, musical and artistic activities (and making these and other entertainment affordable), places to hang out with friends, a chance to discover their own identity and more places to seek support from trustworthy people (not just at school) are all important.

2.4.2 Protection rights

The discussion on discrimination in the section 'At School' above is equally relevant here.

2.5 At Work

2.5.1 Provision rights

Various feedback from young people indicates that youth wages are frequently seen as too low, especially by those who need to earn money to supplement the family income or to pay for their own clothing or education.⁶⁸

It appears that neither the *Agenda for Children* nor the *Youth Development Strategy* specifically address the issue of low wages for youth. However, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about the minimum age of employment and legislative provisions for young people in paid work:⁶⁹

Economic exploitation of children

47. The Committee is concerned that protection of persons under 18 in employment does not fully conform to the principles and provisions of the Convention and it reiterates its concern of para. 20 about the lack of a minimum age of admission to employment.

48. The Committee recommends that the State party expedite the ongoing process of reviewing and strengthening legislation protecting all persons under the age of 18 who are employed, and encourages the State party to ratify ILO Convention 138.

⁶⁶ Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Childrenz Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10, p 9.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs, p 17.

⁶⁸ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Agenda for Children Project Team. (2002). 'Listen to us and take us seriously': Young people's responses to the government's Agenda for Children consultation, *Childrenz Issues*, 6 (1), 6-10, p 8.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy (2nd ed)*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2000). *Children in New Zealand: Second Periodic Report of New Zealand*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

⁶⁹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

Summary

Young people have indicated that youth wages are too low, especially for those who need to earn money to supplement the family income or to pay for their own clothing or education. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child was also concerned about the minimum age of employment and legislative provisions for young people in paid work.

2.6 Health

2.6.1 Provision rights

Children's growth and development requires access to adequate health resources as well as an appropriate home and community environment but not all New Zealand children enjoy these resources. Blaiklock et al (2002)⁷⁰ conclude that children living in poverty in New Zealand often experience poor nutrition, overcrowded and poor quality housing, and lack of access to primary health care including antenatal and postnatal care, GP visits and vaccinations.

In turn, this can lead to or exacerbate such health problems as asthma, obesity, diabetes and poor dental health. One of the main factors in the recent meningococcal epidemic has been overcrowding, most likely due to poverty.⁷¹ More subtle barriers include poor access to transport and phone.

New Zealand continues to have one of the highest rates of youth suicide in the OECD. The youth suicide rate is much higher among young men than young women, and is highest for young Maori males.⁷² Poor mental health is a significant problem for many New Zealand children. It has been estimated that approximately one in twenty of the child and youth population have 'serious, ongoing and disabling mental illness' requiring specialist intervention. Moreover, 15% of the youth and child population have chronic lower level mental health problems (Mental Health Commission, 1998).⁷³

Research indicates that young people's physical and psychological development and well-being requires a context of security and encouragement. Ideally, young people will have a sense of connectedness to their family and community, particularly if families are adequately supported in the care of their children. Where young people do not have someone trustworthy they can talk to within their family, it is vital that they are able to access support or counselling elsewhere, such as at school or in the community.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

⁷¹ Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E. and Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

⁷² Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, p 168.

⁷³ Cited in Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, p 168.

⁷⁴ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy (2nd ed)*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child articulated numerous suggestions relating to health in its 2003 concluding observations:⁷⁵

35. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Child Health Strategy in 1998. However, the Committee is concerned that immunization coverage is not universal and at the relatively high rates of infant mortality and injuries among children. The Committee also notes with concern that the Maori population generally exhibits lower child health indicators than the rest of the population.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- a) allocate sufficient human and financial resources to implement the Child Health Strategy;*
- b) take all necessary measures to ensure universal immunization coverage and develop preventive health care and guidance for parents and families, which effectively address the relatively high rates of infant mortality and injuries;*
- c) take all necessary measures to address disparities in health indicators between ethnic communities, in particular the Maori population.*

Adolescent health

37. The Committee shares the State party's concern about the high rates of youth suicide, teenage pregnancies, and alcohol abuse by adolescents and the insufficient level of youth mental health services, particularly in rural areas and for Maori children and children in residential institutions.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- a) take all necessary measures to address youth suicide, especially among Maori youth, inter alia by strengthening the Youth Suicide Prevention Programme;*
- b) undertake effective measures to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies through, inter alia, making health education, including sex education part of the school curricula, and strengthening the campaign of information on the use of contraceptives;*
- c) undertake effective preventive and other measures to address the rise in alcohol consumption by adolescents and increase the availability and accessibility of counselling and support services, in particular for Maori children;*
- d) strengthen mental health and counselling services, ensuring that they are accessible to, and appropriate for, all adolescents, including Maori children and those in rural areas and in residential institutions.*

Summary

Poverty reduces children's access to health care and can result in poor health outcomes for these young people. Further, New Zealand continues to have one of the highest rates of youth suicide in the OECD. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that New Zealand implement the Child Health Strategy and take all necessary measures to address the youth suicide issue. Young people need to be able to access more support both at school and in the community if they need it.

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

⁷⁵ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

2.7 Legal and social services

2.7.1 Provision rights

The evidence suggests that young people living in alternative care are not always served well by the care and protection system in New Zealand.⁷⁶ Justice Brown (2000)⁷⁷ reported that problems include that the average number of placements is 3.1 per year, that young people are inadequately supported and consulted, do not have adequate contact with social workers and too often face the disruption of frequent changes of social worker. He also found that reviews of placement are inadequate and that caregiver needs have been neglected, for example, there is little respite relief available to foster parents.

There are also issues of inadequate assessment of the safety of placement. The principle of placement within extended family has been misused. Many children needing care have behavioural difficulties that are too great to be managed by extended families. Sometimes whole extended family systems are dysfunctional and cannot offer safe care. Kinship families have received fewer resources than unrelated caregivers. Extended families are frequently pressured into agreeing to permanent care.⁷⁸

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child made the following recommendations with regard to alternative care:⁷⁹

Alternative care

31. *The Committee welcomes the State party's initiatives to strengthen the system of child protection and alternative care through, inter alia, the adoption of the Social Work Registration Act (2003) and the establishment of grievance panels in residential institutions. Nevertheless, the Committee remains concerned that the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services does not have adequate financial and human resources to effectively carry out its responsibilities. While welcoming the additional written answers provided by the State party on the issue of police powers of search and seizure, the Committee is also concerned about reports of children in alternative care being subject to an increasing number of searches of their person and their belongings.*

32. *The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to strengthen the system of child protection by:*

- a) improving the qualifications of social workers and personnel working in the child protection system, and enacting measures to retain qualified and specialized staff; taking effective measures to improve coordination between the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and organizations delivering services to children;*
- b) increasing the financial resources allocated to alternative care, while ensuring that institutional care is used only as a last resort;*
- d) strengthening efforts to guarantee that all children placed in care have a periodic review of their treatment and all circumstances relative to his or her placement, in accordance with article 25 of the Convention.*

⁷⁶ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2003). *Our Children: The Priority for Policy (2nd ed)*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

Smith, A. (1997). 'How do we ensure the 'best interests' of children in out-of-home care?', *Childrenz Issues*, 1 (1), 23-7.

⁷⁷ Brown, Judge M. (2000). *Care and Protection is About Adult Behaviour: The Ministerial Review of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Policy.

⁷⁸ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, p 222.

⁷⁹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

Summary

The evidence suggests that young people living in alternative care are not always served well by the care and protection system in New Zealand. The UN Committee recommended that New Zealand continue its efforts to strengthen the system of child protection by improving the qualifications of social workers and personnel working in the child protection system, enacting measures to retain qualified and specialised staff, taking effective measures to improve co-ordination between the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and organisations delivering services to children, increasing the financial resources allocated to alternative care, while ensuring that institutional care is used only as a last resort, and strengthening efforts to guarantee that all children placed in care have a periodic review of their treatment and all circumstances relative to their placement.

2.7.2 Protection rights

Research suggests that young people in the youth justice system are not always safe.⁸⁰ Some have described being abused by the police, guards or other young people, for example, one young person said 'I was bashed by the police but so has pretty much everyone in here'.⁸¹

Further concerns regarding protection of young people in the juvenile justice system were outlined by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in its concluding observations (2003):⁸²

Juvenile justice

49. While noting the Youth Offending Strategy and the Task Force on Youth Offenders and the use of family group conferencing, the Committee reiterates its concern stated in para. 20 about the low age of criminal responsibility and that special protection is not accorded to all persons under 18 in conflict with the law. The Committee is further concerned that juvenile offenders, both female and male, are not separated from adult offenders, and in some cases they may even be detained in police cells for several months.

50. The Committee reiterates its recommendation contained in para. 21, and further recommends that the State party:

- a) ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards and in particular articles 37, 39 and 40 of the Convention, as well the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) and the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), and in the light of the Committee's 1995 discussion day on the administration of juvenile justice;
- b) ensure the availability of sufficient youth facilities so that all juveniles in conflict with the law are held separately from adults in pre- and post-trial detention; and,
- c) undertake a systematic evaluation of the use of family group conferencing in juvenile justice.

Summary

Research suggests that young people in the youth justice system are not always safe. The UN Committee outlined concerns about protection of young people in the juvenile justice

⁸⁰ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, p 217.

⁸¹ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2003*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, p 217.

⁸² United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, CRC/C/15/Add.216, 3 October 2003.

system regarding the low age of criminal responsibility and that special protection is not accorded to all persons under 18 in conflict with the law. The Committee was also concerned that juvenile offenders, both female and male, are not separated from adult offenders, and in some cases they may even be detained in police cells for several months.

CHAPTER 3: KEY ISSUES FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

This section identifies issues for specific groups of young people, most of which are drawn directly from the government's *Youth Development Strategy*.⁸³ Most of these issues were identified by young people themselves.

3.1 Rangatahi

Young Maori aged between 12 and 24 inclusive make up a larger proportion (27 percent in 1996) of the total Maori population than do Pakeha young people (18 percent in 1996) of the Pakeha population. The number of young Maori as a proportion of Aotearoa New Zealand's total youth population is forecast to increase, creating a number of opportunities and challenges for government agencies, Maori and communities in general.

Rangatahi need to be properly equipped to contribute to their whanau, hapu and iwi. Many find that developing a greater sense of their Maori cultural identity helps strengthen their connection to their whanau, hapu, iwi and wider communities. Whanau may be able to teach rangatahi about their Maori identity, but some need more support than others. The Treaty of Waitangi establishes this as a right.

Key issues identified for rangatahi include:

- recognising rangatahi in the context of iwi, hapu and whanau
- recognising that rangatahi often live in conflicting systems of two cultures
- supporting community-based, rangatahi-driven youth development programmes
- providing opportunities for rangatahi for reo Maori and culture development, including relevant Maori values and practices and opportunities for connection to their whanau, hapu and iwi
- increasing non-Maori communities' understanding and acceptance of tikanga Maori and the rights of rangatahi to participate in a culturally appropriate way
- empowering rangatahi with opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives
- better understanding rangatahi and recognising their values, how Maori see the world and their preferred ways of learning.

3.2 Pacific young people

Most young Pacific people in New Zealand are from the main Pacific ethnic groups: Samoan (50 percent of the Pacific population in 1996); Cook Island (23 percent); Tongan (16 percent); Niuean (nine percent); Fijian (four percent); and Tokelauan (two percent). However, an increasing number are of mixed heritage as a result of marriages between Pacific and other Pacific or non-Pacific peoples.

Pacific culture, values and practices are very strong in New Zealand. However, most young Pacific people (58 percent of the total Pacific population in 1996) were born here. This means they need to develop their own identity among conflicting systems and two or more cultures. Many young Pacific people's social, spiritual, cultural and youth development activities centre around the church.

Key issues identified for Pacific young people include:

- acknowledging the different Pacific communities

⁸³ Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

- recognising Pacific young people in the context of their families
- recognising first-generation cultural issues – New Zealand born and Island born
- promoting opportunities for retaining language and culture
- using appropriate methods and learning styles for engaging with Pacific young people
- promoting and using mentoring programmes and role models
- working alongside the strong church connections in Pacific communities
- providing culturally appropriate services in schools
- empowering Pacific youth with opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives
- supporting Pacific community-based youth programmes
- promoting exchange programmes for Pacific young people between New Zealand and the Pacific Island nations
- providing opportunities for Pacific young people to develop and express their talents and skills, for example, through scholarships
- increasing cultural understanding by non-Pacific people of Pacific cultures and values and how they are brought up.

3.3 Young people from minority ethnic communities, in particular recent migrants and refugees

New Zealand has a diverse range of ethnic communities. In the 1996 Census, 300,000 (eight percent – of which five percent were Asian) New Zealand residents described themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than Maori, Pacific Island or of British origin. The largest ethnic communities are Chinese (81,000), Dutch (47,000) and Indian (42,000). Since 1996, this number has increased, with a high proportion of new migrants each year coming from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Ethnic people's needs and views vary according to their background and time spent in New Zealand. For example, many Asian young people come to New Zealand as students and then return on temporary visas, so are often not eligible for full citizens' facilities such as health care. They may not have money or insurance to cover the costs if they become unwell.

Key issues identified for young people from minority ethnic communities include:

- acknowledging that issues often depend on how many generations are born in New Zealand
- acknowledging the specific issues of young people who are recent migrants, including language barriers and conflicting cultures, with different identities at home and at work or school
- promoting opportunities for retaining language and culture
- meeting the needs of young people in New Zealand who are here on their own for study without support from their families
- recognising and understanding culture difference in values and practices
- helping parents better understand their young people in the context of the New Zealand youth culture at school or work
- acknowledging the specific needs of young people who are refugees
- helping in the transition to adulthood in a new and sometimes alien culture
- living with different culture and religious expectations from the majority of New Zealanders.

It is worth noting that the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child made some recommendations regarding refugee children in its concluding observations to the New Zealand government in 2003:⁸⁴

Refugee children

45. *The Committee takes note of the services provided by the State party to ensure the integration and equal opportunities of refugee children, however it is concerned that activities undertaken in this regard may not be entirely effective in achieving the stated objective of integration.*

46. *The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to integrate refugee children into society and undertake an evaluation of current programmes, in particular language training, with a view to improving their effectiveness.*

3.4 Young people with physical, intellectual and learning disabilities

In 1996 about eight percent of all 15 to 25 year olds had a disability that limited their daily activities in some way. The most common disability is physical (affecting mobility) followed by sensory disabilities affecting sight or hearing.

The *New Zealand Disability Strategy* is a long-term plan for changing New Zealand from a disabling to an inclusive society. Objective 13 of the Strategy is to 'enable disabled children and youth to lead full and active lives'. The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa supports this objective.

Key issues identified for young people with disabilities include:

- providing opportunities for connections with peers, in particular young people without disabilities
- providing opportunities for meaningful work and ongoing education
- providing opportunities for strong links and active participation with their families, schools and communities and in wider political processes
- reducing barriers that limit young people with disabilities, such as transport, access to places and the attitudes of others
- achieving better awareness and understanding among young people and adults of the issues for young people with disabilities
- providing opportunities to be involved and participate in a wide range of youth development activities.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child also made some recommendations regarding children with disabilities in its concluding observations to the New Zealand government in 2003:⁸⁵

Children with disabilities

39. *The Committee is concerned that children with disabilities are not fully integrated into all aspects of society and that services, in particular in the education system, are often difficult for families of children with disabilities to access.*

84 United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, 3 October 2003.

85 United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2003). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: NEW ZEALAND*, 3 October 2003.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that adequate human and financial resources are allocated to implement the New Zealand Disability Strategy, in particular aspects related to the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream education and other aspects of society.

3.5 Young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people

The proportion of gay people in our society is commonly cited as one in ten. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual young people face the same health, mental health and other challenges as their heterosexual peers, with the addition of social and health challenges associated with society often not accepting their identity. Developing a positive sexual identity is crucial to these young people's self-esteem and wellbeing.

Key issues identified for young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people include:

- identity issues
- discrimination and harassment in schools and workplaces
- access to support groups and programmes.

3.6 Isolated rural young people

Twenty seven percent of young people live in small urban or rural areas. The proportion of the population aged 15 to 24 years in rural areas is lower than the national average. This reflects young people's migration from rural to urban areas in pursuit of educational, employment and lifestyle opportunities.

Young people in rural areas face a number of unique challenges. For example, distance from family, school, peers, work, services and social opportunities can result in a sense of isolation. They do not often see themselves represented positively in the media and it can be difficult for rural young people to access national activities and programmes. However, young people from rural areas often also have a positive experience of growing up, with different opportunities available to them.

Key issues identified for young people in rural areas include:

- ensuring that services and programmes are accessible
- addressing transport issues where there is no public transport and travel distance is significant. This can particularly affect young people's ability to maintain social and peer connections
- enhancing opportunities for training, employment and social interaction in local areas
- acknowledging that a significant proportion of young people in rural areas move away from family and community for schooling, training and employment
- increasing opportunities for access to high-speed internet connections in rural areas.

3.7 Young people in the youth justice system

Rights are of particular importance when young people are accused of or brought to court for criminal offending. Although there are a number of special protections that have been put in place to protect children caught up in the youth justice system there are also areas where children are being denied basic human rights. Examples are:

- Seventeen year olds do not get the special protections that under-17s are entitled to. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed concern about this failure to meet the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Young people are sometimes held for days, weeks and occasionally months in police holding cells which lack basic amenities because of a chronic shortage of beds in Child, Youth and Family residences
- Young offenders are often held at a great distance from their parents, family and friends because of the lack of accommodation in the local area. They often experience difficulties in maintaining regular phone and other contact with parents and family
- Young people are mixed with adult prisoners in some correctional facilities
- Grievance procedures for young people in residential institutions have often proved ineffective

3.8 Other children and young people held in institutions

Children who are placed in institutions face particular risks and difficulties. They are separated from their parents, families and friends and it is difficult for them to communicate with people outside the institution. There are numerous recorded instances of their rights being infringed. In particular:

- They are sometimes subjected to intrusive and illegal searches including strip searches
- They are at times treated in a humiliating or degrading manner or punished in a way which breaches the Regulations which set standards of care and treatment
- Family visits and phone communication with their parents and family are sometimes unreasonably restricted
- Complaints made in accordance with official grievance procedures are not followed up and detainees are sometimes discouraged from making complaints

Concerns in respect of these and other issues have been raised by annual audit reports prepared by Child, Youth and Family. These reports show that the position has deteriorated overall over the last five years.

3.9 Young parents (in particular young mothers)

Overall, young people are less likely to be parents than in the past. By the age of 25 most women (63.2 percent) have not had children. However, Maori women in their late teens and early 20s have higher rates of pregnancy than other women of the same age. Birth rates for young Maori women under 18 years in 2000 were 22.7 births per 1,000 compared with 4.9 per 1,000 for non-Maori young women. Births to young Maori under 18 years accounted for five percent of all births to Maori women in 2000.

Key issues identified for young people who are parents, in particular young mothers, include:

- supportive communities and families
- support groups and income support
- opportunities for continued education and personal development.

PART TWO: FOCUS GROUPS

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Stakeholder identification

In the last five years considerable work has been undertaken seeking the thoughts of young people regarding their lives in New Zealand, including the *Global Voice*⁸⁶ conference for young people held in Christchurch, the Government's *Agenda for Children*⁸⁷ and *Youth Development Strategy*⁸⁸ consultations and the focus groups contributing to *Whakarongo Mai*⁸⁹, a youth video to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. In the light of this existing work, it was determined that it would be most useful if the focus groups contributing to the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights targeted some specific groups of young people who generally are less likely to be heard. For reasons identified in the background paper, they are also often the groups of young people who are most likely to need our assistance.

Focus groups were therefore held around the country with young people who are Maori, Pacific, Asian (mainly Chinese and Indian), who have disabilities, are in rural locations, are in the youth justice system, or are in care.

4.2 Process design and planning

A focus group process was selected in the hope of obtaining a rich data set. Qualitative approaches such as focus groups are ideally suited where children's perspectives are being ascertained on important areas in their lives. Much of our existing knowledge about children has come from quantitative research methods utilising surveys, questionnaires, participant observation or highly structured interview schedules. These methods have tended to stifle the expression of children's own voices and frequently decontextualised them from their family or institutional settings.

However, the Sociology of Childhood has recently spawned a new era in qualitative research with children which elicits, values and respects their own perspectives on aspects of their lives.

The most obvious advantage of interviewing a child is that the child is the expert (the only expert) on his/[her] feelings, perceptions and thoughts. Thus, if knowing the child's point of view is important, the interview is unsurpassed as a technique for obtaining information. If an adult wants to know what or how the child is feeling, or thinking, the adults must ask the child (Hughes, 1988, p.91).

⁸⁶ Le Lievre, B. (1999). *Global Voice Report*. Christchurch: Christchurch City Council.

⁸⁷ Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

⁸⁸ Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

⁸⁹ Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa. (2003). *Whakarongo Mai: Listen Up – UN video*. Auckland: Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa.

4.3 Method selection and implementation

Facilitators to run the focus groups were identified through our networks for their skill in working with young people in the target areas. They were chosen for their ability to obtain the greatest input from young people without 'leading' them in any way in their responses. They were also chosen for their existing connections with appropriate groups of young people and were therefore asked to locate the young people for their focus groups through their own networks.

Focus group feedback was gathered by means of the young people working in small groups of 3 or 4 people to fill out A1 sheets of paper prepared with a template. The template was a jigsaw asking them what was working well, what needed improving and how this might be done in the following areas of their lives: 'At Home', 'At School', 'Out and About', 'Work', 'Health', 'Legal and Social Services', 'Belonging (to family, community etc)' and 'Other'.

This approach was determined by previous focus group work with young people which indicated that when asked to identify areas for improvement it is natural for them to look at these different areas of their lives ('At Home', 'At School' etc) and identify issues within each of them.

The principles of informed consent, confidentiality, the right to withdraw at any stage and feedback to participants were incorporated into the focus group methods. Facilitators were provided with general letters of introduction, consent forms (for the young person's consent and, if under 14, their guardian's), participant evaluation forms, facilitator overview forms, certificates for the young people who attended, and forms to collect data on ethnicity, gender and age of the participants. Additional information on human rights and children's rights was also provided for the focus group participants.

A training workshop was held with the facilitators in Auckland on 10 November 2003. Feedback from the Children's Rights Sector Advisory Group (young people and adults) and the NZAPHR Project Manager was incorporated into the training and resources for facilitators.

The focus groups took place in November and December 2003.

4.4 Data analysis and reporting

The project manager entered all the information from the A1 sheets filled out by young people, and the comments from the facilitators. The following pages contain the analysis of the themes and sub-themes from each group and the last section (section 5.9) draws out common themes across all the groups of young people. Where two or three different focus groups were held for one category of young people and the results showed that most of the young people had similar things to say, their comments are considered together (even if they were different ages).

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Rangatahi

These groups comprised 15 young Maori people from south and west Auckland and Rotorua, aged 13-19. There were 11 males and 4 females.

Facilitator impression

There were a lot of concerns in common with all the young people but overall many just wanted people whom they could trust, lots of love, understanding, listening. Many of the kids had had trouble at school (5 had been indefinitely expelled from high school and 5 had left early because they felt that no-one believed in them, and therefore school was a waste of time). Although asked what they thought was working well, the focus of the young people's comments was on what needs improving for them.

At Home

These young Maori people felt that they should all be able to live in a good house (without broken things) and that rent and board should be cheaper. One wanted to move out of the trailer park and into a bigger house with their own room while another commented '*shouldn't have to live in a trailer park with all of these drunks*'. Some thought it was important that everyone should have their own space away from others and that everyone should do their fair share of jobs.

Quite a few mentioned that they would like to get pocket money to do stuff and buy things. It was also felt that it would be to have enough money for bills and superannuation plans and to be able to go away on holidays at least once a year. One mentioned that their Mum wastes a lot of money on drugs, alcohol and gambling.

Comments about food included the need to have more food in the cupboard, and for there to be more health food and not junk food. One said '*I want to always have good food to eat and to go out for dinner sometimes*'.

Some young people expressed a wish not to have to look after siblings or be looked after by siblings when a parent is not around. Several also wanted to have non-abusive siblings, for example, '*not have my brothers pick on me and hit me all the time*'. Some talked about how parents shouldn't always take their sibling's side of the story. One respondent wanted his/her sister to stop smoking P and weed.

There were extensive comments regarding the atmosphere at home and a wish for their families to be kinder to them. Some said home should be a swearing free zone and that people shouldn't be so grouchy or get so angry about all the little things that happen. Many felt that parents shouldn't argue or be violent in front of or towards young people... '*You should be allowed to say what you want without getting a punch*.' '*Tell my dad to stop running away from his problems and grow up. He can't hit me and not expect to get hit back*.'

There were many comments calling for families to be more supportive, for example, for older family members not to tell young people they're '*the bad one*' or tell them they're useless. One said that '*my family should stop talking behind my back and just be honest*'

while another mentioned that they didn't want their cousins teasing them just because they are a bit behind with reading and writing. One girl felt she should be getting more help because she's pregnant. A majority thought that young people should feel free to be themselves and that their parents should trust them more to make the right decisions. They also thought that there should always be someone to talk to about their problems. Some thought that young people should have good role models (for example, *'my mum should have taught me not to smoke drugs'*) and to be able to see their cousins and extended family.

With regard to families who have split up, one group said that kids should choose which parent they want to live with if their parents are divorced or separated. There were also some comments about not letting mum's boyfriends come over and interfere with arguments and about how mum shouldn't have stupid boyfriends all the time and hardly ever be home. Another thought that their mum shouldn't always drop them off where ever someone will look after them. It was interesting that fathers weren't mentioned much; the only comments relating to them were that *'my dad should leave his work attitude at work'* and that *'Dad should get some statutory holidays off work to spend with us'*.

A couple of groups talked about how they don't like everyone stealing off one another and that there's no one you can trust – in fact, they felt you should be able to ring the cops on your parents.

Being able to have friends over and spending time with friends was very important for most of these young people. They felt that their families should respect their friends when they come around and some said they didn't like being embarrassed (about things they don't have) when their friends come over. One wanted to be allowed to go and stay at their friend's house when invited and others thought it important to get time away from family to spend with friends.

At School

These young people seemed to want greater choice about many aspects of school. They wanted to be able to choose which high school to go to, what clothes to wear (*'make it mufti all the time'*, *'the uniform is a bit strict – we're in 2003 now not the 1960s'*) and all of them had something to say about what they would like to study. They want to have subjects with topics that relate to their generation and think they should be able to do the subjects that they want because they reason that they are more likely to be good at subjects they like. Examples given were astronomy or a language, more music and art classes, computer and 'new' technological stuff, and more exciting practical subjects and activities instead of just writing and bookwork. One person said they needed more help with everything that was hard because their reading and writing was not so good and consequently they found English, science and maths boring. Some thought that teachers should be more interactive than just reading out things to do. One group wanted to have more PE time because it's fun and it's good for you.

A significant number commented on money related matters, such as the need to make school fees and subject fees free, maintaining they shouldn't have to pay for NCEA/Bursary and that everything should be free or cheaper if you're poor. One young person said *'Mum couldn't pay for my books and fees so she pulled me out of school when I was 13'*. Some also commented on the need for free tertiary education. One person wanted the school bus to be free so that they didn't have to walk every day and another thought that too much money was spent on rugby. Another wanted to learn a musical

instrument but the family couldn't afford the lessons. Others wanted to be able to wear cool clothes on mufti day, so they would fit in, or to be able to buy their lunch a couple of times a week. Several thought that school trips should be free. One 11-12 year old said *'I want to be able to go home when I'm sick and for my mum to come and get me when they call her to come'*.

A number of respondents thought it would be cool to be able to speak Maori and would have liked the opportunity to learn at primary school. In general, they thought there should be more Maori stuff at school, including kapa haka groups.

The young people made a variety of comments about teachers' attitudes towards them. Some thought that the teachers/principals are okay and one young person said that the teachers are very good but that sometimes s/he needs extra help and there are too many kids in one class. Others thought that teachers should be less grumpy and more polite and should want to listen to them (*'make it so that teachers receive the same respect that they give'*). They felt that teachers should ask you directly and believe you (for example, if you are late to class or you don't hand something in). Further, they want teachers who aren't racist and who believe in them. A related issue was that some felt they shouldn't be judged by the people they hang out with, that is, if their friends are always in trouble, the teachers shouldn't assume that they are trouble makers too.

These young people had firm views on their rights to education. Some felt that primary school was where you should learn how to learn properly, it's too late at high school. Another group thought *'you should always be able to be educated – if someone can't write or read, then the system's f*!#%d'*. Others thought that if you don't want to be there it's a waste of time and that it doesn't matter if you don't pass school because heaps of people still get good jobs. One even said that sometimes it's like a prison.

With regard to discipline, some young people felt that they had received detentions for no reason. On the subject of expulsion, some thought that principals shouldn't kick you out just because you're a little bit naughty because this is just taking the easy way out. They felt that the principal always takes the teacher's side if there's a problem. One respondent was kicked out because s/he sold \$900 worth of marijuana/trips/P-crystals at school. S/he said that they didn't even know what it was but had taken them because their mum's boyfriend stole the money they earned at their job. They thought that the principal didn't like them anyway prior to the incident so paintballed his car on expulsion.

On the general atmosphere at school, some felt that there should be nicer things to eat at the tuckshop and that you should be able to eat in class. One group thought that schools shouldn't stream students into different classes based on marks because it makes some people feel dumb while others said that everyone should get a certificate for trying, even if they don't do so well (one respondent said *'I just want to be good at something'*). Another felt that the school should look after them and not worry so much about foreign students. A few young people thought that bullies, taggers and smokers should be stopped but another said that bullies aren't so bad now. One group said that everyone should be nicer to each other and that *'there should be trustworthy people we can talk to at school'*.

Out and About

All these young people talked about the need for more things for them to do and for these things to be free or cheaper (*'More youth events – bored all the time!!'*). One said that they wanted to go and do new things instead of just staying at home or going to see their

mum's mates. One group suggested it would be good to have a marae where they can go and more social sports teams that are free. All groups mentioned that things cost too much and they can't afford to do anything. They all identified a need for more money to do things and thought it would be good if they got more discounts for such things as public transport, movies, bowling and at the pools. On the plus side, one group thought that it's good that smoking has been banned in public places.

They also talked a lot about safety issues when out and about. Some saw a need to get rid of gangs, thieves, 'homies', 'prosties' and 'dudes trying to hook up all the time'. Tagging was also an issue for some ('People should stop tagging and gangs should stop beating people up'). One young person said that while out at night in Henderson 'lots of gangs would try and stock me for my money'. Another respondent said that they had carried a wooden baton for protection, especially from other people that they knew, even a couple of members of their own family. Some talked about how they should be able to wear whatever they want because at the moment they have to be careful to have 'no colours' at shopping malls because of gang affiliation problems. There was also a feeling among most that the cops shouldn't think you're a trouble maker if you're just hanging around and that there should be wardens in town to make it safe when you go out but they shouldn't hassle you like the cops do.

At Work

There was a consensus amongst these young people that youth wages are insufficient and the amount young people are taxed is too high. They offered various solutions, such as increasing the minimum wage, or having no or less tax for under 18 year olds as an incentive to work.

SHIT PAY! Should make minimum wage higher.

Tax sux – they shouldn't tax people under 18 anything to give them a head start.

Paper run sucked – really poor pay even though I did lots of work.

The young people also highlighted poor working conditions and would like better treatment from supervisors and bosses who don't pay wages when they should and try to exploit young people. One person thought that ACC should have paid out faster when they hurt themselves at work and ended up with a broken arm. Another sold lollies and other lolly sellers harassed them. One group thought that we should bring back higher paying apprenticeships as an alternative to low paying hard labouring jobs. Another suggested that gaining work experience while still at school will help young people learn, among other things, if they're being taken advantage of or not.

With regard to obtaining a job, some respondents said that it's hard to get a job sometimes and that people should just give them a chance ('Sometimes people don't hire you because of your age – sometimes I think it's because I'm Maori').

On the positive side, one young person thought that it's good that if you work hard you move up in the chain. An 11-12 year old said that work is fun but it takes up too much time sometimes. Some of these young people are very motivated to work ('Sometimes my mum takes my pay, and sometimes she banks it for me... I want to save lots of money to buy a car').

A couple of respondents talked about wanting their mothers to get good jobs that pay well. One of them would also like their mother to work fewer hours.

Health

Everyone thought that doctors should be free or cheaper. One group's suggestion was for doctors to be free for everyone under 18 and then cheap for people under 25. One said that it was good that the doctors are free at WaiHealth although another said there needs to be quicker service at the A and E. The young people also thought that medicines and prescriptions should be free or much cheaper. Some of these young people were not able to go to the doctor, optometrist or dentist:

Sometimes my mum and me can't afford to go to the doctors and she won't take me.

I think that there should be free opticians because my eyes are funny.

It is good that the dentist is free but I haven't been because I don't make the appointments because she [mum] is too busy.

With regard to other services, it was felt that good midwives who come and see you should be free if you can't afford them and also that there should be more places for mentally ill people.

Some groups commented that the sex education they received was good but that maybe receiving it a bit earlier would be good. They thought young people should get free contraception and condoms at which point the facilitator told them about the Family Planning Association but they said it's too embarrassing going there. Some respondents also said that girls should get cheap tampons.

These young people thought everyone should be healthy and had quite a bit to say about this, for example, some thought you should start playing sports when you're young and that the gym should be free. While some said the drinking age should be higher, another thought you should have to be a certain age where it's okay to take drugs because everyone does it already. A further person said *'my boyfriend should be helping me out and stop using drugs'*. On a slightly different note, someone said *'they should close down McD's hehehe'*.

Using legal and social services

These young people said that we should be able to stop people from killing their kids, and that social welfare should take kids away from their parents if they are being sexually abused or beaten.

Several thought that if someone kills someone else they should go to jail for the rest of their life and that there should be tougher prison sentences for all crimes. Opinion about the police ranged from some who thought the cops are fair, to those who thought that *'the cops shouldn't be so rough to people – some of them are power tripping dickheads'*.

A couple of respondents talked about the need for drug rehab for their little cousins and another thought there should be somewhere for their brother to go because *'he's always getting dropped off by the cops but he always does naughty things again and again'*.

One group mentioned that iwi support and social services are good. Another group thought that there should be well-known Maori support to inform them of community projects or how they can get help.

With regard to other services, one person said that WINZ worked all right while another said *'I should be able to get some kind of money because I'm pregnant – it's stupid!!'* A further person mentioned that it was good that there was a free lawyer for them.

In other matters, some felt there should be more education grants and that young people should know more about scholarships and benefits. One group also thought that 16 year olds and over should be allowed to vote.

Belonging

Many of these young people expressed a wish to feel as though they are a part of their family or community (*'I want to have the chance to join a sports group or go to church and see what it's like but there's no one to take me'*). Most thought that you should always have people to be around and spend time with (*'I want to see my older cousins more and spend time doing fun things'*) and that it is very important to have someone older to talk to who's not just going to boss you around.

Other comments about community involvement included *'I don't want people to expect me to speak Maori but I want to know things about my marae and learn things about the olden days'*. Some also felt that there should be more community things to do on the weekend and that it would be good to know other families in their street. A few respondents thought that they shouldn't be put down because they live in South Auckland.

One person had a negative experience of their local community, saying *'kids my own age are corrupt – they are all thieves where I live. I don't do stuff in my community because of this'*.

Other

There were several additional money related comments, including that gas (petrol) should be cheaper, that air flight tickets should be cheaper so you can go overseas and that having a swimming pool would be good.

A couple of comments from 11-12 year olds were related to television content:

I want to hear good news about other Maori people on tv and not always bad things.

I don't want to see rude video clips and movies on tv.

5.2 Pacific young people

These groups comprised 24 young people from Hamilton and Auckland. There were 14 aged 12-13, 10 aged 16-17, 11 female, 13 male, 6 Tongan, 5 Samoan, 4 Cook Islanders, 3 Fijian, 1 Papua New Guinean, 1 Nuiean, 1 Tuvaluan, 1 Samoan/Maori, 1 Samoan/Nuiean and 1 Samoan/Tongan.

Facilitator impression

These young people thought some things were working well for them in New Zealand, for example, there are better facilities here in New Zealand than those found in the islands. However, the main focus for them was on what needs improving. Their key issues were firstly, there is not enough money for Pacific families to be able to provide for their needs, secondly, more facilities and help are needed for Pacific people trying to get a decent education, and thirdly, the young people do not want to be hit or otherwise abused at home. These concerns came from both age groups.

At Home

Positive aspects identified by some young Pacific people about New Zealand included that there are more facilities and that things are more modern and cheap. However, most also said that their families can't always afford stuff, and most thought that they should have more money, better housing for cheaper prices with quieter areas for them to study (*'Give kids enough time and space for themselves to be able to do homework etc'*), better meals, more books etc (*'books, bikes, toys, tvs, playstation 2, xbox'*) and computers and cheap or free access to the internet.

There was a consensus amongst these young people that they wanted to stop abuse (physical/sexual/emotional). Instead of parents or caregivers criticising or neglecting kids, they thought that they should give them support, love and attention, acknowledge their achievements and support the choices they make.

Most (and particularly those born here) also thought it was good to learn about their family and culture. However, some experienced difficulties operating in two different worlds, that is, their traditional one and the 'new' New Zealand one.

Acknowledge we're in a new country and culture and that it's not wrong for us to adapt to it.

Speaking our mind is NOT disrespecting our parents or culture.

At School

Some of these young people thought that schools should be able to recognise differences in culture and to cater to such needs. They would like to be able to learn more Island languages (*'language classes to learn and speak our languages with our friends'*). They also said they would like the chance to be involved in more Pacific groups and would like to share with other people what they know and learn more about other people.

Some of the groups also talked about the need to learn good English and thought there should be more support for Pacific kids such as extra tutoring. However, it was particularly important not to treat Pacific kids as if they are 'dumber' or more 'trouble'.

A majority thought that education is very important (*'Have a good education for the Pacific that have no education'*) and one group said they might need to get a better teacher. Others said there should be more classes in the arts (such as dancing) or sport which they perceive Pacific kids to be generally stronger in. Some mentioned it is good that they can take lots of books out of the library.

Quite a few of these young people thought that schools should put a stop to bullying and that there should be less peer pressure at school.

Several money related issues were mentioned including the need to *'make activities cheaper so poorer kids have a better chance to participate'*. Some thought that schools should provide lunch, especially for those who don't have any, and that there should be healthy food available at school. One person said that school uniforms are easier for poorer kids. A few also discussed the need for free tertiary education to make it more accessible to Pacific students.

Out and About

Commenting on the general physical environment, some young people thought that it's less crowded and less polluted back in the islands since there are *'heaps less people and hardly any cars'* there compared with here. A few groups said there should be safer environments, and cleaner neighbourhoods and surroundings. Some thought the environment should be smoke, drug and alcohol free and that there should be *'better neighbourhood keeping of animals'*.

A majority thought there should be better facilities and areas for community activities and sport. Some of the Hamilton-based respondents mentioned that there should be Pacific markets there and that they would like to have a Pacific community group. They acknowledged that perhaps they might need to learn where these places are.

It was strongly felt that there should be more entertainment, recreational facilities and support drop-in centres for youth in the community, especially in areas such as Mangere and Otara. They thought this might help to keep kids off the streets. Some said that we need to *'get help for people on the dole or streets'*.

Better transport for young people to get around (in Hamilton and Auckland) was also an issue for most.

All these young people thought it was important that they be allowed to *'hang out with friends after school'*.

A few mentioned their responsibility for taking their parents out. This is because sometimes the young person speaks better English than their parents and the parents rely on the young person's help to get around or attend various appointments, for example, at WINZ or the hospital.

At Work

Education was once again highlighted by most of these young people as very important for gaining work. Also considered important were training and opportunities to rise within a workplace. They said that learning academic skills is a lot easier here in New Zealand.

A couple of people pointed out that sometimes it is difficult for their parents to get work here because often different equipment or skills are required here that they have not experienced in the Islands, such as intensive use of computers or other technology.

With regard to their own work, most thought there should be *'better rates for younger workers'* and *'more jobs for drop outs and less educated'*. One group also said *'do not make kids work in farms/factories over summer'*.

Quite a few young people expressed a wish for there to be less racism in choosing employees, saying *'Pacific people are not any less competent than Pakeha'*.

Health

All these groups of young people thought that it should be free or at least cheaper to see a doctor. While they said it is a lot safer here and cleaner because we have lots of medical facilities, it was felt that we need *'more hospitals (free and 24/7) so we don't spend ages queuing'*.

The younger respondents had quite a few comments about healthy living. They thought you should *'eat 5+ a day, eat different kinds of servings, eat lots of soup and fruit, an apple a day keeps the doctor away'*. Some of the older ones thought that healthy foods should be cheaper and that there should be health education for Pacific people about lifestyle factors that affect their health.

Some felt there should be more Pacific people working in the health area and that *'health interpreters and other health workers need to be respectful of our cultures'*.

Some of the older respondents asserted the importance of being more open about sex education in order to help lessen the amount of teen pregnancies (*'Break taboos like talking about sex education'*).

Using legal and social services

Some of the older respondents said there should be more respect from the police and that it would be good to *'change how police use power and aggression (no beating/swearing)'*. They would like the police to *'watch over the streets and community better'* and especially to try and make it gang free.

A number of groups felt strongly about protecting young people from abuse. They thought we should *'make social services aware of abuse in some Pacific families'* and also *'tell kids it's illegal for parents to beat them'*. They also felt there should be *'more support for troubled individuals'*.

One group thought the legal drinking age should be left at 18 years.

Belonging

One group thought that *'family is more special at home (the islands) cause you work and play games together'*. Others perceived a need for greater community group support for families, for example for their houses and bills. They said the *'community should get together – chip in to help poorer/troubled members and reward the successful ones'*.

On the other hand, another group thought that there should be *'less obligation to give all our money to the Church and to keep sending money back to the islands – their governments need to sort themselves out'*. Some of these young people thought that perhaps these obligations were a contributing factor to their families' lack of money.

Other comments related to a need for less violence and to ensure your things are always safe.

Other

Some respondents wished to reinforce that there should be more government support and supplies for poor Pacific families - '*Pacific families need more money!*' They thought it should be an easier and better life.

5.3 Asian young people

This group comprised 14 young people from Auckland aged 14-17, 9 male, 5 female, 12 Chinese, 1 Malaysian and 1 Korean.

Facilitator impression

These Asian young people like their lifestyles in New Zealand, particularly the potential freedom. They would like more freedom and respect from their parents but also more enhanced and stronger relationships with their parents. They also would like respect from their teachers, less peer pressure and put downs, no racism, equal pay, and fairness in work. They would like to be more healthy, for example, cheap gym prices and healthier eating.

This group also emphasised issues around cultural adjustment, conflict, intergenerational gap and the extent of their freedom. Some talked about how their parents should learn to adapt and adjust to New Zealand lifestyles.

At Home

Most of these young people said they would like more freedom, trust and privacy at home. They expressed difficulties in communication with their parents or homestay guardians. All were keen to have good relationships with their parents and family.

Some of the young people said they would like some pocket money to buy more stuff with and that no housework would be good! More spaces were also mentioned as desirable.

At School

These young people thought that there should be fairness at school and that teachers should accept students' ideas. Some thought the '*relationship between friends and teachers could do with some improvement, i.e. how well you work with teachers and students*'.

All were adamant about the importance of '*equality – judge by inside NOT appearance*' and about the need to '*stop rumours and racial discrimination*'. One group also said that the school had had tried to stop bullying but that it wasn't working very well.

Other issues included a plea for no homework and no homework copying, clean toilets and more sporting facilities.

One person also recommended a three day school week with longer hours and four days of no school.

Out and About

Several respondents highlighted the need for *'more activities, sometimes it's boring you know!'* Some also thought there should be a better public transport system including cheaper buses. Others said more cinema and cheaper gaming systems would be good.

Some felt that it would be good to have no peer pressure and that people should try to fit into different cultures at different times.

Other comments regarded the need for less police and more public toilets and better quality and quantity of toilet paper.

At Work

Most of the young people thought they should have more pay and/or less tax. Several also thought there should be less time spent working (not sure if this related to them or their family) and one suggested that there is a need for more part time jobs.

With regard to work conditions, some said there should be no racism or put-downs and workers should be eligible for more sick days. They also felt that bad management can be a problem so it is important to have a good boss.

Health

Most commented that there should be free doctor visits and free dentist until you're 22. In terms of general health they thought exercise is important and that there need to be more and cheaper gyms and healthy food.

A couple of young people also asserted the right to voluntary euthanasia, stating *'Right to live, right to die'*.

Using legal and social services

The only comment was *'more student allowance'*.

Belonging

Some identified that good relationships are important, along with respecting other cultures and religions.

Other

The comments here were primarily related to levels of freedom for young people. One group thought we should keep the low age of drinking and being able to go into bars. Others said *'no restricted licence – full straight away'*. They also thought we should have more public holidays.

5.4 Indian young people

This group comprised 10 young people from Auckland, aged 13-18, 2 female, 8 male, 7 Indian and 3 Anglo-Indian.

Facilitator impression

These young Indian people seemed quite comfortable with their life in New Zealand and did not appear to experience a great deal of cultural and intergenerational conflict (relative to the mainly Chinese group described in the section above). However they did talk about needing more freedom, more privacy and respect (from and for others). Racism was something they were definitely keen to experience less of. They thought more youth oriented activities would be good, along with more health and hygiene awareness.

At Home

These young people were interested in improving interpersonal relationships at home. They thought it would be good to have more patience, listening and co-operation with each other. They said they need more freedom and understanding, which they felt can be achieved by listening to each other and trying to understand each other's feelings. They want more trust and privacy and less over-protectiveness. *'Home can be improved by sending the parents to a course about understanding teenagers.'*

At School

Positive things at school identified by some were availability of good materials and many friends.

Regarding improvements, some felt *'teachers need to 'come down' to our level, i.e. explain things so we are able to understand'*. Others thought less homework would be good although one said *'don't increase level of studies only at year 11 onwards but start from year 8 so students get used to studying'*.

Other possible improvements were identified as more physical activities, recreation periods, extra-curricular activities and more freedom for students. Along with this, most respondents thought they would benefit from more encouragement, rather than put-downs. Some said a more disciplined environment and peer support could also help.

Most identified a need for *'less racism (i.e. stop favouring whites)'*. Other concerns were a need for cheaper school fees for international students and for cheaper food in the tuck shop.

Out and About

These young people said everyone's thoughts should be respected in the community.

Most thought there should be more music, recreation and under 18 clubs. Security at parties was also raised as an issue. Some said that longer library hours of the local library would be good so youth can visit after school.

A couple of comments related to driving. Some felt that the age of driving should be lowered, but with stricter rules. The price for licences should also be lowered.

At Work

Positive things about working were thought to be that there are good opportunities and the chance to make more friends.

However most said minimum wages for youth should be increased and that a greater variety of jobs for youth is needed. Young people could do jobs that 'match' their possible future career, for example, apprenticeships.

Commenting on work conditions, some thought there should be flexible work time (for example, extra days for a paper run when it's raining), optional overtime, and a bonus for not taking days off.

Some also said that international students should be allowed to work.

Health

These young people identified a need for better health check-ups for disabled children and for regular eye check-ups for youth in general. They also thought there should be '*cheaper prices on medicines for youth*'.

Most thought sex education and education about alcohol and drugs was important, along with health and hygiene awareness. Some also said an 'after school' gym would be beneficial.

One person thought we should increase the number of emergency bracelets for the older people.

Using legal and social services

A general comment related to a perceived need for more information and education about these services. One group thought there should be '*stricter check-ups on foster parents*' while another said there should be '*better and more funding for yellow ribbon to reduce youth suicides*'.

Belonging

These young people felt there should be greater acceptance of and respect for youth within the community and more youth-orientated activities and songs.

Other

The comments were that '*points should be raised for IELTS to prevent illiterate people from entering*' and that '*it's good that MAF is strict cos it protects the environment*'.

5.5 Young people with intellectual disabilities

These groups from the Bay of Plenty comprised 10 young people, aged 17-20, 7 female, 3 male, 6 Pakeha/European, 2 Maori, 1 Maori/Pakeha and 1 Pakeha/German. These young people all have an intellectual disability.

Facilitator impression

The young people were generally happy and positive about their lives but rely almost totally on family to meet their needs and for all social support/community access etc. There is a huge need for increased community support with regard to such things as transport and activities.

Most young people want work but felt there was little support outside their immediate family. Some had realistic concerns about finding work but others had no idea that they might work and had no idea what their adult life might be like (especially those at special school). There is a need to improve transition services.

A young person who had previously attended a special school and was now at a local high school was adamant that no one should be sent to a special school unless they (not adults) wanted this. Bullying is an issue in the special school – the young people need to learn empowerment/protective strategies.

A young person with Down's Syndrome was concerned about the lack of skilled medical support for her now that she is too old for paediatric services – it was thought there needs to be a medical specialty for development disabilities.

At Home

These young people thought every kid should have a family, a home, enough good food, clothes and somewhere nice to sleep (and a safe place to sleep). They also said that spending time with parents and family is important and there should be *'nice people in our homes'*. They said they *'should feel loved'* and *'should not be punished, but may be guided'*. Most of these young people thought there should be *'someone to talk to at home'*.

Most thought it was important to be able to do fun activities such as skating and watching tv. One also said *'we should be allowed to choose our own clothes, music, friends – dirty or clean'*.

It was felt that kids need to be safe and that kids can call the police when bad things happen. Most thought there should be no fighting and arguing at home and that if parents fight, you could improve the situation by telling them you don't like fighting.

One mentioned the responsibility of looking after their brother (not sure if this was good or not) and others thought that everyone should help out at home.

At School

These young people thought that it is good to have free education and transport to any school you want to. Some were adamant that they should have a choice about what kind of school they attend – *'anyone that wants a real school should have a real school (should*

not be sent to special schools). Some said they like mainstream classes and some said they like the unit. Regardless of school choice, these young people said *'don't treat us like handicaps'*.

Most also mentioned that they should be allowed to choose what subjects to study at high school (the facilitator indicated that these students get limited choices in regular schools) although one did think that the teacher should choose what they learn. One person liked studying *'art/art/art'* and another thought the best thing is cooking. Some said they like going outside of school, for example, for camp and others thought they needed more equipment and cultural activities at school.

Having good friends and fun at school was identified by most as very important. They said you should be able to choose who you hang out with, and if you need to, you should tell your friends if you don't like the way they are treating you at school. If people are mean, they thought you could improve this situation by telling a teacher and/or trying to ignore it. Schools should be bully safe, in other words, we should *'stop bullies and name calling'*.

One person said *'my mentor is choice'* but others indicated that *'some teachers are mean'*. Another group said that *'guidance counsellors are not interested'*.

Other comments included 'too much homework', 'don't like detention' and health related comments that there should be no smoking at school and that school should sell healthy food.

Out and About

Some respondents said that it can be boring (for example, after school) and there are not enough organised activities. They would like heaps to do and a variety of choices. They also said that some things are too expensive and there should be cheaper sports that are easy to get involved with because it is important to play sports for fitness. Other things they like doing are mini putt and movies. More and cheaper transport was also an issue.

Some young people said that they usually do what their family is doing and if they need to go shopping their families have to take them. However one person said *'I ask my parents but I choose what to do'*.

Other comments were that young people should feel safe and be safe when out and there should be good access to rubbish bins, water and other stuff.

At Work

Many of these young people expressed a wish to work, for example, at Burger King, for the police or in an art related job. One said that *'having Downs Syndrome it's hard to get a job'* and some said *'we don't think our disability should make it hard to get a job'*. They recognise that they need support in order to work and think it should be available.

Some also thought it would be good if there were people to help find jobs (full and part time) and training opportunities for youth. People should do jobs appropriate to them and get appropriate pay for their work.

Some groups highlighted the need to 'know your rights in the work place'. This seemed particularly in relation to harassment because they also mentioned *'respect – keeping*

hands to yourself and *'tell people you don't like it, to go away'*. They thought that if you want people to be nice to you, you should be nice to people yourself.

Health

Everyone should have free health care and access to a doctor/medical care. More regular health checks. Some of these young people have a need for specific medical care, for example, one said they need an adult specialist for Down's Syndrome - *'only the paediatrician knows how to look after me and I'm an adult now'*. Another said they needed a blood test for an operation on their heart. They were all keen that health workers do not talk down to them.

Some of them have studied health, learning about first aid, CPR etc at school. Some also thought that more exercise, less tv and eating healthily would be good for their overall health.

Using legal and social services

These young people had some positive experiences to report. One person who was a witness in a trial (using video taped evidence) said s/he was treated well. One respondent commented favourably about the police and another said that the FGC (Family Group Conference) process made them safe.

Most thought it was very important to have a safe place to live and that we *'need good foster families – lots of love'*.

General comments relating to these services included a wish to *'know your rights'* and that *'people should make an effort to help us understand'*. One was interested in more information about using legal firms and another wanted to find out how to get their own money.

Belonging

All these young people thought that everyone should feel loved and have something to belong to. They said *'it is important to have a family to teach and help you grow'* and that everyone should be a part of a family team. One expressed a wish to see their (real) mum and dad more often while others said the amount of contact is ok and *'I feel safe in my family'* (two of the young people live in foster care).

Everyone said it is important to have *'someone to talk to inside and outside of your family'*. In addition, friendship with others was thought to help you feel as though you belong. Friendship involved being a kind and nice person, not nasty, and having manners.

Other

It was reiterated that *'friends are important to make you feel special'*. Some respondents talked about their dreams – *'to have a flat and a car, to see God, to sing, holidays – Christmas'*.

5.6 Rural young people

These groups from rural Northland comprised:

Under 14 year olds – 18 x 12-13 year olds, 8 male, 10 female, 17 Maori and 1 Pakeha

Over 14 year olds – 15 x 14-16 year olds, 6 male, 9 female, 12 Maori, 2 Pakeha and 1 Pacific/Maori.

Facilitator impression

When asked what was working well, these young people identified feelings of safety, of having a healthy environment, access to beaches and kai moana, and some 'good differences' to city kids such as open spaces, no traffic and no pollution.

Stopping child abuse was a theme for these young people and lots of discussion centred on this issue. There was an awareness of 'breaking the cycle'. They talked about feelings of powerlessness regarding child abuse and in particular had an awareness of the power difference between children and adults.

They also had a high level of awareness of poverty, especially of the consequences in terms of such things as housing and being able to afford to go to the doctor. Simply to have fresh water on tap at home was a wish for some. They were keenly aware of the lack of infrastructure in their communities, for example, in relation to health services and the transport difficulties associated with rural isolation.

With regard to education, they talked about students having to pay for education, choices at school and being treated well. Many felt they were not being listened to at school and there was a need for help to be available there. Closure of schools and the impact of these closures was also a concern.

They felt the environment should more equipped for children and that there should be more things for them to do. Simply being accepted for being young and Maori was a key goal for some, especially given the racism against Maori teenagers some had experienced, especially from police.

They young people said they weren't taught about rights, teachers were often bullies and made them do things without explanation and didn't treat them 'like humans'. They also talked a lot about adults being racist towards them and not Pakeha kids. They thought children's rights should be taught in schools. A majority of children discussed land issues and the government returning land to Maori.

At Home

The need for more money was apparent from these young people's comments. One said 'our family shouldn't get taxed so we can have more money for better houses, school, university and us children'. Others thought they were not getting the right kind of food, and that essentials such as a fire alarm and an emergency phone were missing from their homes. Some were also keen to be paid more allowance.

These young people told us 'cut out child abuse altogether' because 'verbal, physical and sexual abuse emotionally and physically damages'. They were in agreement that there was too much violence in homes and not only should there be no hitting of children, but

there should be *'no violence against other adults in front of children'*. Further, less discipline and fewer growlings would be good according to these respondents.

Many of these young people sought better communication at home. They felt their family should listen to them and that there should be *'more family bonding time'*. They also thought that parents should teach their kids the difference between right and wrong.

Other improvements sought by most of these respondents were a bigger playing environment, places to swim, and to be allowed to have friends over. They were keen to go out with friends or family a lot more. Some felt they did not have enough freedom and would like a longer curfew.

A couple of groups mentioned that there should be no smoking in the home around kids and especially no smoking dak (or doing other drugs) around children.

Some felt they had to do too much work at home and if they are required to do that much work they should be paid to stay home and do the work.

Other comments related to the need for security, transport and fresh water.

At School

These young people had many comments regarding teachers. They wanted to be treated with respect by teachers and have teachers who teach better and care about students more (one teacher was singled out as a role model for the rest). It was felt that teachers are too strict and gave too many growlings and that they *'should listen to what we have to say'*. They also thought they *'should have younger teachers because they understand our needs and what we are talking about'*. In order for them to understand, it was very important for teachers to *'explain things properly and not just make us write things down off the board'*.

Some thought students should have more options to choose from in terms of subjects to study. Many thought there should be less or no homework and one person said *'no more detentions'*. One person said they should *'not to be forced to do things we don't want to, shouldn't have to do things against will'*.

More money for educational and other resources was identified by some as a key issue along with the struggle to pay school and activity fees etc - *'if the government expects us to get a good education and go to school why do we have to pay for it?'*

Many young people thought there should be more outings/trips, fun activities and that there should still be camps. Also high on the priority list for many was a plea for more sports and funding for a variety of sports equipment. However, one person said *'if you don't participate in PE it shouldn't be a big deal'* and another said *'no more press-ups (x100)'*.

Other requests were for more places to play, more time outside, and for a designated area for water bomb fights. One person said there should be spaces at school while another said *'no spaces'*.

Some wanted to be able to eat energy food in class, to have healthy food and a greater variety of food in the tuck shop. Free food would be favourably looked upon, along with (more?) water fountains.

The young people all thought there were too many bullies at school and this should be dealt with *'no monsters at school'*. Further, they would like no racism, no harassment and no peer pressure. They would like to be treated with respect from everybody (teachers and fellow pupils).

A couple of people suggested starting school later and others commented that school is too long. One person thought that a choice of day or night school would be good.

Some identified a need for more puberty classes, especially because *'too many people getting pregnant while they are at school and they aren't carrying on with education'*. There was also a call for more and better guidance counsellors.

Other comments included requests to change some rules, for example, to have no uniform and to be allowed jewellery and bubble gum. One person commented that the buses are always late.

Out and About

Most respondents said there should be more things for kids to do to get them off the streets, such as playgrounds, more stuff for kids at parks, places to swim on a hot day, more physical facilities, and fun places including places to meet friends. It was also identified as important to *'cut down prices for kids' stuff'*. One respondent mentioned that there are too many rated movies.

There was consensus about the need for more protection from racism and harassment. Quite a few felt that the police assume the worst and pick on them because they are young Maori people wandering around at night - *'the police shouldn't harass us when we're walking home at night'*. With regard to shopping, quite a few felt that they *'should be able to shop freely as teens and not be followed around in shops. People shouldn't look at us evilly as if we have done something wrong'*.

On the subject of shops, most felt there should be more shops and that the shops should be open longer and provide a greater variety of supplies.

A few said that *'they should provide transport for students when there is something happening in the community'* and also in general.

Other comments included that drinking shouldn't be allowed on the streets and one person thought that if their parents allow them to smoke then they should be allowed to buy them. Water fountains in the community would be good according to one group.

At Work

The consensus view was that young people are not paid enough money and should be paid the same amount as adults. One asked *'does age matter?'* However, some felt that the hours should be more flexible for young people and that the applications should be easier. A few thought that you should be 15 or over to work and there should be a variety

of jobs while another said *'this town should put out more job applications for students at the age of 15 (like New World) and accept more students'*.

Other comments included a suggestion that there should be more physical jobs like on the farm, for example, milking the cows. Someone also stated that *'bosses can be eggs'*.

Health

Everyone thought there should be more doctors, faster services and therefore less waiting. *'When someone gets hurt (physically or mentally) they should be treated straight away.'* They further stipulated that they should not have to pay for medicines, surgery and other treatment. Free dental care was also important. Some thought more wards were needed along with *'more mental health units for people (including parents) to make them better'*. The medical air retrieval service was extremely important for people in this area.

Quite a few thought that *'when you go to the doctor's, if you prefer a female or a male doctor you should have the choice of getting them'* and that therefore there was a need for *'more lady doctors'*.

There was a plea for doctors (and nurses, but mainly doctors) to listen to the young people and to explain things in language they can understand.

Other suggestions were for better pregnancy prevention plans, free first aid kits and free health food at tuckshops.

Using legal and social services

In general, many of these young people thought that *'social services should treat kids good and with care'*. They felt that Child Youth and Family should help out families but that *'when kids get taken from their parents they should be able to see their parents regularly'*. Their preference was for these kids to *'be able to stay home but be looked after by a different person'*. They also mentioned the need for places for street people to stay.

Other issues raised by some were a need for more youth lawyers to prevent youth going to jail for wrong reasons, and a request for police not to use force and to listen when told something. They felt all of the people in these services *'need to listen to us and what we have to say. They need to understand us better'*.

Most of these people thought that they should be taught their rights – *'kids need to learn their own rights'*.

A further comment was that youth should have more benefits (such as the dole).

Belonging

Quite a few people said there shouldn't be a need to belong in a cool group and that young people shouldn't be peer-pressured by adults or kids. Most important was to be proud of where you come from and *'to be proud of being your culture and not to be ashamed of being Maori or Pakeha or any kind of human'*.

A few said that teens should be able to feel that they belong to themselves and that they are respected. Others felt that more community services and community parties would be good.

Other

A majority thought that Maori should get their lost land back - *'Maori land that was leased years ago was sold without permission and now the community of [local area] don't own the land any more – what's up with that?'* It was thought that the Government should pay for the land that was taken from Maori.

One group commented that *'the schools (little area schools) should stay open, they are a part of the area, and let our future generation get the chance to attend'*.

5.7 Young people in the youth justice system

This group comprised 10 young people from Canterbury aged 15-18, 6 male, 4 female, 8 described their ethnicity as 'New Zealander', 1 African and 1 Samoan.

Facilitator impression

The young people liked the mountains and beaches of New Zealand and one said they like horses and donkeys. Parties, clubbing and pubs were mentioned as things they enjoyed going to. One young person said home was a good place to be. Also viewed favourably by some were lots of drugs and hot chicks.

However this group mainly concentrated on the many things that needed improving for them. In particular, things at home were pretty rough for many of these young people and they said that hidings need to stop. They really wanted to be understood and listened to more and thought there should be a school for parents so they can have training. They also had plenty of comments about other areas of their lives. Of note, many thought that people in legal and social services have bad attitudes towards them and don't listen to them.

At Home

Virtually all these young people thought that *'home sux cos of no food, parents, getting hidings, fighting with family or people that we live with, people not listening to you, not trusting you and not letting you be who you really are, too strict'*. One said it was compromise with mum or *'get the hell out of her house'*.

They thought that home could improve a lot by *'talking with us, understanding and listening, putting in everyone's ideas, giving everyone a bit of trust, letting us be who we are and trying to understand why we do what we do'*. They recommended that there *'should be a school for parents'*.

Other comments included a wish to have a say in what chores they do, that parents shouldn't have favourite kids, parents shouldn't back stab them, siblings can be annoying, and sometimes sleep is difficult because it's too noisy. Some said they would like to go shopping more often.

At School

(These young people are on a youth offenders' course.)

Many of the young people thought that *'this course sucks, need to find a new course'*. They said that it's boring and they need more outings and activities. Some also felt that *'when the tutors are pissed off they take it out on other people'*. However, one person thought that *'if we be good as one big group and work together to be nicer to the tutors maybe they might give us respect as well'*.

Other issues included that *'some of the rules suck'* and it was felt they should have a say in the rules. There were problems with people getting into fights and some girls commented that *'the boys can be dicks – teach the boys more respect'*. Quite a few said that there should be a travel allowance to help them get to their course and back home.

Some thought it was problematic that they are not allowed to swear at the course because they felt they need to be able to swear if they are shitty. It was also a problem that there are hardly any smoke breaks.

Out and About

Some of these young people's experience of being in the community included *'getting smashed or getting into fights, getting arrested'*. They didn't like how there were *'people (including police) wanting to give everyone the bash. Get all the bashers put in jail'*. One person said some police are *'dirty pigs'*.

Other problems identified were peer pressure, back stabbing and getting ditched by mates. One person said it's *'good to hang with a lot of mates, about 14 people'*. Another person made some racist and violent comments about young Asian people *'in town thinking they are all that'*, while others said *'don't get into shit! No criminal actions'*.

Other comments were that the community should be more friendly for young people, *'Christchurch sux, Nelson rox'*, and there were a few requests for a theme park.

At Work

The only comments were *'work sux'* and *'if there were good jobs for youth, there wouldn't be any youth stealing'*.

Health

Most of these young people told us they were in good health but that there should be more free health care. The only other comments they had were that there were too many personal questions at the doctor and that it is important to be able to choose a doctor of the same sex for personal things.

Using legal and social services

Most of this group felt that people in legal and social services have bad attitudes towards them and treat them *'like shit'*. They said the police treat them unfairly and social workers

never keep promises. However there was one person who said *'my lawyer is cool, so is my social worker xxx'*.

They thought these people should listen to their ideas and *'social workers should try and put themselves in our shoes for once – I think they forgot what it was to be our age'*.

It was also thought that youth advocates should be paid more - *'youth advocates don't really try hard enough, if youth advocates were paid more they would give better service'*.

Belonging

The comments here mainly related to not getting along with family and not feeling part of it. Some talked about family *'getting shitty with them'* and one said *'I have no family, no, my family are all retarded. Admit them to Hillmorton hospital'*. (Hillmorton is a psychiatric hospital.) Some suggested that counselling might be a good idea.

5.8 Young people in care

These groups from the Otago area comprised:

Group 1 – included foster children, caregivers' children and children of social workers, 13 x 12-15 year olds, 6 males, 7 females, 12 Pakeha and 1 Cook Islander.

Group 2 – these were young people living in a group home in a rural area, 8 x 13-15 year old males, 6 Pakeha and 2 Maori.

Facilitator impression

Group 1 seemed generally pretty accepting of the way things are and a number of positives were identified. With regard to what needs improving, for group 1 school was a major focus – in particular inconsistency from teachers – and several groups talked about verbal abuse/put downs.

With group 2 it was difficult sometimes to distinguish between their present living environment and their family environment when they talked about 'home'. Many of their positive comments seemed to relate to their present situation. Despite the difficulties these young people have faced there seemed to be a remarkably high acceptance of the way things are. Having said that, group 2 tended to focus mainly on what needs improving.

For both groups there was a lot more verbal interaction than is reflected in written material.

At Home

Group 1 identified positive things at home as food, pocket money, electrical appliances, a roof, health, gardens and games. Some thought that parents are good but they need to learn how discipline better - *'instead of smacking they belittle with words'*. Quite a few mentioned that they don't like being yelled at, being bullied by brothers or sisters, or not having a say in anything.

Young people in group 2 said it is good that in the group home they get money, food, clothes, treats, and they are safe. They felt they should help around the house if needed.

Comments relating to improvements in their original homes included *'we should have funds for unwealthy families that can't provide their children with school lunches'*, and *'we need our own space at home and somewhere to go if your parents fight'*. Other things needing improvement within their family were *'more communication, more support (show up to things earlier)'*.

At School

Group 1 listed good things at school as education, sports and parks, games and subject choices. Some said that students are able to build good relationships with some of their teachers. Others asserted that teachers need to be consistent, stop swearing and not speak rudely to students, for example, calling them freaks etc. It was felt that teachers should listen to students and check what is and isn't okay with them.

Some felt they shouldn't have to make allowances for students with disabilities/difficult behaviour. There was a perception that they were allowed to do whatever they wanted. For example, one girl had to deal with a classmate who was very intrusive to the extent of wiping her nose on her clothing and she felt she was expected to just accept this. A boy in the group talked about another pupil exhibiting very threatening behaviour (strangling another student) and the anxiety of not knowing when he would do something like this again.

Other comments related to the need for tougher controls on bullying, especially verbal bullying, and to stop racism. One said *'it's not assault if you accidentally hit a teacher with a tennis ball – you shouldn't be stood down'*.

A few said that school is boring and there should be more facilities at school, no school uniform. Money related issues were a request for no school fees and for free school buses free.

Some of group 2 said they were getting along well with teachers, receiving help with their schoolwork and that their learning is improving. To improve school, there should be more help for teachers and more things to do such as sports, lunchtime programmes or other fun stuff.

Some said there is *'too much bullying in school systems these days'* and others said that behaviour and attitudes at school could do with improving.

Out and About

Group 1 thought it was good that there are smoke free zones, kids only places, and that there are a lot of different opportunities around Dunedin.

However, they said there is *'not enough stuff to do in Dunedin for fun that doesn't cost money!'* They thought there should be cheaper buses and more of them, more places for kids to hang out, cleaner streets and less car fumes, and police out every day to deal with gangs/mobs.

'People should have respect for young people in shops.' Several of the comments about the way they are treated in public spaces reflected a feeling of being judged on their age, for example, shop assistants suspicious of them stealing, and bus drivers not believing they were school age if they lost their ID.

Some also mentioned racism as an issue in the community.

Group 2 thought there should be play areas for older kids, more recreation places, and more things for young people to do such as game parlours or weekend bus trips.

They also said we *'need safer communities, on the streets too'*.

At Work

Group 1 thought there should be good pay and/or no taxes for high school students. (There was a lot of discussion about rates of pay and examples of young people being paid as little as \$1.70 an hour in established work sites.) They also said it would be good to have more say and communication with regard to your job.

Group 2 said there should be more chances for young kids to get a job and more work experience for kids in town and out of town. They think it's good that at the group home they learn how to use chainsaws, and do practical garden work with the lawnmower, weed eater and shrubcutter.

The only other comment was that *'you should be able to go to work without getting sexually harassed'*.

Health

Group 1 said it's good that New Zealand has hospitals, doctors, counsellors, medicine and a young (family?) planning clinic. However most thought that health care (including medicine) should be free, and that more doctors are needed in each suburb and in the emergency departments. Group 2 thought that there should be more health check ups for young people and that these should be free.

Using legal and social services

Group 1 said that the confidential nature of these services was good but they weren't entirely sure they could trust everyone.

Group 2 thought there should be *'more jobs for John (name has been changed) and other CYFs workers to help us be better'*. ('John' is a resource worker funded by CYF – a 23 year old who works alongside the young people at this group home.) Other comments were *'we need better social workers who get back to you when you ring and who organise lots of things for you'* and that people *'shouldn't be able to bash over young persons at any time'*. (This last comment refers to the police.)

Belonging

Group 1 said friends and parents are important to feel as though you belong and *'if we didn't belong to a family we would be sad as we need to be loved'*. A few said that younger siblings, parents and school can sometimes make you feel as though you don't belong.

Group 2 thought that *'you should be able to be who you are but within the law without being judged or something'* and that *'people should leave overseas people alone'*. One also thought that people should be able to leave their doors unlocked.

Other

Group 1 thought drivers licence fees should be cheaper. Group 2 said there should be more chances to get qualifications if you leave school early, more programmes for young disturbed kids, especially with drug and anger management problems, and that there need to be youth centres for young people with people to talk to.

5.9 Overall themes

Despite the wide variety of young people involved in these focus groups, some clear themes emerged across all groups.

At Home

Many young people in these groups identified a need for more money for rent, food, bills, activities and holidays. They wished for better housing, quiet space at home to study and more and healthier food.

Many said there should be no abuse or fighting at home (from either parents or siblings) and although some said parents are good, others thought theirs should go to parent school. They thought it was incredibly important that people at home listen to them, love and care about them and spend time with them.

Some thought they shouldn't always have to look after their younger siblings, especially if it's because their parent(s) are going out to party.

Some young people from other cultures (for example, Pacific and Asian), felt that their parents need to recognise that they are often required to live in two worlds, that of their traditional culture and also in New Zealand culture. These young people say it is difficult for them if their parents expect them to behave only in traditional ways.

At School

Although some teachers are good, the young people want all of them to listen and not to pick on them for no apparent reason. They wanted to be able to choose the subjects they like, have more activities, weekend trips and camps and enough money to afford these. A call for more sports facilities and equipment also featured prominently.

Across all groups there was a plea for no bullying, no racism, and for someone trustworthy to talk to at school. Some said that everyone should be able to have an education even if they've left school (including pregnant mums).

Out and About

All young people said there should be more and cheaper activities for them in the community, for example, clubs, gyms, theme parks, movies, places to hang out with

friends etc, and affordable transport to get there. Their message was 'give us stuff to do and we will stay out of trouble'.

Requests to 'stop the police harassing us when we're not doing anything wrong' came particularly from Maori and Pacific young people while requests to stop discrimination in general came from Maori, Pacific, Asian and Indian young people and young people with disabilities.

At Work

Every group said that young people should be paid better for their work and had various suggestions about increasing the minimum wage or reducing or removing tax. There were also some comments about not being harassed or discriminated against at work.

Health

Every group wanted free health care (including prescriptions etc) and free dental care until they are 18 years old. Virtually everyone wanted easier and faster access to health care, saying there should be more doctors in the community and in the emergency departments. Quite a few young people showed a high level of awareness about healthy living issues such as the need for exercise and healthy food.

Legal and Social Services

There were comments from quite a few of the groups that the police shouldn't be able to bash people.

The young people in the youth justice system thought that some people working in these services have bad attitudes towards them and don't listen to them. They said some social workers are good but some have forgotten what it is like to be a young person. Some also thought that we should pay youth advocates more so they will do a better job. Some young people from a group home thought there should be more funding for resource workers such as the person working with them in their group home.

Belonging

All groups thought that feeling as though you are part of your family is very important. However some from the youth justice group thought this was less important if it is a crap family. In order to belong, all groups said you need '*someone to talk to inside and outside of your family*' who listens and whom you can trust. In addition, friendship with others was thought very important for feeling as though you belong.

Other

Quite a few said that drivers licence fees should be cheaper. One group said there should be more chances to get qualifications if you leave school early, more programmes for young disturbed kids, especially with drug and anger management problems, and that there need to be youth centres for young people with people to talk to. The group from rural Northland thought that Maori should get their lost land back.

PART THREE: ONLINE SURVEY

CHAPTER 6: METHODOLOGY

6.1 Stakeholder identification

Central to the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights process was the desire to hear from young people. This online survey was therefore designed for people aged 11 and above to fill out. Anyone younger who wanted to complete it or anyone who needed assistance was invited to ask an adult or phone the 0800 number published on the website for help. Young people aged 11 and older were targeted via a mailout to intermediate and secondary schools.

In addition, it was decided to target those people (mainly adults) on the mailing lists of the Office of the Commissioner for Children and the Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, since it was hoped that some of these people would be likely to take the time to fill out such a survey and would be likely to have opinions on the subject matter.

6.2 Process design and planning

The survey used the same structure as throughout the background paper and the focus groups. That is, the questions were grouped into the following areas: 'At Home', 'At School', 'Out and About', 'Work', 'Health, Legal and Social Services', and 'Other'. These categories were used since young people tend to consider their lives in this way. Each question contained two components, namely, 'how important is [the right]?' and 'how well do you think the right is met in NZ?'.

6.3 Method selection and implementation

A mailout of flyers advertising the online survey was undertaken to approximately 500 intermediate and secondary school guidance counsellors all around New Zealand, asking for their assistance in bringing the survey to the attention of students and teachers.

Flyers advertising the online survey were also distributed via the Office of the Commissioner for Children mailout and the Children's Issues Centre mailout (a total of approximately 6000 people/organisations). In addition, there was also some ad hoc distribution of flyers through our networks and a media release was made about the survey.

The survey was trialled with a few young people and adults prior to going live. It was live from mid October until mid December 2003.

6.4 Data analysis and reporting

Quantitative aspects were analysed using pivot tables in Excel as well as through the software used for the survey backend database. Qualitative responses were collated into a table and analysed according to themes and sub-themes.

CHAPTER 7: RESULTS

There were 458 valid responses, 63% of which were from young people (20% from 11-12 year olds and 43% from 13-17 year olds). The responses were from a range of ethnic groups with approximately 57% of responses from European/Pakeha, 20% from Maori, 8% from Pacific and 6% from Asian people. The ethnicity category 'Other' referred to in the following pages includes those who selected 'other' without specifying and people who identified as Australian, Canadian, Danish/Korean, European/Mid Eastern, South African and South Africa/Philippines/Malaysia/NZ.

227 people provided responses to the open-ended questions at the end of each section and the number of responses to these questions from 11-12 and 13-17 year olds was very pleasing. These qualitative responses provide the most interesting data and will therefore form the basis of the analysis. At the end of each section ('At Home', 'At School' etc) the qualitative responses will be supplemented with the most significant data from the structured survey question responses, particularly where there was a noticeable discrepancy between how important people thought something was and the extent to which they thought the right is provided or met.

Please note that this survey was not targeted at 5-10 year olds. It is great that three 5-10 year olds did complete it but there is a need to be extremely cautious making any generalisations from this data. Please take particular care when reading the graphs.

7.1 At Home

'19. Please type in any other comments about what you think needs to be improved for young people at home and how this might be done.'

5-10 year olds

There was only one comment in this section:

Stop brothers fighting at home, stop them stealing money from mum's purse, stop parents spending too much money, stop brothers saying mean things and hurting people (e.g. younger sister).

11-12 year olds

Key themes for this group were regarding protecting children from abuse and parents' fighting, kids being able to make their own choices and having people to talk or seek help from.

Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protection.• Protect children from violence, abuse, and neglect at home.• Child abuse.• I think that people need to have more concern in child abuse in and out of homes.• I think that children should be pressured to learn the kidsline telephone number because some people may be getting abused at home and don't know what to do about it.
Parents' fighting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When your parents are fighting I think that the kids should be sent into another room!• Parents should not have an argument when a child is around.• Parents should not abuse any one in front of their children.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think that it is important that there should be more help for adults with anger problems.
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More choices made by themselves not their parents or friends. Give children the chance to have their say and do things they want to do. I think that kids should also be allowed to make their own decisions at home and at school. Children should be allowed to make choices. Parents should learn to respect their children's choices.
People to talk to and to help you
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have people to talk to when upset. When they need help their caregivers should help them. I think at all times they need a parent at home to look after the little kids. We need more social workers for families who need help to take the child away for a while. Give advice on homework assignment etc, make sure the parents are willing to help by holding conferences with the P.T.A or all parents/caregivers.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give new rights to children. Send in new bills, laws.

13-17 year olds

This group identified issues around abuse, the need for more money (e.g. for food, going to the doctor and cds), parents' fighting, the wish to have more say in decisions that affect them, and the need to have people in their lives who listen to them, help them and love them.

Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child abuse - checking on family every week. More protection against abuse for ALL young people. Abuse - emotional and physical - needs to be improved as it is a big factor in New Zealand. Every child should not be included in fighting, violence and any other inappropriate behaviour. Should be able to slap bottoms. New Zealand has a very high rate of child abuse that needs to be improved.
More money
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of issues are brushed off at home when in the end it could be serious e.g. sickness, broken bones, because families can't afford to see a doctor. I think that kids deserve to all have the same amount, not saying I don't want to have no food but I got food. U got beef???? Children deserve to have what they want e.g. food and water and clothing. We should be given more money so we can buy more cds and dvds.
Parents' fighting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people at home need more safety around arguing parents and abuse of all kinds. Parents should learn to realise that what happened in the past is the past and that they need to look at what is happening now not back then. Banning parents from simple discipline is not going to help our society if the child feels or knows that he/she is being abused then the situation should be looked at immediately by persons other than child youth and family!!! Rights on the child's leaving home needs to be confirmed with all people today. Everyone should have a phone so that if their parents have an argument they can call somebody to come and help them or call the police. I think parents should stop fighting cause it scares kids (Answer: Parents to go to the guidance).
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More say in the decisions that affect us. Young people need to be able to have decisions and participate in family says e.g. with outside activities. We need to have more choice of what music we listen to. Young people need to think about their own actions and react from their problems by themselves. I believe that children should learn from their mistakes.

- We think that parents shouldn't be that strict. They need to give us freedom to do what we want. mmmmmmm you could put out a new law to tell parents that children's freedom is a must have.
- More freedom.
- Opinions by young people are as important as adult's opinion.
- A fair bit of freedom on who they hang out with and where they go. Parents/caregivers know where their kids are going, name a time for them to return but let them have a choice in this. Then let them get there and return in whichever way they choose.
- I think that we should be able to do something that we're allowed to do if we ask.

Having people who listen and help

- I hope lots of young people can have more conversation with their family!
- Parents need to listen to their children.
- More access to counselling.
- I think that kids need to be supported when exams are written, they can become very stressful.
- Every 20mins a teenager commits suicide.
- Having parents listen to their side of the story.
- I think young people need to be listened to more at home, about their comments, problems etc. I think they also need to be supported more - this will help with young people's self esteem and may prevent bullying.
- More love.
- Just to be heard by the adults and to try to let them know what we think about things that happen in life and at home.
- Listen to someone bigger than them or good for them.
- Attention all the time.
- Young people need love and guidance from both parents. Parents should not have to work long hours and be so tired they can't have time with their children or each other.
- Adults should protect their young and be involved in their children's life as much as they can because our children are our future.
- Help when they need to be helped.
- The needs that need to improve for young people is neglect from their family and they should have people who check on each family to see whether they function properly or if this could happen maybe they could see families who have trouble and try to help them so their children will have happy lives.
- Young teenagers or children should grow up in good conditions so they can have good self esteem, values, sense of community, and all the good human qualities.

Privacy

- Privacy - parents (especially mother) sometimes read personal diary and letters. Ask before reading it.
- I think that kids should have the right to have their own personal things kept private & parents not to have the right to go through our stuff without asking.

Other

- I think that young children should not get to do drugs because there are far too many young children who have taken drugs. We should have random drug tests to see who has taken drugs. It is far too easy to get drugs and there are too many places where you can get drugs. Even I know where to get them and I don't deal or do drugs.
- They should be allowed to buy smokes under the age of 18 because they do anyway!!
- People definitely need to inform young people of their rights - something that is not really done - so that they know they are able to speak out if they are being denied their rights.
- Young kids could be exposed to drugs and violence against parents this could change a lot of their confidence and they might not wanna go to school quite often they will attend school scared.
- Children need to be eating correctly at this stage of their life, for both mental and physical health, and parents need to play an influence in this part of their child's life.
- Parents need to teach their children discipline.
- By respecting elders and being kind!!

18-25 year olds

Key comments related to the need to protect young people from all forms of abuse and the need for parent education.

Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is extremely important for young people to be protected from all forms of abuse - the only way we can rule out 'bad parenting' in the long term is to educate the children of today - so that they may become better parents tomorrow... As people we only do the best we can with the resources that we have - if we give our young people all the resources available to them (emotionally, financially, physically, spiritually etc..) then I believe that we can shape a better future for Aotearoa/New Zealand in general. Short-term fixes don't work - we have seen this time and again, lets stop making the same mistakes!!!!• I think that the legal defence for smacking and physically disciplining children in the home (s59 of the Crimes Act) should be outlawed in New Zealand. Instead our people should respect children and young people as people just like the rest of us. We are not allowed to hit adults or even pets, even if it was for the sake of discipline, so I don't think that in a developed country like NZ it is acceptable to hit children (even if it is only a little smack and for the purpose of discipline). Human rights are considered important in New Zealand yet we continue to accept the physical punishment of children by the very people that are supposed to love and care for them. I come from Austria where smacking children has been outlawed for over a decade. I don't think just doing educational campaigns about alternatives to smacking will change the social perception of children and people's opinions about smacking. What is needed is a clear change in the way New Zealanders view children. Since when is it ok to hit a wife or partner a 'little bit' for the sake of discipline? Obviously all the New Zealanders that argue parents should be allowed to physically discipline their children haven't really thought about the issue at hand. I don't think that the campaigns on TV by CYFS help in this cause. Sure they may make some people aware of the alternatives to smacking but they do little to reinforce that children are humans like the rest of us and that no amount of physical force (even if it is used for the sake of disciplining) is ok. It is illegal to hit adults and pets in this country. Why are we still allowed to hit our youngest and most fragile citizens? In order for New Zealand to gain respect in the eyes of other countries around the world, our Government needs to urgently tackle the issue of physical discipline and Section 59 of the Crimes Act. Defining what amount of force is ok to use for disciplining children sounds as ridiculous to other countries as a country like where women are still beaten trying to change the law so that they have a definition of what parts of the body a women may be hit or how hard a woman may be hit in order to be disciplined!!! The same way that New Zealand looks upon wife beating in less developed nations, other countries look at New Zealand's law about physical discipline of children! It is not acceptable to use force when disciplining children and the New Zealand government should stop being so soft and scared and make the move to outlaw this old fashioned legal defence. Just in case the Government feel that they can't make such a move because of the huge public opposition...Germany outlawed its legal defence for punishing children amidst similar public opinion as it is currently in New Zealand. Furthermore, many New Zealanders did not want the GE moratorium lifted yet the Government went ahead and lifted it anyway. If they can go against public opinion in the case of the GE moratorium I am sure the Government could also outlaw physical punishment of children even if 80% of New Zealanders disagree. After all no civilised society would allow its most vulnerable and fragile members of society to be the only ones left with the protection against physical force that the rest of us take for granted.
Parent education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There have been many cases recently where CYFS have been unable to adequately protect children in their care. Rather than blaming CYFS for this I think it is actually a statement about how overloaded they are with work. I believe it would be better to put resources, time, money in at the beginning such as around parenting courses and more support for families and also teaching our society to value children rather than trying to fix it after the fact with CYFS protection.

26+ year olds

Themes for this group were preventing abuse, lack of money, parents' fighting, young people's choices, the need for more support for young people, the need for parent education and the desirability of young people feeling a sense of belonging to and safety within their family.

<p>Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop abuse (physical, sexual and emotional) of young people. • Repeal of section 59. • Right from day 1 when a child is born, we need to identify if they are going home to a safe environment, we need to provide parental guidance to those parents considered to be at risk parents - we must make the child the most important person in decision-making, not be PC about it and say that the whole family is important - the whole family is important but if there is a risk of abuse the child needs need to become paramount. We must put the funding at the beginning of life rather than at the bottom of the hill. • Education as to how to discipline children in a non physical manner. • The specific agencies that are meant to cater for families in trouble need more funding and less concern about being PC and more proactive about removing children from harmful families/situations. The cycle of violence and dysfunction tends to run in extended families, why just move the problem? • How to access help when they are at risk - tv and internet, school education. • Free from abuse - more support and education for parents and repeal s 59 of Crimes Act • Children should have the same protection under law as adults against physical assault/ punishment. • I think that smacking children should be banned. It is illegal to smack an adult who can defend themselves but children can't defend themselves so why is it legal to smack defenceless people - even animals have better rights in New Zealand than our children. • CYFS workers need to be better valued and paid. I am a school teacher. • Repeal Section 59 of the Crimes Act.
<p>Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economically parents with young children are unable to spend sufficient time with the children. Re-instate family benefit, and put into place tax incentives/rebates or whatever to allow a parent of under 3s (or even 5s) to stay at home, i.e. support parenting. • Give parents confidence, and income! • Support for those living in poverty - better access to resources, health education etc. • Beneficiaries may not seek medical advice because it costs too much to see a doctor. Cost might also limit opportunities for sport, music, artistic or cultural activities. • Employment that provides a regular income to a household is one option of creating positive flow on effects to improve the home environment for young people. • Very important to have food supplied to their homes and family. • The Welfare system has had a great impact on this country and its young people - so many are reliant on the welfare. Perhaps we need to look at the system - the state does not owe anyone a living. You must earn it yourself. Too many beneficiaries spending too much on booze. • Close attention to basic needs to be ensured. NZ has fallen behind many countries in this aspect.
<p>Parents' fighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it is important that children need to know that when their parents/caregivers argue that they are still loved and that it can be OK to argue sometimes. It is the way in which arguments are carried out which is important. I am totally opposed to physical fighting and no child should be exposed to that. • I think its ok for children to see healthy arguing as problems and issues do arise within relationships its good for kids to see how to argue in a healthy way so they can model that behaviour.
<p>Young people's choices and opinions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should be given opportunities to express themselves within their families - not just once, but many times. • I will let younger people speak for themselves. • I think young people should feel that they can say how they feel etc. • I think young people need to have more choices and more of a voice. • Often when parents separate and Family Court proceedings ensue, Counsel for the children do not even bother to meet with their young clients to ascertain their views. This may sometimes be said about social workers and psychologists who are required to report to the court pursuant to S29 of the Guardianship Act. The end result is that the views and wishes of significant adults are given precedence over those of kids.
<p>Having people who listen and help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people need to be listened to and heard, or their existence to them is frustrating and boring. • The quality and quantity of family time are very important for young people. • Children need plenty of quality time with their families and caregivers.

- Young people need the opportunity to be able to speak to both parents, with so many split families this is often difficult. Separation agreements should give emphasis to access. Turning the TV off especially at meal times gives families a chance to speak and to listen.
- Designated support for young people who try to deal with the hurt of parental separation.
- Young people need more access, along with their parents, to information which enables them to identify support services that would be of assistance to their family.
- Support for their educational achievements - may mean in some cases that their parents need support too.

Parent education

- There needs to be more education for parents on how to care and help educate their children.
- I think that there is a significant need to have some form of parent education. I note in my circle that parents who are well educated themselves also seek out information about how to parent. In my work I have met a number of parents who do not do anything to gain further knowledge of what may help them to increase their parenting knowledge or skills. I think that schools could do more to encourage parents into learning more skills and I think that some of these examples already exist.
- Parents be encouraged in their parenting role, maybe incentives offered, to be involved in parenting groups from early age.
- Good nutrition, access to books, - by parental education
- Parents should be educated about child rights, legal info, etc. this could be included in high school health curriculum. Caregivers and foster parents/agencies should have mediation, facilitation assistance and full knowledge of child rights and individual case histories etc. Educate, monitor and if no results start fining parents who don't deliver the basic needs to their children. Make it clear where the line is drawn to slow down generational cycling of abuse and dysfunctionism.
- I think parenting education needs to be compulsory at secondary level. Parenting information/discussion should be more visible on tv and in the media more often.
- Children need parents who have some training in good parenting.
- Some families seem to struggle with demonstrating a defined positive value base in the home which leaves young people confused and insecure. Opportunities for education in Child Development and easier access to Family Therapy could well make some dent in this area of concern.
- Parents be encouraged in their parenting role, maybe incentives offered, to be involved in parenting groups from early age.
- More parents should take on parenting courses to help with upbringing of their children.
- Young people's situations at home would improve with better support and education for their parents, right from the time of conception. Programmes on preparation for parenthood, budgeting, managing time and tiredness, anger management etc.
- Parents to have an understanding of child development, what is a sick child - education around basics to be widespread, how to cope with behavioural problems, and safe and effective forms of boundary setting.
- Parents need education on some basic parenting skills to better enable them to be the best possible. To help them understand their children's needs, abilities and development.
- More readily available parent education and guidance would help. Young people should be expected to take appropriate responsibility as they grow up and not be waited on or given everything they want, they would then feel more part of things in their family and society.
- There needs to be a lot more parenting courses available to guide and support parents.
- Parents need to be educated. Unfortunately young people themselves become parents (at an early age) and the cycle/knowledge (lack of) is repeated.
- Very important that parents/caregivers themselves have the understandings, skills, life resources, good health, etc.
- In order to better meet the needs of young people, we need to better look after the needs of their parents and carers. Parent mentors, buddies, friends, neighbours and whanau all need to be supporting our parents.
- Coaching to improve parenting is always helpful.
- Parents need to be educated on how to raise children.

Children's rights

- Children's rights need to be promoted rather than children's welfare and best interests as everyone thinks they know what best interests are and what is best for the child's welfare to varying degrees of appropriateness.
- Many families in New Zealand believe they are doing the best for their families. It is the minority of families whose children do not have their rights respected that make the headlines. Nationwide UNCROC education could help this.
- Children recognised as human beings, loved and respected not treated like property.

Family, community and belonging

- Children need time with their parents/whanau just being - playing, creating, developing close family bonds based on mutual respect and love. So often parents are busy working full time and children are being moved around a variety of services e.g. after school care, dance classes, etc or parents are unable to understand the importance of this time or are poorly equipped to do so e.g. limited by poverty, lack of education etc.
- The community needs to take greater responsibility for caring for children (all children). We need to educate people - more tolerance of a broader range of family types.
- More quality family time for sharing and listening. A TV programme could model this, to help form the habit.
- I think community forums where families in a neighbourhood can get together, meet each other & share info about the limits they set (or don't set) in their household would be useful. We are losing our sense of community, where families can support & communicate with each other. Teens are running rampant, making health/wellbeing threatening decisions which parents feel they cannot discuss with other families because of shame, feeling it's not their business, presumptuous, etc. In other words, what I am saying is that, young people are at greater and greater risk in western society, with free availability of drugs, fast vehicles, HIV, internet dangers, etc. But our effective 'community' is breaking down further and further in ways that remove boundaries that could promote safety and healthy decision-making. We need new structures, whether community based, family based, statutory, whatever for supporting boundaries and sound ACCESSIBLE info for youth.
- The family as a unit need to talk to each other about things big and small. They also need to commend each other on each other's successes and support each other in failure.
- Open discussion about issues of importance to both the child and family/whanau. Family is a place where children should feel safe, in a lot of cases this is not. Children need to be able to talk to their families about issues that could to them, e.g. Sexuality, peers, social expectations. Parents also need to realise these issues are important to their children. Place for debate and critical thinking. A child may say / the teacher said this.... But the parent/s may not believe this or have a different opinion. Herein lies a place for critical analysis and debate.
- Join in church's activities and the youth group to get friends.
- The overwhelming need for young people to be cared for in a responsible, committed, meaningful family. Children have become pets, to be abandoned, ignored, often poorly housed and mistreated.

Other

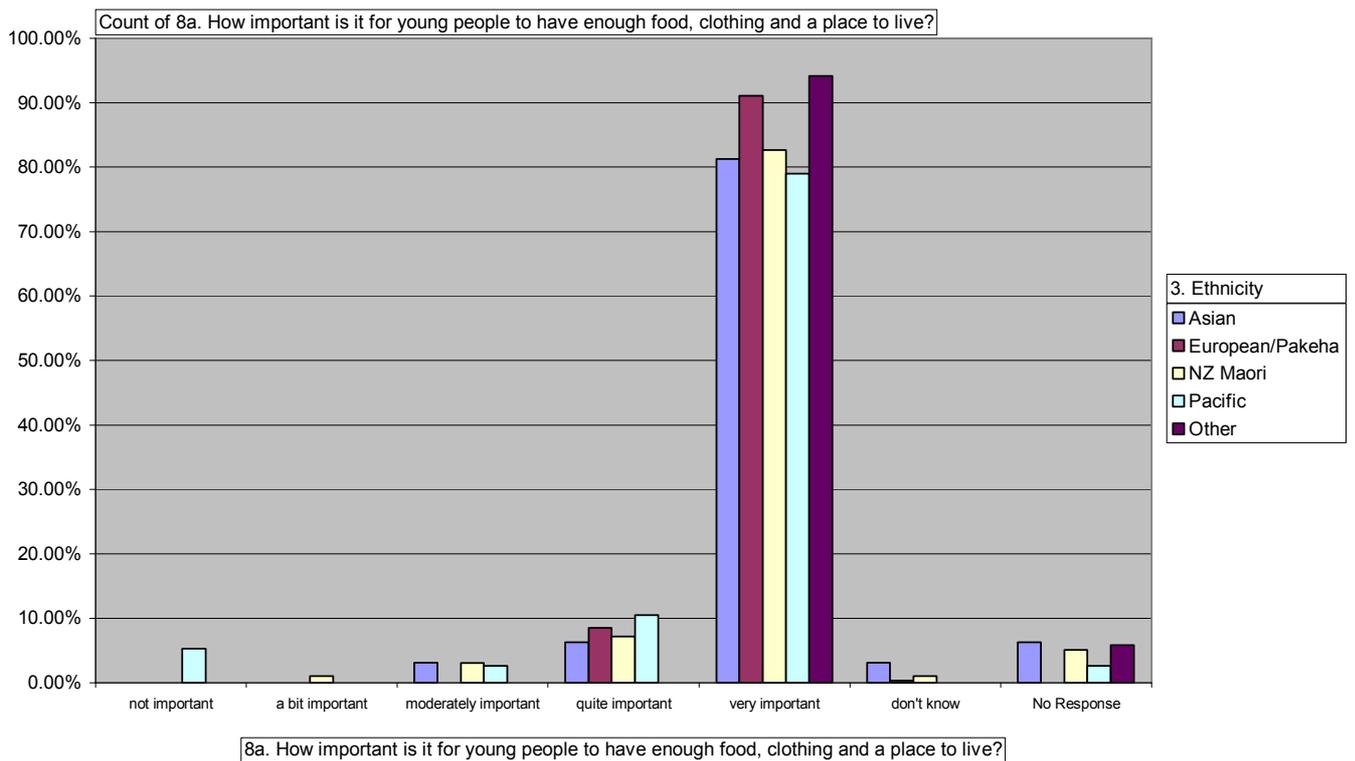
- It is very important for young people at home to have been planned for and wanted in the first place, and for them to be reared with siblings who have been similarly planned for according to parental capacity.
- The government should put in places policies that strengthen families. The best thing a father can do for a child is to love the child's mother and stay committed to her. Broken families hurt children more than anything else.
- Parents need to understand they can't just get rid of their children when they can't cope e.g. threats of social welfare home.
- Home needs to be put in context with the whole socio-ecological environment. The changes need to occur at the macro level in order to influence the positive changes at home.
- What I think we, as New Zealanders need to do, as a society, is lessen the "it's their problem"/"the child probably deserved the smack"/"I'm not getting involved" attitudes in regards to children - we as a society have to believe it is not right to smack children or abuse them in more serious ways. And whilst globalisation and technology is making us more aware of various issues, several families/parents still need to extend their knowledge/understanding/tolerance of certain things (i.e. homosexuality, changing attitudes by this generation to certain taboo subjects) - we have kids (/young people) in Aotearoa killing themselves as they are not accepted/understood by those whom should respect their decisions or accept them for who/what they are. I believe NZ is 'growing' but we have a long way to go in terms of societal attitudes and acknowledgement that things are constantly evolving.
- The trouble with this matter is that the situation at home for young people is to some extent a matter of luck i.e., who their parents happen to be and the socio-economic situation they are in. It is hard to alter some of the features of this without interfering in that great institution "the family".
- Our whole emphasis in this country needs to change. We need to value parenting more. Mothers who stay at home and raise children are really not valued in this country. We have a workaholic mentality - people who work hard are always spoken about in glowing tones. What is your instant first thought when someone introduces themselves and is asked what they 'do' and they say they are at home with the children? It's most likely to be 'oh, you're at home'. We need to keep Plunket going and have more Plunket Nurses, mothers with new babies need nurturing. I could go on and on. We need to value our children - we pay lip service to this but it is simply not happening.
- All young people have the RIGHT to have a mother & father, & sadly this is lacking for many. Making their own decisions needs to be done under parental supervision because children often do not have the maturity to see the

whole big picture to make best decisions. All children need to be taught about the God who created them.

- Life's getting better for people, including young people, all the time, and that needs to be recognised.
- More support for single parent families.
- A big brother kind of scheme that solo parents can hire for a weekend.
- Clear and consistent boundaries and security
- Protection from internet use and over watching of tv.
- Children and young people need to be viewed and portrayed more positively.
- Going out with friends should be improved at home. Do more activities to help them stay home.
- Demonstrations of loving co-operative relationships, anger management and conflict resolution by example of good parenting.
- The need to respect parents, their wisdom and knowledge is important.

Significant findings from the structured survey questions related to basic needs, a sense of belonging and abuse. Question 8 asked 'how important is it for young people to have enough food, clothing and a place to live?'.
 Almost all responded that this right was very important.

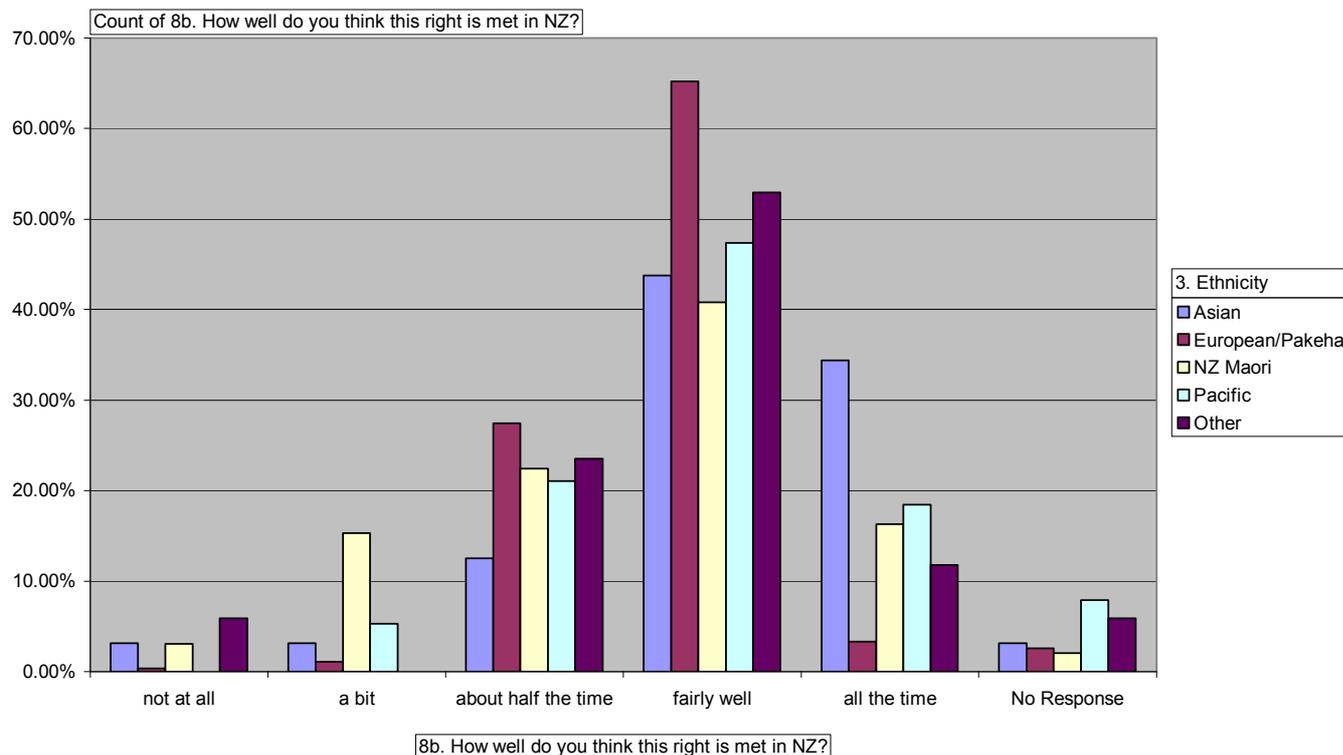
1. Age (All) 2. Gender (All)



When asked 'how well do you think this right is met in New Zealand?', most people thought that the right was met fairly well.

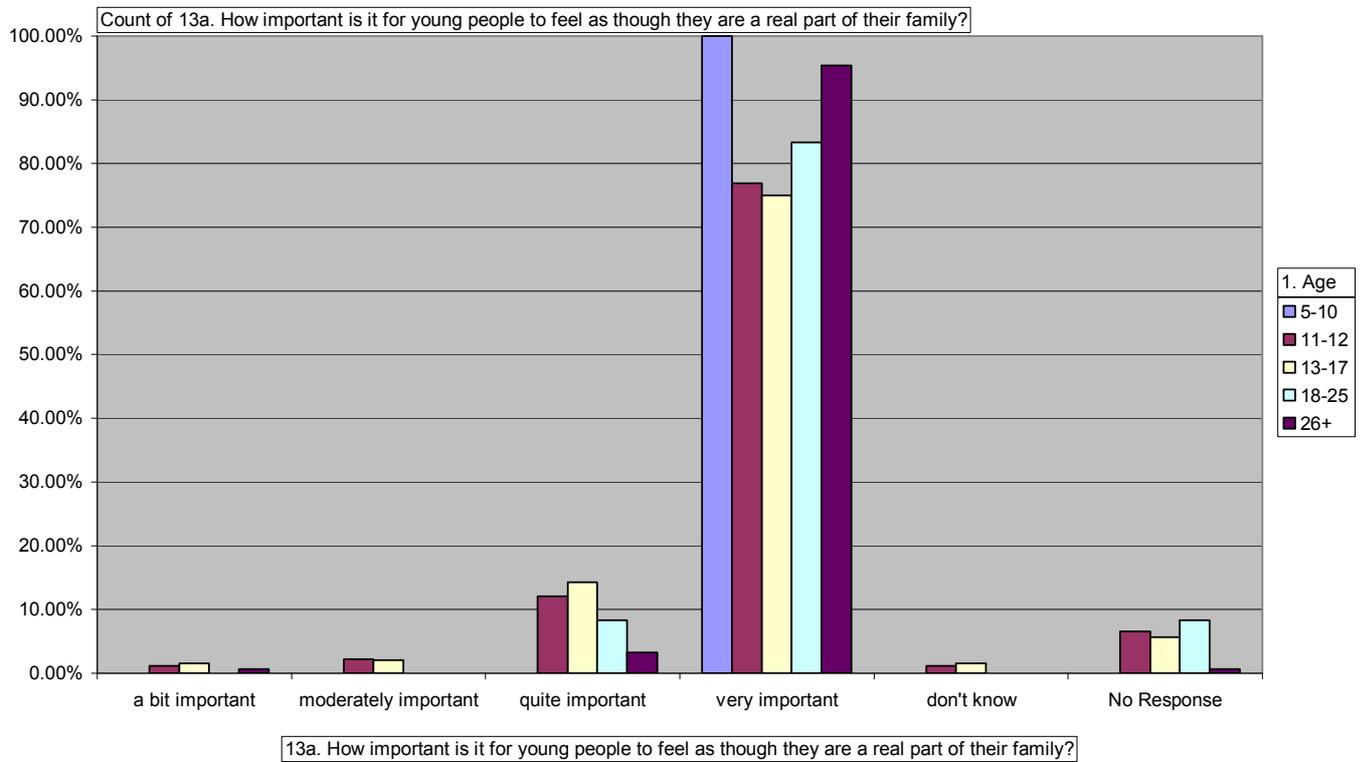
However, 18% of NZ Maori respondents thought this right was met less than half the time (3% thought it was not met at all and 15% said it was met only 'a bit' of the time).

1. Age (All) 2. Gender (All)



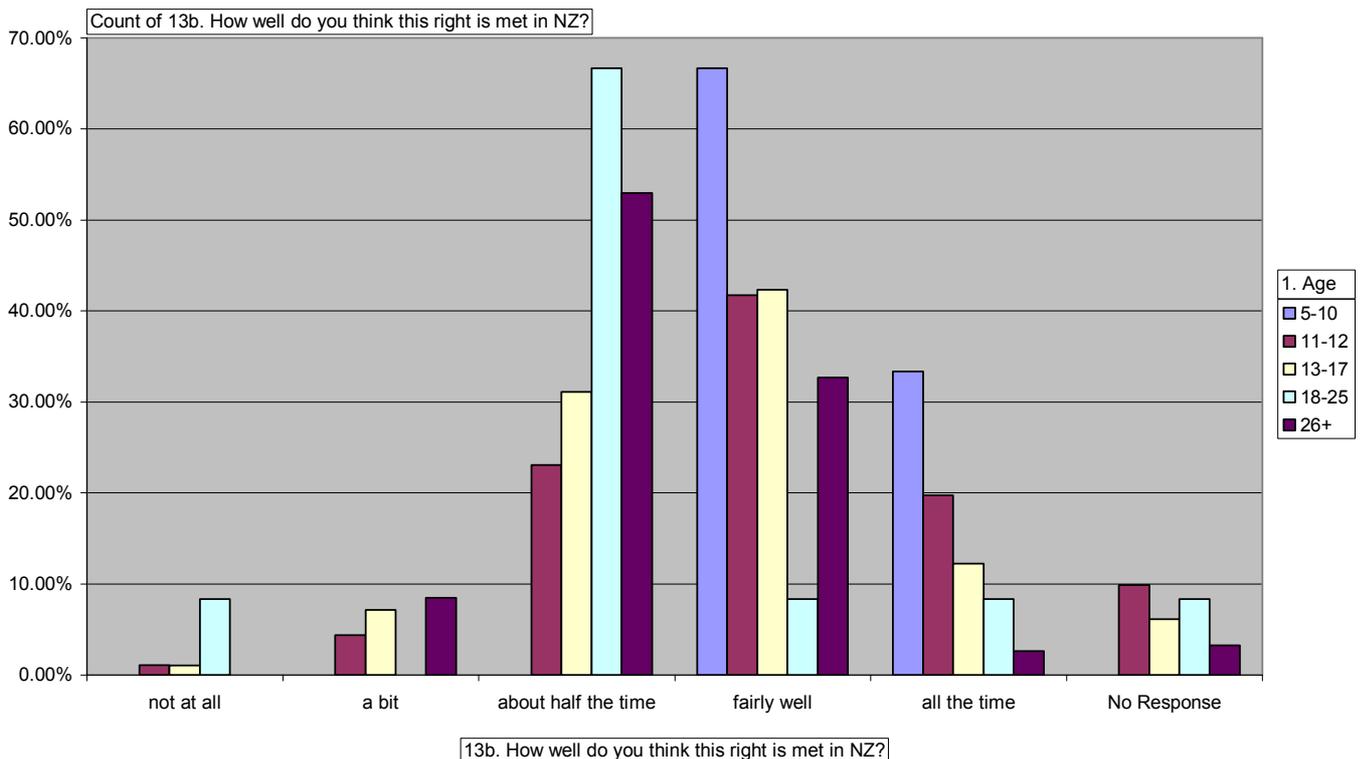
Question 13 asked 'how important is it for young people to feel as though they are a real part of their family?'. Most people thought that this was very important.

3. Ethnicity (All) 2. Gender (All)



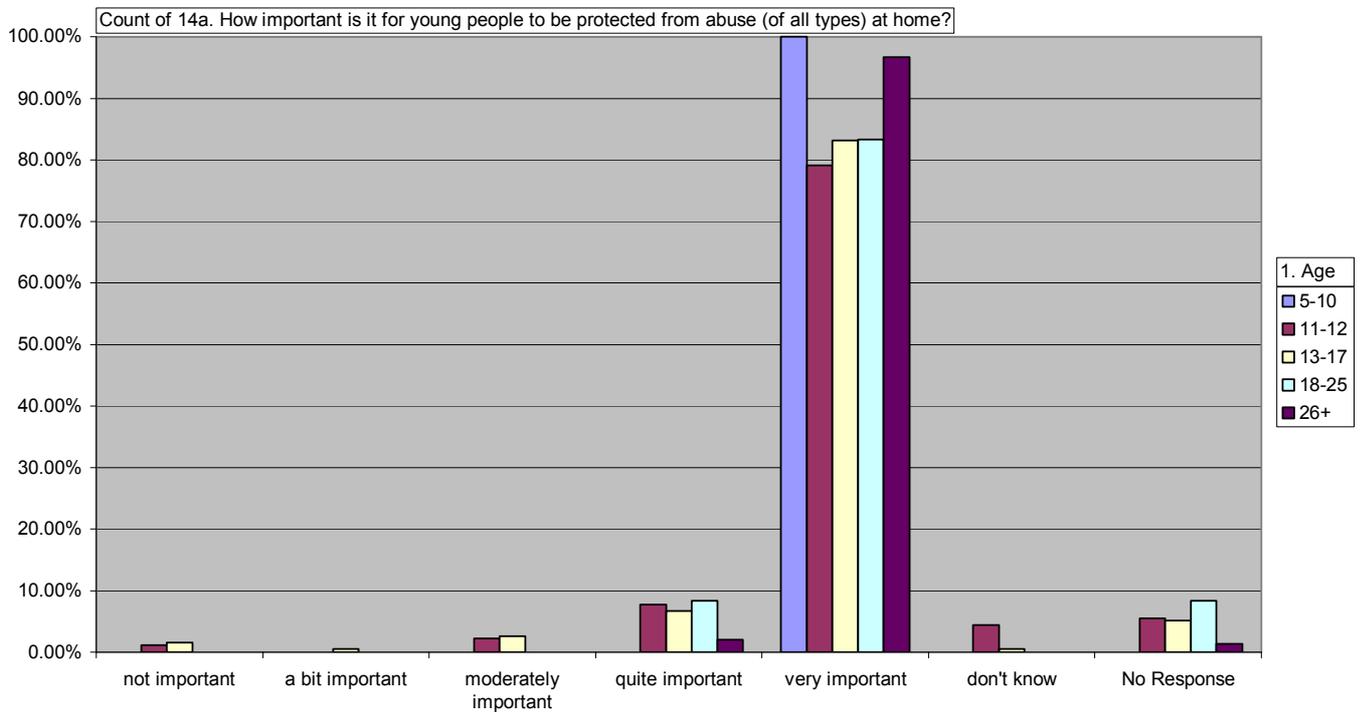
However 46% of people thought this right was met only half the time or less.

3. Ethnicity (All) 2. Gender (All)



Question 14 asked 'how important is it for young people to be protected from abuse (of all types) at home?'. Again, most respondents thought that this was very important.

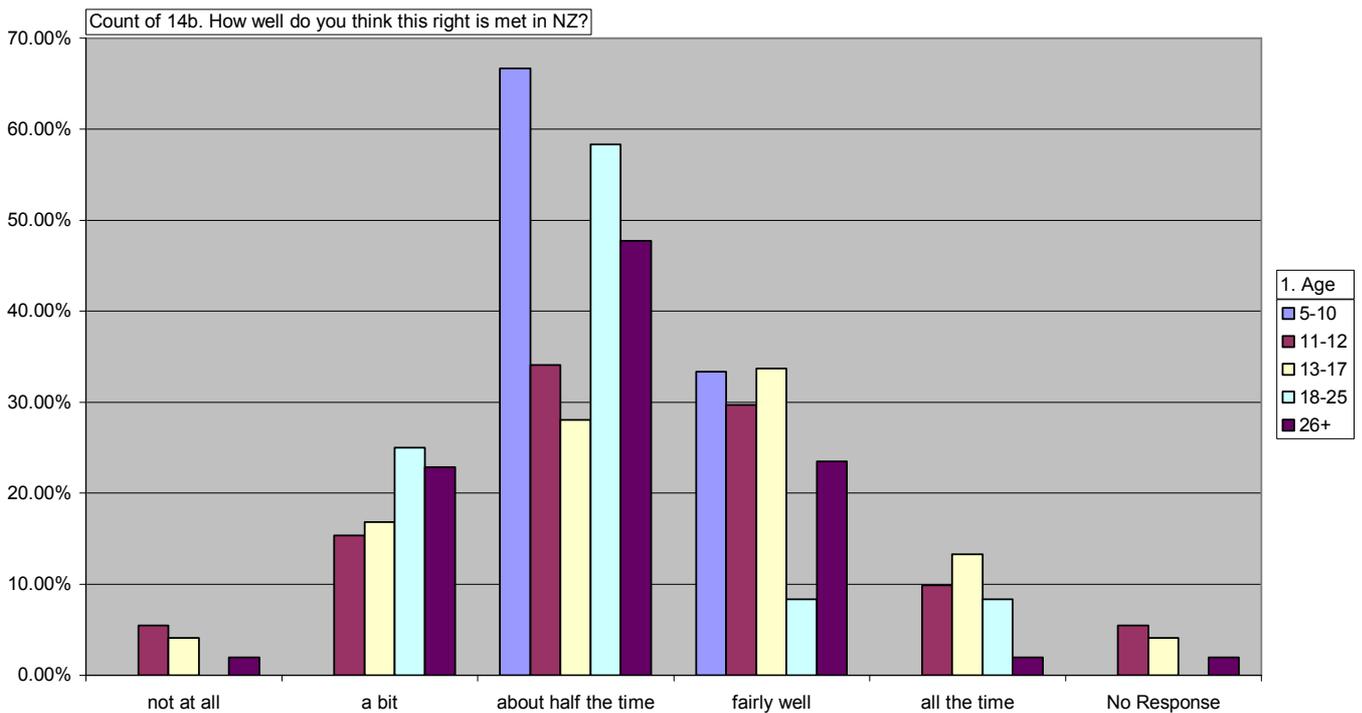
3. Ethnicity (All) 2. Gender (All)



14a. How important is it for young people to be protected from abuse (of all types) at home?

59% of respondents said young people were protected from abuse half the time or less.

3. Ethnicity (All) 2. Gender (All)



14b. How well do you think this right is met in NZ?

Also of interest was that when asked how important it was for young people to be able to be with friends at home, 49% of 11-12 year olds and 46% of 13-17 year olds responded that this was very important, compared with 33% of those aged over 26.

7.2 At School/Early Childhood Centre

'37. Please type in any other comments about what you think needs to be improved for young people at school and how this might be done.'

5-10 year olds

The only comment from a 5-10 year old was:

Help students to learn to speak English. People should help other people instead of fighting. Don't snatch other people's stuff and don't always just think about yourself but think of other people too. People should help other people when they get hurt. Don't be mean to others and respect others and help them. Less kids in class at school.

11-12 year olds

Key themes related to the need for more equipment (e.g. sporting, musical and computers), no bullies, having more choices and having people to talk to.

Money, resources and activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable chairs - buy them. • Cleaner toilets by raising money from a fair or chocolate sales etc, then they can finally get some decent toilets for school. • More equipment like computers and sport gear like balls to play with at lunch and play. • Students need to be given more opportunities to play musical instruments and at a cheaper price. • More freedom to sports equipment. This could be done by talking to teachers or principals. • More sport time and freedom to do fun things.
Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that teachers need to take more seriously everything that goes on at school. Because they usually don't see what's happening and no one wants to nark because they are afraid of what might happen to them. • Have a bully free school. • Less bullying more parental supervision!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More freedom of speech and ideas. Better choice of what to do. • Teachers should not pressure children to do something they don't want to do and teach them the right things to do. And not to argue with their decisions.
Having people who listen and help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be more people to help little kids learn at school! • More teachers to talk to. • Teachers to talk to.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give kids a couple of chances and not just ping them to detention like a teacher I know. • Cleaner toilets by keeping it clean and not throwing toilet paper and other stuff around. • Teachers need to put them in the learning place were they don't talk.

13-17 year olds

Themes for this group were the need for more resources and activities (and to acknowledge that poorer families find it difficult to pay activity fees), requests to stop bullying, having good counselling available and the need to prevent racism.

Money and resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always getting a good quality education in a proper educational environment with the proper resources.• It is mostly said in New Zealand to be a free education system when in public schooling although families are still made to pay for equipment used etc, I feel that can sometimes be too much for families hence the 'poorer' families attend less sporting activities and take part in less cultural activities etc school fees are also you could say 'forced' onto parents and they are not told of the fact that it is unnecessary to pay this fee.• Supply more resources.• I think that education is a key factor for leading a healthy mind. In order for us to achieve this, we need to be educated without hurting our parent's pocket.
Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students still abuse other students and just for fun trouble others and hit them like my friend was beaten by some Maori girls when she didn't even do anything.• I think New Zealand schools have a many fights so I hope they stop.• Bullying needs to be improved.• Most bullying at schools goes unnoticed.• More prevention about bullying, not just physical stuff, probably using education methods that could be taken seriously and stuff.• There needs to be more discipline on the bullies.• Schools are meant to be places where children and teenagers want to go but if bullying and abuse is happening children won't enjoy school - speak from my own experience.• Mainly bullying at school, not so much physical, but more mental abuse occurs.• Harder discipline on those whom bully others- making it easier for others to confront teachers about bullying situations.• "Beating people up" needs to have stronger penalties with the police principles and community all involved to put in place decent punishments. It sucks being bullied and teachers don't give a shit!• To stop bullying it can be cut down by more parent supervision.• Bullies need to be given special training not to be bullies.
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think that New Zealand has a good education but how are they going to talk if they might get into trouble.
Having people who listen and help
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The government needs to help out with the unfortunate people and support the schools. The counselling is very important as speaking from first hand it is hard to go through school and not have anyone to give you advice on what to do and how to study, and also with peer pressure and family problems which have an influence on decisions that we as teenagers make in the future.• I think that teachers must always be supportive to students and be very patient with the students who have difficulty learning.• We think that parents should put less pressure on their children.• Teachers need to listen to their students more and need to put more effort into doing enjoyable things.• Better counselling opportunities to have confidential out of school counselling.• Young kids should feel that they can talk to their counsellors or teachers in confidence and make them feel that it's ok to talk or tell on someone.
Discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There needs to be less racism at rural, urban and suburban schools, students need to broaden their knowledge on other people and cultures to decrease stereotyping and discrimination. Teachers need to educate more about racial tolerance.• Racism should stop right away since Asians are getting every kinds of discrimination.• I feel that racism is a big problem in schools like towards the Maori and people that are from other countries than NZ.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers need to teach us about discrimination.
More activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I suggest there are some extra classes which are after school or at the weekend. Those classes are to teach students something they are interested in but they can't study at school, like dance, singing, swimming, drawing comics etc. • Set up activities and school programmes to help young teenagers.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many children and teenagers do not know about human rights. More educational studies should be done. • Every child needs to feel that they are part of the school they belong to. • It is important for students to know their right and wrongs and also know how to balance the way they are taught at school. Being under a lot of rules can discriminate a child from coming to school but then again it will help them achieve a better life in the future so we should be able to hear what students have to say about school as well. • Have a friendly atmosphere everywhere!! • To accept people for whom they are. • Colleges need to get better teachers • Less pressure to perform. • There is a lot of pressure on children in schools to do a lot of things. • A lot of young people today are being exposed to drugs and alcohol. So adults should be more careful with their kids. • 3 school days and 4 day weekend. • There should be a longer lunchtime miss out on 6th period. • Everyone should be fair and protect by the law. • Homework unrelated to school work. Homework to cover work done at school. • Classes need to be streamed for all subjects before college, not just maths.

18-25 year olds

This group talked about the need for adequate support mechanisms for young people and the need to address inequality in the system.

Having people who listen and help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that young people have all the support that they require in terms of counselling etc. • School teachers should be taking social work papers!! If anything is going wrong with our kids - they will know about it - they are in the prime place to pick up on it, and they should be trained around dealing with it and making safe, effective interventions.
Children's rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the right to education not be unfairly extinguished through suspension/exclusion/expulsion - a right and a fair and consistent process to appeal any such decision.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a immigrant to this country who has lived here for over a decade one thing that is really obvious to me is the discrepancy in school attendance, performance and enjoyment between certain cultural groups. It seems that in this country if you are white, middle or upper class and come from a reasonable background then the education system will serve you well, you will probably enjoy your time at school and will probably stay at school until the end or at least finish well enough to have reasonable chances of further training or employment after leaving school. If however, you are Maori, Polynesian, a refugee or come from lower socio-economic background where education may not be valued as much or less accessible (especially in early childhood and primary school) then the chances are that you may not enjoy school as much, that you may feel discriminated against by teachers and other children, that you are less likely to do well at school and less likely to finish school and that your needs are less likely to be met by the current education system. You are also more likely to end up in alternative education groups, less likely to find a well paying job and less likely to go on to further tertiary training. Now I know that this is only a stereotype and that there are exceptions to the rule but the fact remains that in New Zealand coming from a minority group or a lower class background does seriously disadvantage children and young people in the education sector. I think the New Zealand government need to urgently address this and ensure that all New Zealand children really have the same opportunities!

26+ year olds

More resources and greater accessibility to activities (especially for poorer people and those with special needs) were issues for this group, along with the need to stop bullying, facilitate young people's participation, provide better support services such as counselling, and comments relating to the importance of understanding how young people learn and applying this within the school setting.

Money and resources

- We must focus the funding provided to schools. We must help schools to be able to perform better. We must NOT have children out of school - truancy, expulsion etc must be dealt with - schools must be provided the extra help with "difficult" young people - the worst thing we can do is NOT have young people in school. Better resourcing/systems/support.
- Definitely free education without the pressure put onto families to pay school fees.
- Government needs to provide more money for education.
- I know there is not enough funding for children with learning problems especially if the child/ren have no behaviour issues.
- There are so many other things children need, why should we have to pay for education.
- Access and cost are some factors that limit Maori children and whanau to such facilities like library services, swimming and music lessons (extra curricular activities).
- Many of these preferable states are made difficult to optimise in schools when there is a lack of resources to enable schools to do their job well, too much pressure to do and be all things, and a lack of reality understanding by those who sit in judgement of schools.
- Free education! Come on. IT is not and those who don't have the money for new books when they are needed, going on the trips/activities that give new knowledge, paying for registration in sports teams, purchasing a team or school uniform, are disadvantaged in all manner of ways. Poverty is their enemy. That is a political problem often beyond the ability of the school to cope with, if indeed it ever should. Arguments to say that it should otherwise the child suffers, is ignoring where the responsibility for the wellbeing of the child initially resides. Go back to the family/whanau and State. I am fearful that the emphasis being placed here on support/help for young people in a school setting is somehow saying that this is the responsibility of the school.
- More resourcing for special needs.
- Ensuring that the environment is rich with resources (people are probably the most important resource).

Bullying

- A child being bullied at school will dislike school and not learn as well (personal experience through my own children).
- Schools need to demonstrate equal opportunities within staff - people treating each other fairly and with consideration. Zero tolerance for bullying yet providing students with alternative ways in which to behave.
- Stop being bullied. Behave well on the playgrounds.
- Ensuring children are safe - free from harassment, discrimination, abuse, bullying or stigmatisation.
- Stop abuse by teachers.

Young people's choices and opinions

- Children need more autonomy in the school system. They need to be viewed in an holistic way, not decompartmentalised. They need to be shown respect, regardless of ethnicity, religion, sex, etc. Getting rid of the use of Mr Smith or Mrs Smith as titles for teachers in the school system and the use of Christian names would help break down the barriers of teachers being "unreachable" would go a long way to assist with the children's sense of belonging and well being.
- Parents to be more involved and interested in their child's schooling and participate more in the decision-making on their child's behalf. Children to have a greater voice on committees at school.
- I think that schools could do a lot better in setting up structures for true participation in decision-making for children and young people. Many school councils are a whitewash - no real power.
- A health promoting schools approach increases the opportunity for students to have meaningful input into the decision-making process in schools.
- It is important young people have choices though this needs to be tempered with their maturity to understand the consequences. Allowing every child the right to decide for themselves undermines parental responsibility and

teacher responsibility. Sometimes the way Rights are expressed by young people is of grave concern.

- I think we are still a society where adults make decisions on behalf of young people, often on the mistaken assumption that "we know better" - this is true only in some respects and when it is true it is sometimes because children are misinformed or uninformed. This process disempowers young people and hinders their growth into a balanced adulthood.
- This is about children having input into decisions that are related to them as far as possible.

Having people who listen and help

- Greater support services e.g. appropriate and accessible counselling.
- If staff were supported adequately (which they are not - due to national education policies) in terms of their own mental and emotional well being, they would be more likely to be generous to the children they teach in terms of providing "extra info/education" beyond the basic type school curriculum informational needs.
- Recognition that in order to learn well other issues affecting the individual need to be resourced too.
- Smaller classes so they are not lost in the system, would give them a sense of belonging and not just a number. More social workers so there is someone who can listen to them when needed and help them to resolve issues for them and their family. Less exclusions and more supports in place when their behaviours become a problem.

Discrimination

- Encouraged to have respect for others who are different through ethnicity, disability etc.
- Learn respect for others.

Learning

- School teachers need a lot more training in catering for children as thinking, creative individuals who also need to be an important part of a community of learners.
- Learning needs to be fun not boring, repetitive, sitting hour upon hour being lectured at.
- Learning to be part of a team is as important as learning about self. A lot of the above questions are stereotyped ideals without addressing the main issues for children.
- Schools tend to have a very narrow view of education - they want to be seen to meet all of the curriculum and this has led to some pretty superficial coverage of key aspects of learning and education. The focus appears to be on the product rather than the process and less focus on creating positive dispositions to learning over the long term. The curriculum seems to be at the heart of the teaching process rather than the children. Children should always come first and I am not sure this is always the case. I see children being rushed throughout the day trying to fit everything in. This is not good practice but I don't see it as the teachers' fault they are trying to do their best in a difficult environment with huge expectations on them to address all of society's ills, plus teach the curriculum. The individual child seems to be at the bottom of the list.
- Smaller classes so our children get the attention and help that they need. Downsize our classrooms or introduce more teachers e.g. compulsory student teachers to help children that are having trouble learning through lack of understanding of the work that is expected.
- Lower teacher pupil ratio. Special needs children need lots of help and their parents do not need the stress of applying each year for the special needs hours - they are, in lots of cases, gradually reduced because of funding restraints.
- The school curriculum needs to be delivered in a manner that is contextually-based and that meets the developmental levels and needs of individuals. Students need to be able to express their opinions and ideas more freely without fear of being knocked back for doing so (particularly at secondary school level). Respect needs to be earned from teachers not just expected. "Mutual" respect must abide.
- Treating students with respect. Teachers acknowledging that students have different styles of learning and are not all academic. Some excel in the Arts or Sports.
- Need highly qualified, well-paid and rewarded teachers who use interactive teaching methods that are based on current ideas about learning.
- School should be a place of learning and children should go with that attitude. Education should be highly valued.
- Smaller classes with better teacher to pupil ratio.

Early Childhood

- Teacher training needs to encompass the transition for children from an ECE service to school - this could better prepare families for the changes. The availability of more males working in EC services and primary schools would also be beneficial.
- Access to quality childcare is another issue of concern. It is increasingly expensive and difficult to provide.
- Free quality early childhood centres for age 2+. Incentives for parents to stay at home with very young children.

Children's rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights are very important as are responsibilities - there still need to be consequences. • Programmes on the rights of children (and all people) could be included in the school curriculum so that children grow up knowing about their own rights and the rights of others. Budgeting advice, stress management and anger management would arm them with essential skills to deal with adulthood. Less workload on teachers and more accountability in the classroom would also improve conditions for young people. • Re YP learning about their rights - depending on how mature the YP is they may abuse their rights.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools need to be more flexible in timetabling, and subject choices. • They need to be given good clear rules and fair discipline. They need to be taught good values, through a values based curriculum. Sexual abstinence for teenagers must be taught as a positive value, for the sake of their physical and emotional health and well-being. The rights of parents must be upheld. • Schools should be working more with family when children are having problems. Unfortunately schools have their own laws they work by and don't care how it can destroy families. When the problem becomes too much they suspend or expel students and send them on a path of self destruction. More work needs to be done between school and home so our young are able to function at school. This will make a far happier place for everyone concerned. • To meet all of these needs which I think are of major importance I think there has to be a major input into the training of teachers. Currently I do not think that among teachers, and particularly secondary teachers, there is enough understanding that for students it is relationships that help a student understand and work. • The key aspect to education for me is to increase the (diminishing) Eurocentric view to education and the "one way fits all" mentality (i.e. alternate education). New Zealand is not a white country - rather a melting pot of cultures, we need to take into account other cultures learning styles to enable some of our children to perform - I believe the only way we can do this is through the employment of more culturally diverse and world wise teachers. This will mean increasing access and support to university of various CULTURAL and SOCIO-ECONOMIC groups, so put more 'suitable teachers on the shop floor and more analysts etc. in the meso/macro levels. A lot of kids fall-out of the NZ education system because they don't fit, it's one size fits all - I believe more alternate education systems (e.g. London House and Forbury School in Dunedin) have to be offered as a choice for young people or incorporated into mainstream education. • Education needs to be changed to meet the new needs we still have an old European system in a modern multi-cultural society. Our education system fails our young men, our Maori population and new immigrants disproportionately. • Young people need their parents to support the school and value education • Help from parents to encourage their studies and let them believe in themselves they can do things. • Children need strict guidelines re use of internet , they need to be supervised in the primary school. • Computers are the logical way into the future. More computer time and training would greatly benefit our children. • Young people need to be valued and their virtues affirmed. This can happen through the Virtues Programme. • A tribunal for parents and students to take a 'case' to when they feel unfairly treated at school. Tighter control on the ability of schools to expel students. • Schools need to be part of a large, comprehensive network of social services, family services, early childhood services, health services and larger connected school systems in which resources can be more easily shared for better efficiency and quality of delivery to the schools, their families and their children. Schools need to emphasize love of learning rather than conformity, control by adults, and trying to make each child equal rather than extending children to their full potential. We need to produce creative, innovative, confident children rather than rebellious, discontented and unhappy young people which I and other informed colleagues would agree is sadly becoming the norm. Children achieving and being bright is not valued in NZ. Teachers are, for the most part, reluctant to let children take control of their own learning choices even though the curriculum framework allows for such wide scope in how and what children can learn. As long as principals are given too much authority to run schools without adequate bureaucratic support systems that link schools, the quality of teachers chosen by principals and BOTs will continue to be substandard and a "personal choice" emphasis of the principal will be the deciding factor for teacher selection. We have many good teacher education programs at our universities now, but feeble practices still remain in schools which block the introduction of new and fresh ideas into our schools. Boys in particular are hugely disadvantaged in NZ schools. A nation-wide campaign to address this in schools is needed if we want to stem our appalling record of male suicide, depression and juvenile misadventure. Our early childhood education sector is to be admired internationally, but the lack of good links with local schools, huge overlap of services, and not enough

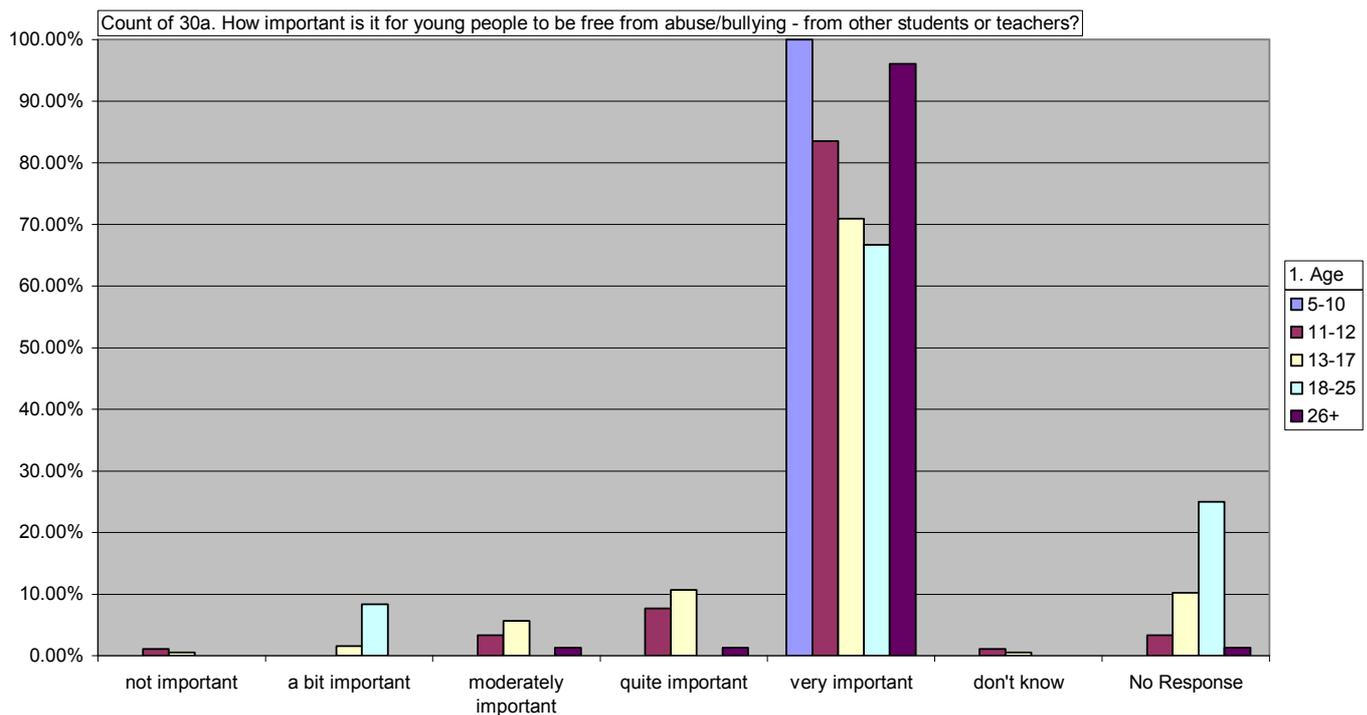
information to the average parent about our different ECE options and family services makes the impact of these great services, in isolation, totally negligible as indicated by our low literacy rates, advancement of minority groups on to higher education and less use of these services by low socio-economic families. The school year should be changed so that children enjoy a longer summer vacation from Christmas to mid Feb. or end of Feb. This would a) enable summer camp providers to set up more camps nationwide to strengthen the small business sector b) to give kids the opportunity to take up summer experiences provided by the government such as work schemes, exchanges etc c) to allow families to have more time for decent summer holidays without the pressure of Christmas and d) encourage businesses to hire young people as part of government sponsored work schemes to assist youth unemployment. It would also encourage universities to offer more summer courses thereby promoting more interest in higher education.

Significant findings from the structured survey questions related to bullying and discrimination.

Question 30 asked ‘how important is it for young people to be free from abuse/bullying – from other students or teachers?’.

Most respondents thought that this was very important.

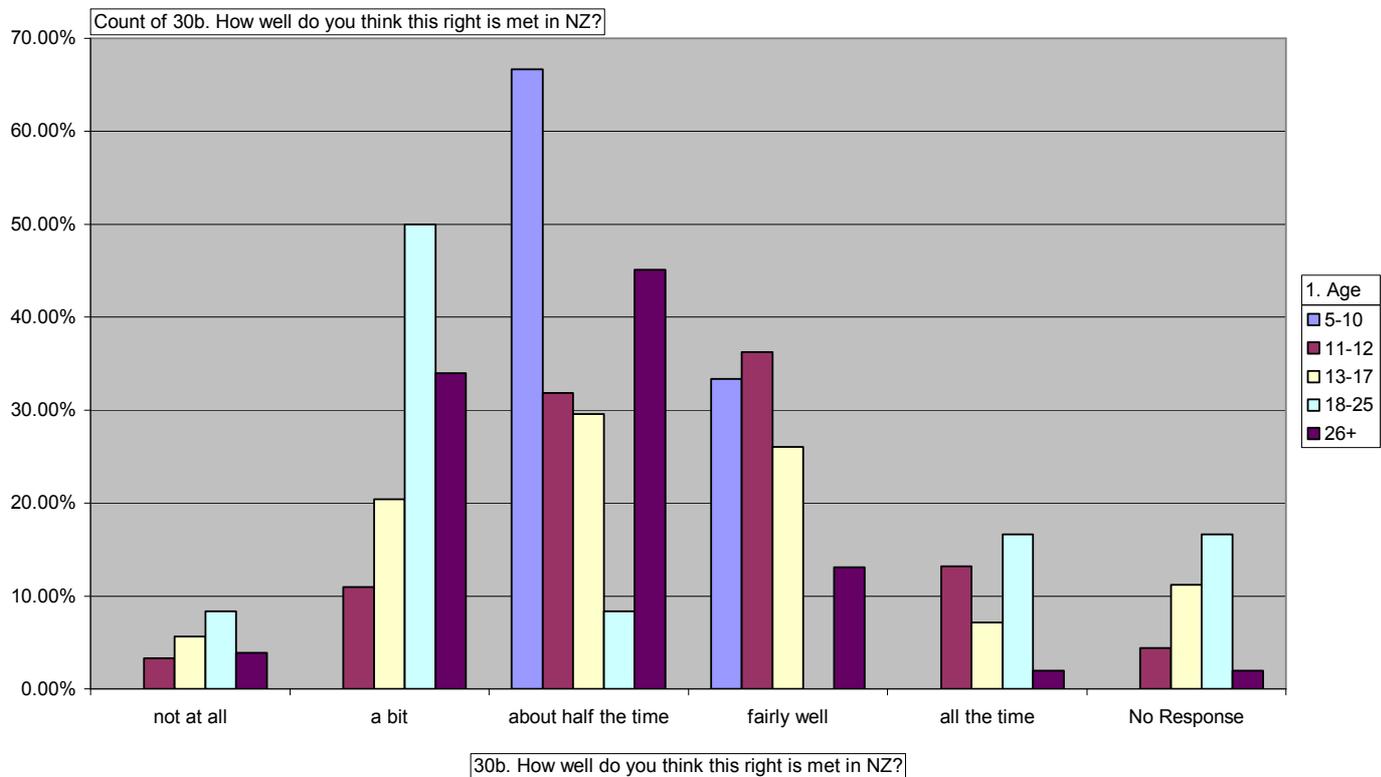
3. Ethnicity (All) 2. Gender (All)



30a. How important is it for young people to be free from abuse/bullying - from other students or teachers?

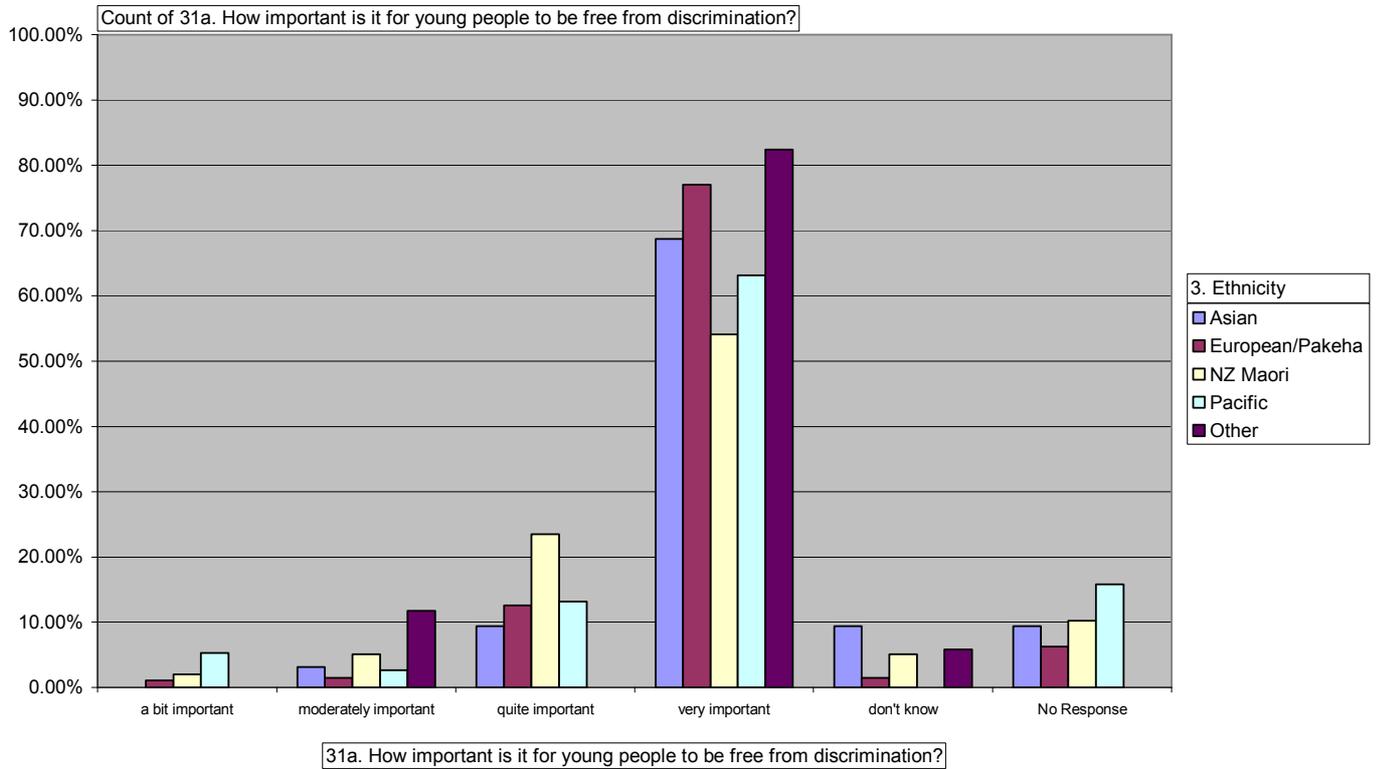
However 63% thought that young people were free from bullying only half the time or less.

3. Ethnicity (All) 2. Gender (All)



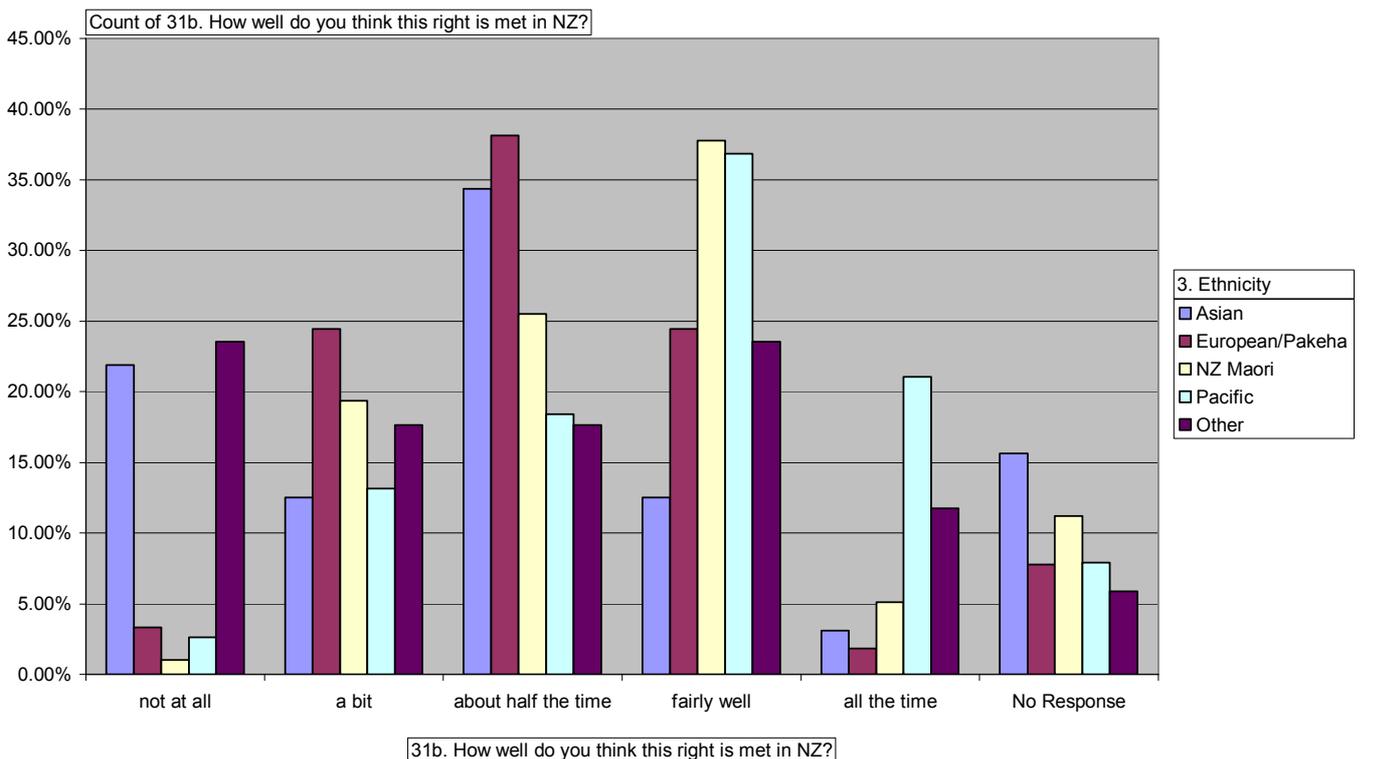
Question 31 asked 'how important is it for young people to be free from discrimination?'. Most respondents thought that this was very important or quite important.

1. Age|(All)|2. Gender|(All)



22% of Asian respondents and 24% of 'Other' respondents thought that this right was not met at all, and 59% of all respondents thought that young people were free from discrimination only half the time or less.

1. Age|(All)|2. Gender|(All)



7.3 Out and About

'50. Please type in any other comments about what you think needs to be improved for young people when they are out and about and how this might be done.'

11-12 year olds

These young people thought the community should safe for them, there should be better transport and that there should be more smokefree and alcohol free places for them to go.

Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think that there is enough stuff for children to do in the city in the holidays and in the weekend.
Abuse/safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect children from violence, abuse, neglect, racism, and drugs. I think that if a child is being abused there is pressure on them to call a friend or a kidsline. I think that the cops need to take a look at what is happening in the community because not everything about it is safe for little or big kids. Have places were children can go if they are being chased by someone etc, robber, bad guy.
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think that we should be able to make our own decisions once in a while.
Smoke, drink and drugs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think people should stop smoking and deal drugs and we can do that by taking the legal age for drinking and smoking up. Have more smokefree and alcohol free places where youths can go.
Cops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cops shouldn't just pull people over off the street just because they look scraggly
Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More taxis, better transport. Better transport.

13-17 year olds

Key themes from this group were the need for more activities, a safer community (including protection from bullying and racism), wanting people to listen to them and help them if necessary, and a feeling that the community should trust and value them.

Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more activities and courses for young people in the holidays. Recreational activities need to be heavily supported as you meet many people and learn good skills such as respect. In New Zealand especially in Auckland on the north shore there are not enough activities for the amount of teenagers living in the area. That is why a lot of teenagers resort to drugs and alcohol as a boredom buster. I think that people do generalise teenagers as trouble but if they gave us enough activities to occupy us in our free time a lot of the problems could be solved. Most young teenagers get bored going to parks and the bowl and so they start drugs. To improve a non-drug environment we should have more things to do outside. Like big graffiti areas we could use or heaps more parks with a racing car track. People telling kids to get off the streets when they won't help fund places for them to go or they can't name a place for them to go to. Funds for a place in each town/city for kids to use.
Safety/abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be no bullying and teasing because a lot of kids get teased which really hurts their feelings which can

<p>be very serious like they can commit suicide!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More safety on the streets. • I think there needs to be a safer community - kids can go for a walk at night without their parents freaking out about them. • It needs to be more safe at night. • Safe places to be with friends with good supervision. • About the streets we just need a elder on the streets with us kids. • There should be guards because when young kids go out they might feel scared because of the people their who might start hassling them.
<p>Young people's choices and opinions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children need to be supported, their decisions will affect the rest of their lives and their mates lives. • We wanted a skateboard park in our local community but we were not listened to by the council. A child advocate on the local council to fight for our rights and what we deserve.
<p>Having people who listen and help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just to be heard by the adults. • Children need to helped more either from parents, teachers, friends or someone else.
<p>Discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't see how racism etc can be freed from the public atmosphere therefore my answer to this question will mostly be quite important because it is never going to be completely racism free. • Away from racism.
<p>Belonging to community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that children and teens need to grow up in an environment that is healthy and will be a good role model for the next generation. Decisions in the community need to be introduced to the teens as then they have an insight in to what is going on and how it is going to affect them in the future years. • Young people sometimes feel as though the community doesn't trust us or value us that much, like we are a nuisance and sometimes our opinions and voices aren't heard because of these stereotypes. This could be improved if adults gave us a little more credit and judged us after they had heard what we had to say. I don't know how you could get them to do this though.
<p>Children's rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children don't always know that they are being treated unfairly and they can easily feel alone and trapped. We need to be aware of our rights and have help if one should need it.
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents shouldn't be allowed to go through teenagers' private property • They shouldn't have to wait 18 months between getting their restricted and their full licence. They should be allowed to go out whenever they want once they turn 16 and they should be allowed to move out of home when they are 16.

18-25 year olds

The main theme related to ensuring the participation of young people.

<p>Young people's choices and opinions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government should introduce specific frameworks to ensure the participation of young people in policy and practice development at various levels. • Initiatives such as local city council youth councils etc should be taken seriously by adults and not just used as a token effort to make young people feel that they have a say but then not listen to them.
<p>Children's rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults set the example - and children follow suit - if we are supportive of them and their rights they'll use them as they were intended.
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that too many New Zealanders think that race (or sex) is even slightly relevant to a person's identity, and personality - it's easy to put people into boxes, for example, describing someone as a "Maori girl" - but does that tell you anything about who that person really is? Pretty unlikely; but, what it is likely to do, is to perpetuate and impose inaccurate stereotypes and assumptions. So, while neatly organising people into boxes is easy, and therefore

tempting, the only real way you can find out about a person is by meeting them - it takes time, but each person deserves at least that level of respect. No one has any business labelling someone, until they've met the person, or somehow witnessed their actions. It would take time, and education (it's not rocket science, but we all need to have basic things pointed out to us from time to time) to change culture in this way.

26+ year olds

Key themes for this group were the need for more affordable activities, safe places to go and safety in general, the need to encourage communities to listen to young people more and to ensure young people know about 'helping' services, and children's rights and responsibilities.

Activities and venues

- More affordable things to do and places to hang out with friends e.g. clubs for teenagers.
- Places that are safe so kids can skate board, play video games, listen to music, and talk and eat. Also places where they can engage in sports or cultural activities after school.
- Often when children have the opportunity to participate in school sports, cultural groups, music etc they do not get into any trouble - so more opportunity and availability for this to happen at all schools, at all levels would be fantastic.
- Children get bored easily. A few recreational activities e.g. dancing, sport, music lessons would see less children on the streets. 'Youth one stop shop' is all that I know of - what about a kind of 'night club' for kids playing all kinds of music from after school times to late on weekends. Children do not know how to go about accessing advice they need. Later buses would deter kids from walking home from being at friends or uptown at game parlours.
- Maybe if there was a programme in schools, there would be less hassles out in the community.
- How come there are no clubs, areas, facilities where young children can meet and hang out, instead of hearing all about boy racer, young children's drinking taking drugs a.s.o but if there is nowhere for them to meet or be it is not surprising that that the mentioned is happening, and there seems to be a very low level of trust amongst parents and young children, parents/caregiver don't trust their children to go out or to a party etc but if young children know that their parents don't trust them they are going to act accordingly.
- Safe places to play and socialise.
- More safe spaces for young people to hang out in and the transport to get them there.
- In the areas of sport, culture and recreation there is ample provision for all. A proportion of young people are involved in none of this. One needs to consider this carefully before allowing anyone to claim 'there's nothing to do' or 'not enough provided for young people'.
- Meeting places for youth often get sabotaged by unruly elements, for this reason, many have closed and adults are unwilling to re-establish them. Maybe the Government or the Police need to re-think how they can set up youth venues in a different way so they can work. There are sports clubs and church groups, but many youth fall into a category in between. More generic activities should equate to less boredom and destruction.

Safety/abuse

- Please repeal s59 Crimes Act.
- Abuse from police or adults is obviously not ok. Yet many young people are out making disturbances in their community. Finding a way to positively deal with this serious issue needs to be taken into account. Safety of our young people is paramount, yet we are becoming a country of extremely distressed youth.
- NZ society has a primitive and backward approach to safety in our country. The fact that so many young children go to school or are at school in bare feet is a good example. This is an unsafe practice that is left up to schools to decide about. A similar problem exists with transport. We have no school bus system here of safe buses solely for transporting children. We also have laws that prohibit young people's parents from monitoring their traffic offences even when a teenager may be using a family car. The law gives our young people too much freedom but not enough supports for dealing with that freedom. We have a great outdoor country, but schools need to emphasize outdoor education more at school but without mishap on dangerous school trips. More camps for outdoor education would be an asset to our country.
- Repeal section 59 Crimes Act.

Young people's choices and opinions

- Unfortunately I don't think it is the children who need to be heard who are given the opportunities to speak out. Children from higher socio-economic groups/middle class are generally given more opportunities both in school and

in the community to be asked for their views, taken seriously and heard.

- The local communities need to be supported and encouraged to listen to our tamariki. This does not happen in our community. Maybe our local community does not have the wherewithal to know where to start this, i.e. "old-school-tie" syndrome, adults not knowing how to break the habit of a life time, i.e. children are to be seen and not heard. This adage is still alive and well within our community, to the extent of lack of knowledge and understanding of the importance of education in the early years. It is quite shameful how "old" male adults still maintain their control without consideration of the community in an holistic way, i.e. without input from our most important taonga - our tamariki.
- As a society we need to understand that if we show respect and inclusion to young people we all benefit. We get to hear and understand what is important to the young people and we get much more co-operation from them and they begin to understand us too.
- It is difficult to generalize about young people,(as it is for any other group), because they come in many types...therefore voice if given needs to be representative, in order to be useful.

Having people who listen and help

- Ease of access to helping services and knowledge of these services are vitally important. We are very poor at providing them services/providing them appropriately.
- Improved and open communication between parents, caregivers and young people. Young people need to feel comfortable with approaching and speaking to adults concerning issues like sex. Organising local competitions, eligibility would be restricted to young people, about how they would get the message out about specific issues i.e. smoking or stop bullying in schools etc.

Discrimination

- NZ is creating racism against Pakeha people by giving every other race special grants/scholarships/allowances except every day white people when it comes to education. This creates resentment - is it any wonder we live in a racist society when we are not treated as equals.
- Racism is rampant amongst young people in NZ no matter how much their families try to promote racial harmony.

Children's rights

- Although children need rights, they must also accept guidance and responsibility, often difficult to accept or give in an appropriate way.
- Children's rights must go hand in hand with parental rights and must not override them. A child's rights to "hang out" with friends is not more important than a wise parent's right to be concerned with safety issues. Many teens get into trouble because of peer pressure. Their friends may not have the wisdom to make good choices. And so parents have the responsibility to guide their children and the right to set limits for the children's good. Thus children's "rights" are not absolute.
- Children need to learn about responsibilities as well as rights. They need to be nurtured and kept safe but they need to learn that they contribute to the well-being of society also.
- Children's rights should be assumed to be part of human rights, and there's no need for separation of the two.
- More legal rights for young people - lower drinking age, lower age of consent, earlier age for leaving home.

Other

- Government support tends to be in the form of laws and rules - rather than resourcing highly competent and effective personnel to support the work.
- With regard to family planning, it has done more harm than good to young people.
- "Communities" are so different, some have good facilities others none, so difficult to answer these questions. Children/young people may have access to resources and facilities if they are in the 'privileged' strata/right place at right time OR through positive discrimination or been labelled "at risk". The majority of ordinary kids in the middle often miss out. Scarce human resources i.e. availability of family members and "volunteers" have all but dried up in support services, clubs, sports teams, the arts and cultural activities etc. for the young. Sense of community is difficult today, more isolation, fear and barriers. Commercial outfits/user pays have taken over and the 'providers' may not be of the community or even live there, just "contracted" to provide a small part of what should be a holistic "service".
- Access to services is particularly problematic in rural areas - cost, availability, transport, etc
- Child Advocacy agencies that have proven themselves to be providing an excellent professional service, should be totally government funded so they can provide more of this excellent service so vital to our children.
- This is one area where NZ and society fails our young people. We still have, to a large extent (except youth forums/youth parliament etc - but are these just token gestures?), kids/young people should be seen and not heard - and if a large group of young people are together some form of 'trouble' will happen. Youth Centres and the like

are very important for young people to socialise, in a SAFE ENVIRONMENT, with their peers, yet New Zealand does not have many of these. If we want young people to feel part of the community then we should provide such things and also ACTIVELY LISTEN (not just hear) what they have to say and act on their concerns. Access to information has grown vastly in recent times, with the 'net' and organisations providing literature, but I believe we could do better yet - this will involve the breaking down of societal/cultural attitudes to various dilemmas young people face.

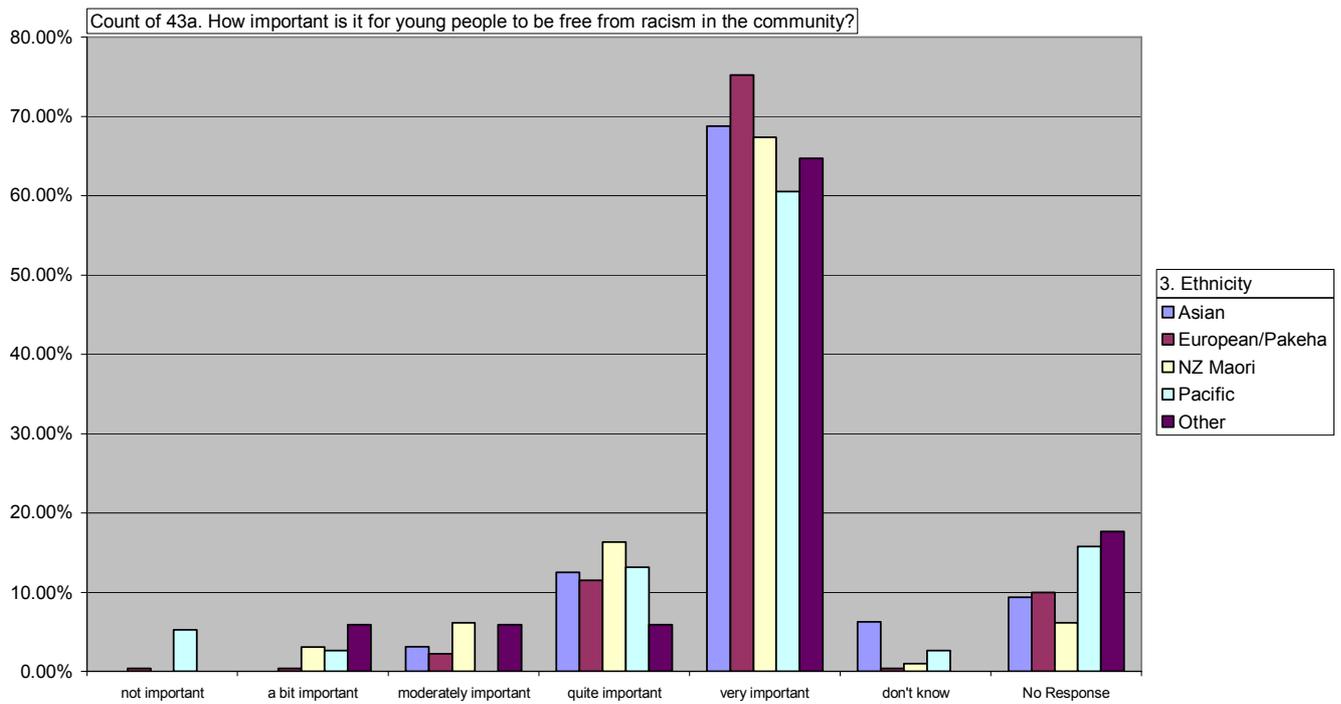
- Security is a vital issue for children. Without this it is difficult to address issues as they grow up.
- Many people do not know about children's issues and the impact of them on the community.
- Learn and practice respect for others.
- Children are our future and our responsibility. Values are important in fostering positive attitudes (eliminating racism, sexism, homophobia etc). Children have a right to participate fully in the community.
- More training for officials in the community on cultural and other differences and ways of recognising worth in young people and showing that they are valued.
- I think young people are one sector of society that is actually getting a lot of attention and resources - which is excellent, but a society must consider all groups equally important.
- It's important to encourage active participation rather than passive entertainment. We need to change our culture re entertainment back to promoting entertaining oneself rather than being entertained. Transport: yes very important - for medical, activities, to friends homes... but ??!! easy transport to anywhere in the city - for a child? not sure I would support this? Similarly, Place to hang out with friends = very important, but needs to be safe. In my neighbourhood, the kids hang out behind the shops - smoking tobacco, marijuana, drinking, hatching plots to break into the shops at night. This is not the kind of place I would want more of.
- Stop drinking and smoking.
- Let them stay away from drugs, drinking beer and smoke by telling what is right and wrong or what is good or bad for them.
- Allow young people to act their age. I think that some of us adults tend to forget what we were like at their age. We can't force them to live as we did. Times change.
- I too was once a person young enough to say 'the police stopped me for no reason at all'. Being there in the shopping centre with mates who boasted their shoplifting skills, was probably every reason why the police should have spoken to me. The addition of the phrase, 'no reason at all', is prejudicial to the whole question.

The structured survey questions gave some additional perspective on racism and the extent to which young people feel part of their community.

Question 43 asked 'how important is it for young people to be free from racism in the community?'

Most thought this was very important or quite important.

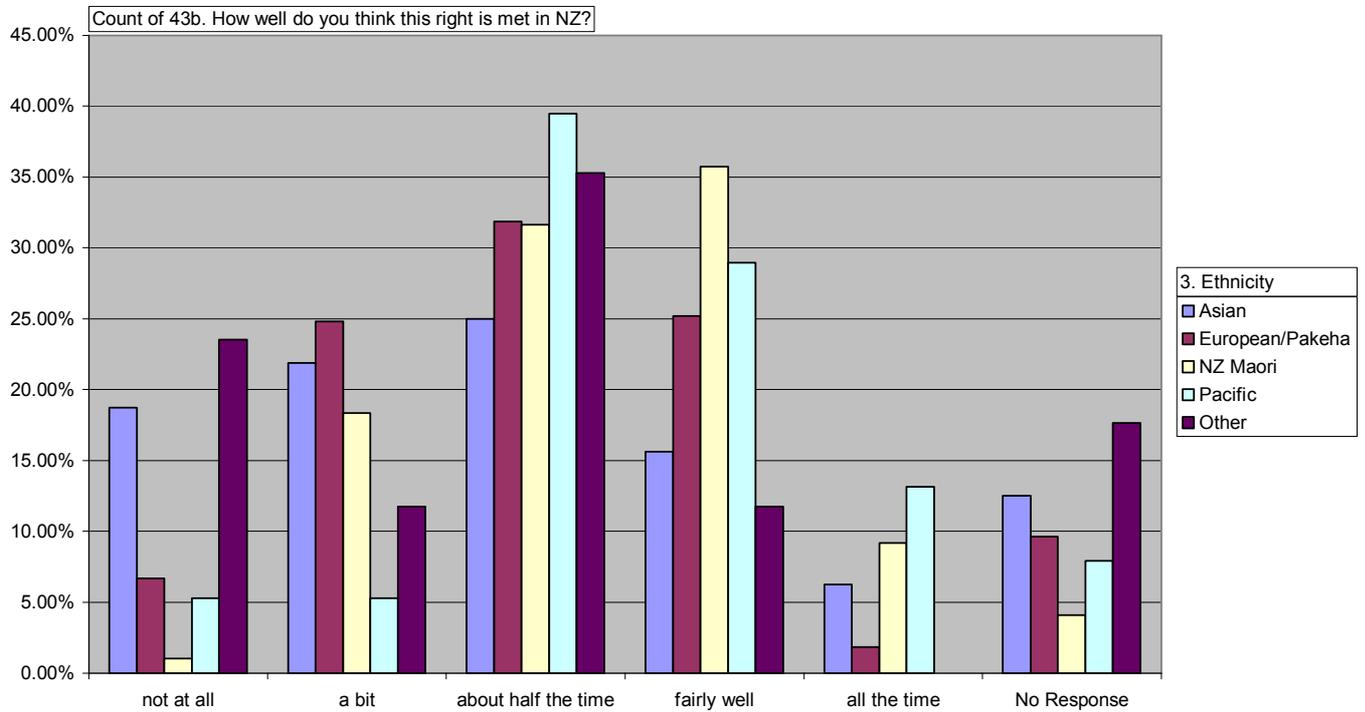
1. Age (All) 2. Gender (All)



43a. How important is it for young people to be free from racism in the community?

However, 19% of Asian respondents and 24% of 'Other' respondents felt this right was not met at all, and 60% of all respondents thought that young people were free from discrimination only about half the time or less.

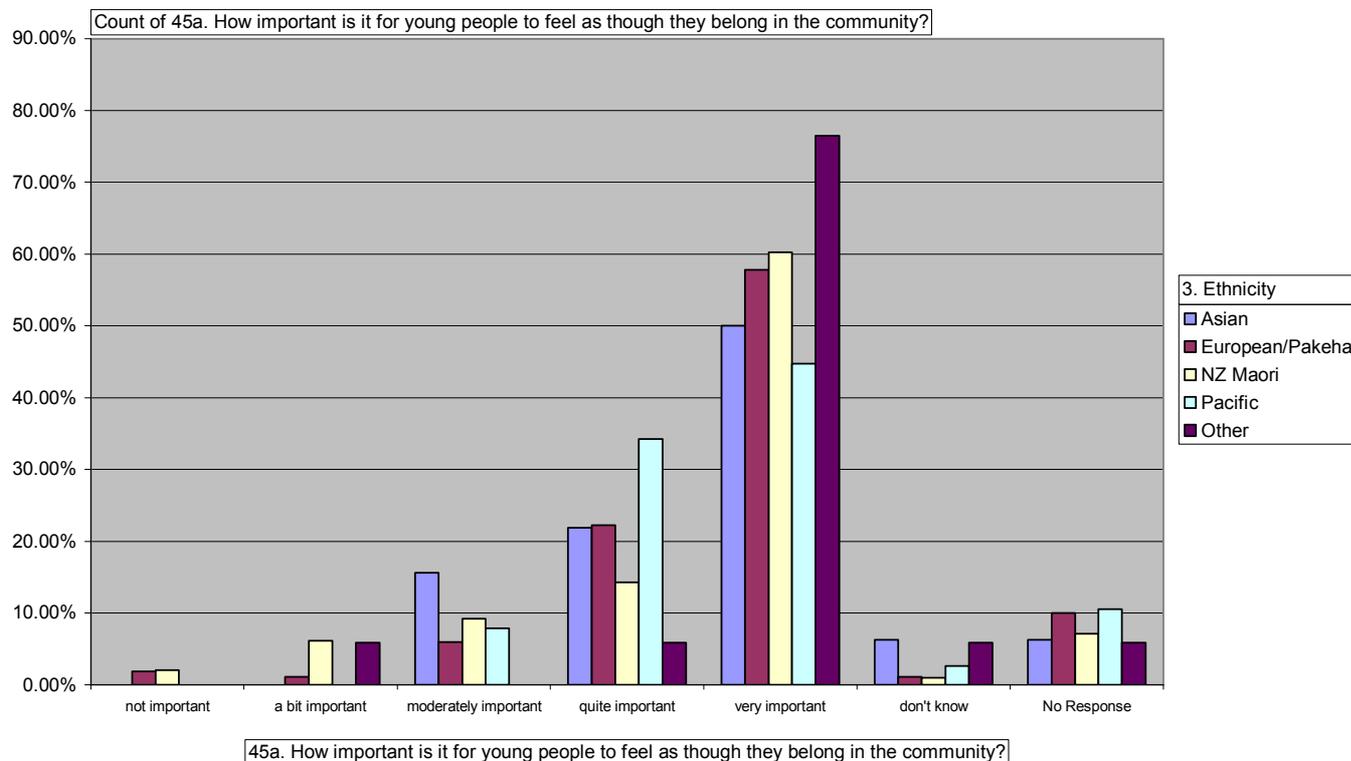
1. Age (All) 2. Gender (All)



43b. How well do you think this right is met in NZ?

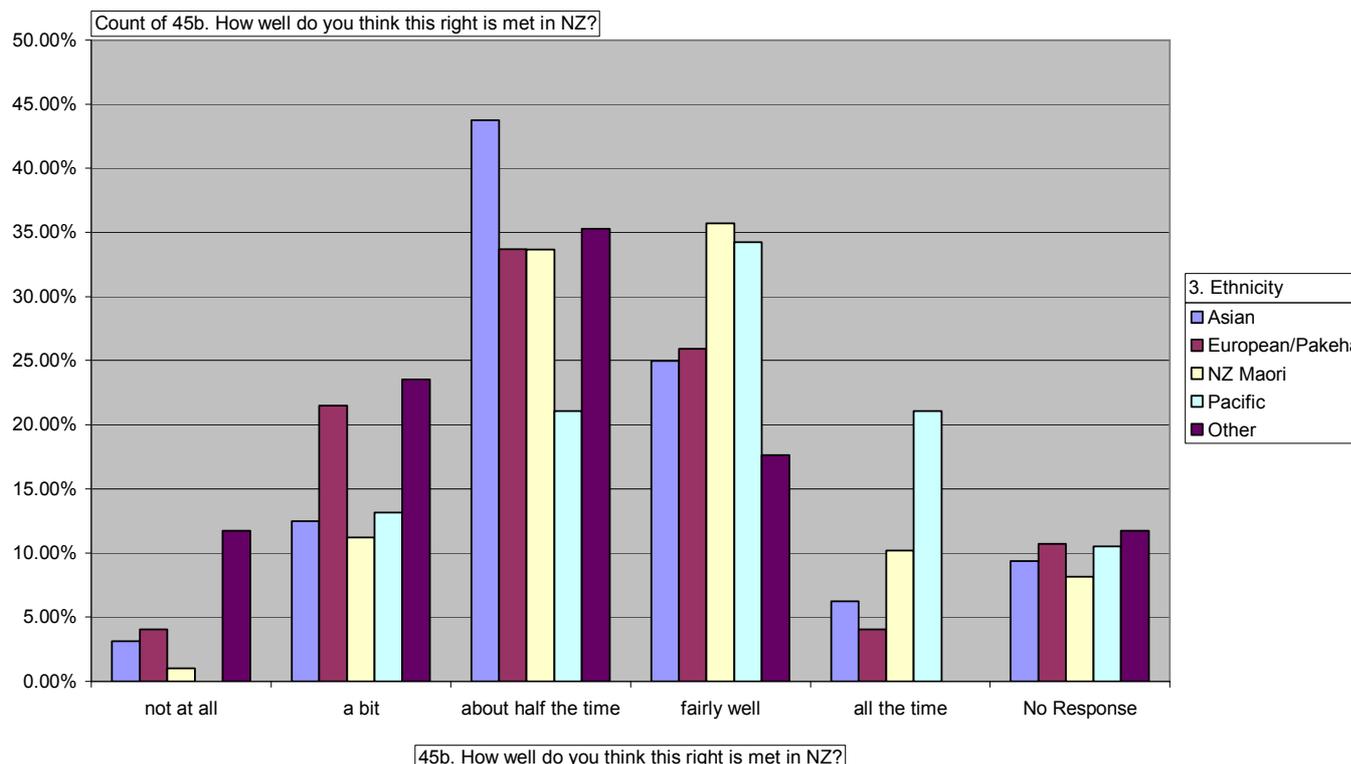
Question 45 asked 'how important is it for young people to feel as though they belong in the community?'. Once again, most people thought this was quite important or very important.

1. Age (All) 2. Gender (All)



However a significant number (55%) of respondents thought that young people would feel as though they belong in the community only about half the time or less.

1. Age (All) 2. Gender (All)



7.4 At Work

'58. Please type in any other comments about what you think needs to be improved for young people at work and how this might be done.'

11-12 year olds

This group thought there should be better pay and more suitable jobs for them. They also felt there should be information and training and that there should be no discrimination at work or when trying to get a job.

Money, work type and availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More young peoples work and money.• Get more jobs for kids suitable for them and a good pay• Young people don't have many opportunities to do work - especially our age 11-13.• More work for younger children.• We need better pay• I think that children/young people should get more pay for paper runs etc, because you get small pay for quite long hours.• They should give younger people a chance at bigger and better jobs.
Training and information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think that there should be like a period that students can go along to for free and you learn all about your future education.• Make a training course for jobs for young people.
Discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think that one big main thing that needs to be dealt with is discrimination. It is a very big thing over here in N.Z. I think someone should do something about it.• Young people should be protected from discrimination at work and anywhere else.• They should be able to get a job no matter what they look like.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They should be protected from violence.• They should have a friendly work place with nice people that are willing to help others when others are at need.• Have a friendly person to work with.• Have a time stop for over working.

13-17 year olds

Key themes for this group were the need to raise the minimum wage, access a wider variety of jobs and training and for work to be safe and discrimination free.

Money, work type and availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaking from experience I think that work for teens who want it and are accepted to take it, the responsibility is a good thing. The pay needs to go up though, I don't get enough pay for \$6 an hour it's hard labour and its not fair, we are expected to make a living just like the rest, as many families who work their teens are supposed to pay for their own food and gear and I think that the hours are hard enough for the pay!!! PUT THE PAY UP TO ATLEAST \$10 an hour!!!• Teenagers are given all of the shit jobs to do.• Raise minimum wage. The minimum wage should be put up. Need to be paid more Young people don't get paid enough at any kind of work. No tax for students. Children need to be paid for the work done, no how old they are.• There need to be more jobs out in the community for young people that are suitable.• Youth are treated as adult and did the exact same amount of loads they did, but we still get paid less than adults. That's not fair!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I reckon there should be more opportunities for younger children to have access to fair paid jobs. e.g. minimum wages for children's jobs. • Kids need to be able to get more different jobs, not just a junk mail or newspaper run. Kids can't get a job in a shop or anything like that because shopkeepers think we can't do basic maths or they think they can't trust us. We want to earn more than \$40 a month for an hour's work every weekday but nobody will even give us a chance. • I think there need to be more opportunities for young people to work (after-school, in the weekends) at a younger age. As a 14 yr old I am finding it hard to get a job other than babysitting or mowing lawns etc. • To be safe at work and get good pay. • Get enough money in jobs to live by them selves.
Training and information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training opportunities should be increased. There are still some of the young people who are willing to work but they do not get a job because they don't have experience. I myself have been refused saying that we need experienced people. Most young people can't get jobs because they are too young and have no experience. We need to have jobs that young people could have and get good pay. • It's better if there is a community that can help or provide young people to find jobs.
Discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Away from discrimination.

18-25 year olds

The only comments from this age group were:

The only thing that changes things for young people in the workforce that would actually make a substantial difference would be peoples' attitudes towards them - young people should be taken on their merits not their age.

Too many young New Zealanders don't get the start in life they need in order to even make it through the education system and to come out the other end with enough qualifications and enough hope and determination to be able to get a decent job or to actually feel like working is something worth their while.

26+ year olds

Key themes were higher pay (or less tax) for young people, better training opportunities and concerns regarding whether young people have sufficient employment rights, and if so, whether they know about them.

Money, work type and availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairer wages for young people – raise minimum wage. • A decent wage for young workers. A person at 16 doing the same work as his 30 yr old co-worker should be paid roughly the same. Give young people some incentive to work. • Too often young people are not treated fairly in their work places. They are taken advantage of, underpaid and treated differently than adults. They should be treated fairly and like others in the work force. • It is very hard for young people to get jobs of any kind. They are competing with older people who may be perceived as more reliable. Work places could be encouraged to employ young people with tax incentives. • Youth in particular should not be taxed for part time work so that they can contribute more to the family income by being more independent and so they have more incentive to work part-time.
Training and information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilities are there - they just need to be made more aware of the opportunities through school. • Firstly, our children need to be protected from bogus training providers. The present situation in Aotearoa/NZ is deplorable. Children and adults are being left high and dry with so called qualifications they have paid for which mean not a jot once completed!! The proliferation of private training providers is a joke. Some qualifications are a joke, children should not have to be subjected to this situation - tertiary education and the gaining of a real qualification should not be a case of establishing which one is OK and which one is not. This needs sorting!! By all

means make education available to all, but do not try and pull the wool over and allow these bogus providers to spring up then enabling the govt. to say, yes, we have this many thousand students in-training, when in reality this is untrue. Once again children are subjected to greed with the trouble being, our society is saying that this is OK. Our children need to be respected and listened too. This does not happen.

- 'Training' schemes do not appear to lead to employment. Proliferation of such schemes with dubious "trainers"- i.e. keeping themselves in work, rather than meeting the needs of the young people. Unrealistic expectations on students to be able to obtain jobs in vacations etc. Unrealistic expectations on families to continue to support young people when they are at the developmental stage of needing to become independent. - and so on.
- There are too many courses offered that go nowhere and the people running them are not accountable.
- Most training courses out there are not suitable for young persons. Young people need to speak up to someone (some government agencies on rights of young workers) if they are being overworked.

Young people's choices and opinions

- More opportunities for young people to have a voice in the workplace.

Harassment

- Sometimes young people may be bullied or harassed at work or they may be unfairly dismissed. Many do not belong to unions and do not know where to go to seek advice and assistance.

Children's rights

- I do not really know how well these rights are met in NZ but I think all of these areas are so important so that young people grow well.
- Major concern here. Young people are used and abused by our employment laws. Training for employers as well as employees about healthy workplaces is essential. Rights and responsibilities belong to both sides.
- Young people must earn the right to be listened to by their attitude, diligence, good work habits etc.
- Current legislation still leaves room for children and YP to be exploited.
- Expectation of a job during secondary school should not be encouraged, especially if the wages are not saved for tertiary training.
- Children have rights at work, to be valued for what they do, and not to have to work, since youth is a time for enjoying life and being involved in education - with less heavy responsibilities for earning income. However, being able to work and having appropriate jobs available is not happening as it should - youth unemployment is too high, many young people get depressed and feel worthless.
- Responsibility, maturity, experience. You can't leap these essential aspects. Giving young people rights without experience alienates them and leads to difficulties.
- Young people often don't know their rights, are scared to speak up in case they lose their job etc.
- That the minimum pay is raised - there is no real incentive to work if your pay is that low and who is looking out for their rights, do they have a collective agreement binding the employer or it is up to each employer's discretion to treat and pay young children, needs to be legalised and uniformed.
- We need a law to prevent parents from benefiting from child labour. There is no current law about this. I know a mum who depends on her 12 yr old's paper run money. Found I could do nothing about it re the law.

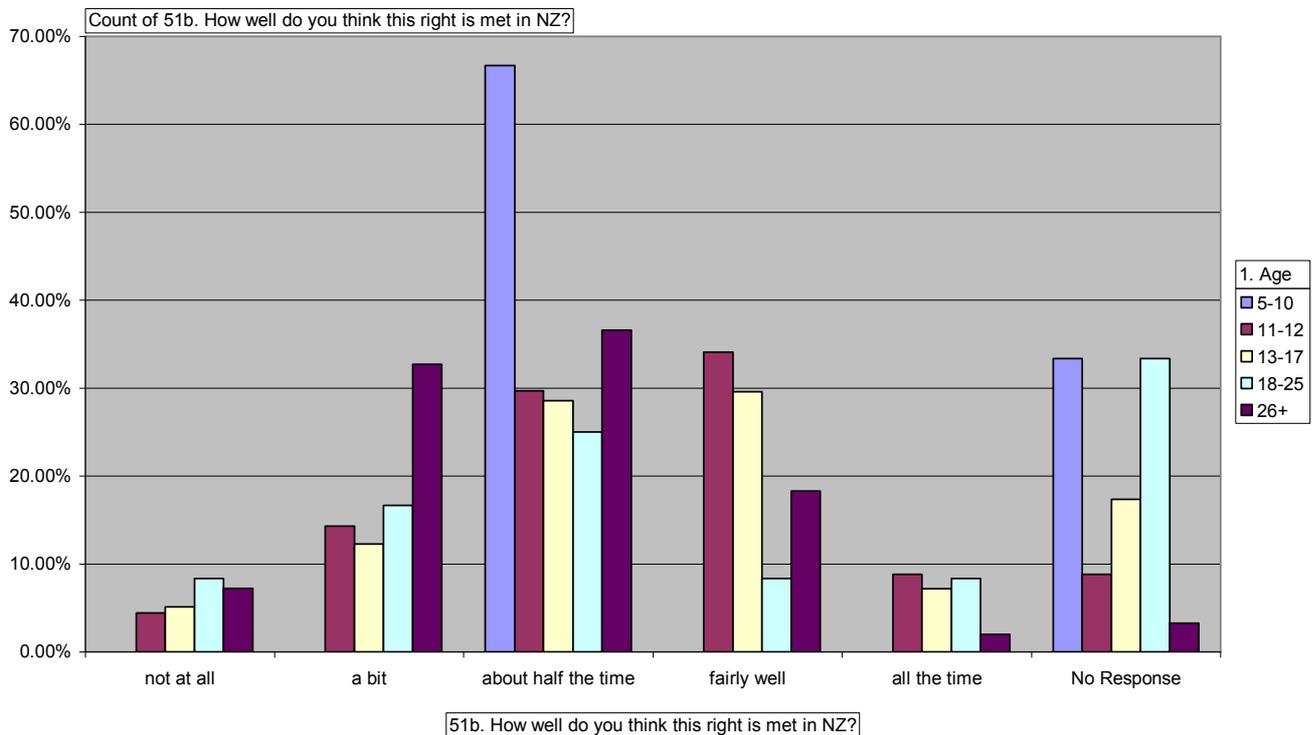
Other

- Very imp't for kids not to get hooked up in consumerism and the need for more and more money at the expense of their youth, sport, recreation and education.
- A longer summer period with the development of a summer work culture for students would help the economy and give valuable work experience to young people.
- The attitude of young people is often: "I don't feel like..." If they learned a new attitude everyone would be better off (i.e. being happy to start at the bottom, being happy to work, no matter what, so they start earning instead of 'Winzing').
- Employment is an ultimate goal for children as they grow and for the nation as a whole. More knowledge and understanding of this needs to be part of the community and families.
- Large employers and family run businesses (especially NEW IMMIGRANT GROUPS!!!!) i.e.: supermarkets, Mac Donalds etc need to be monitored externally. Have some kind of accountability structures put into place. It's not enough to trust business people's integrity in children's rights in the workplace !
- When an employee is involved in discipline proceedings need to have an independent advocate to help sort through issues.
- I don't think school age kids should have to work at all. Unless in yr 12 13 they need work experience to get into a job or training.
- Child employment is the legal means to harass a child into doing more than what they were employed to do.

- To be friendly with your workmates and understand about others cultures.
- Two comments here: Firstly - young people should be paid real wages for the work they do, in most areas (e.g. supermarkets). As these roles are also adopted by adults on far higher wages. And secondly, I believe education is very important to children - I believe some of them are overworking to provide themselves with the necessities (in some cases their own tuition, clothing etc.) or luxuries (i.e. nice cars, designer outfits) - we must ensure young people's work does not detract from their education.
- Young people remain victims of exploitation in some workplaces - partly because they often lack the confidence, support and information required to make the decisions and take the actions that prevent this.

A key finding from the structured survey questions was that many thought that young people should be paid more for their work. 81% said that young people having a fair wage was quite or very important, yet only 32% thought this occurred fairly well or all the time.

3. Ethnicity (All) 2. Gender (All)



7.5 Health, Legal and Social Services

'63. Please type in any other comments about what you think needs to be improved for young people when they use health, legal or social services and how this might be done.'

11-12 year olds

These children thought there should be free health and dental care and it should be available to young people on their own. Some thought there should be more police around to make the community safer and that kids need more legal services.

Health services

- I think it is very important for children to have free dental care and free health service because parents with a lot of children might not be able to afford to take there children to the doctor all the time.
- I think it is important that children use public health systems and I think that there should be a reward for students that use it like a house point if the school has houses or a points for a certain health badge which every time they use a public health service at school they get a point for that badge and once you get 7 for regular checkups you

<p>get your badge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People should get to know that there is free health care. • Make health services seem more available to youths because many youths think they can't go into doctors etc, on their own. • Have better medicine and care for health.
Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more police patrolling round the place. • Safe places to go when they are scared or discriminated against during school or even out side of school.
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WE need to get a choice in what we do, like who we end up living with and where and if u don't like it you can leave.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their lunches. • Young people should be respected for who they are and they should have an equal amount of respect as much as adults. People shouldn't rip them off. • Kids need more legal services. They should also be protected from abuse. • Tell students not to do it at school. • I hate the government because of the aerial spraying of foray 48b in New Zealand! It has made me very sick I'm not at school for half the week and not just me but a lot of my friends, my mum, my sister and a lot of my family are sick. One of my friends has a throat infection, my teacher is pregnant and gets blocked ears, I get sore kidneys, my glands come up a lot, my eyes itch, my god mother has blood coming out of her ears, another friend has eczema her chest is red and all puffed up all because of the spray!!! It's not fair.

13-17 year olds

The young people in this group also thought there should be free doctors, dentists and medication for young people. They said they need to be properly informed and may require support when using any of these services. Some also said that they would like to know about their rights.

Free and accessible services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many doctors charge money for kids to see them. If they are poor that means they can't even see them. • Provide free body check for young people. • Free dental care etc is important as some families can't afford it. • Health care needs to be easily available and confidential. This is done though the school at our school, I don't know if all schools are like that though. • Dentists and doctors should be free for children at least until the ages of 12 but the best would be 16. • Free dentist until they are 20. • Children should know that there are places where they can go if they are being abused at home. • Health care and medications should be free to all children at school. • A better health system.
Adequate information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people need to be informed of exactly what's going on if they are using a health, legal or social service. They need to be told who is in charge of what, any consequences, and if it's medical, what's going to happen to them. • By government groups following the rules and providing all the information that is available, e.g. winz providing copies of the rules for funding etc. This is important as quite often winz workers make mistakes. • Provide more messages about them and treat everyone the same.
Having people who listen and help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child needs to feel that they can talk to anyone nearby if they need to talk to someone that they don't know. • Extra understanding
Children's rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth need to know their rights classes or something. • There needs to be more rights to protect children and some new methods of improving their behaviour because most of the kids act like that they own everything.

Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the U.K. books etc are funded from the government and I believe that poorer families over here cannot support these needs as well as a wealthier person may. • Alcohol free zones, considerate of others. • Young children in the legal justice system need to be treated more harshly as we want to prevent children becoming a statistic. • The parents should let us do what when we hit 15. • They should be let off for more things.

18-25 year olds

Comments from this group related to the need to ensure access to health services, more and better facilities for young people with mental illness or care and protection needs or justice issues, and the need for young people to have information about how to access health, legal or social services.

Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to health, young people should be able to access quality healthcare of their choice that is best suited to their needs. Youth health strategies should be implemented that ensure: access to services, involvement in policy planning and monitoring and effective intervention strategies for youth health issues. • In relation to social services, CYF need to review their practices because they are failing. Community Social Services need to receive adequate recognition for the work they do. • For those children and young people that are unfortunate enough to be born into abusive and dysfunctional families our government and our communities don't do enough. We should have more facilities and better facilities for young people with mental illness or care and protection needs or justice issues. Sending young people into Adult Inpatient wards because there is nowhere else to put them isn't good enough. Starship hospital is the only public facility for young people with acute mental health issues and even that facility leaves a lot to be desired. There should be regional facilities for young people with acute mental health or safety issues because of young people can't get the help they need at that stage many of them will end up in the adult mental health system, the justice system, on our streets and the benefit or killing themselves. New Zealand has a very high youth suicide risk and the fact is that even though we want to deinstitutionalise people of all ages, for some people at certain times, secure facilities are necessary. This also applies to youth justice facilities. Places like Kingslea and Weymouth residential facilities (run by CYFS) are by no means an ideal environment for the young people that are there. Apart from that there are waiting lists for young people to even get into these places! • Not sure what is meant by "free" as in education, health, dental services, etc. If it simply means that great service is provided at no cost to the young person, then of course, that's extremely important. However, if "free" means government provided, then I don't think that is important at all: what matters is that the service is provided, and that it is provided well: but it does not matter whether it is the government which provides it, or not.
Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people need to have greater access to legal information through the internet, magazines and television. The Youthlaw website should be better publicised. • Important for young people to know about how they can access free health/legal services and what their right/obligations are within these systems. • More information!! Cost cutting!!!

26+ year olds

Key themes were the need for free health and dental services for young people, more funding for the social service agencies in order to provide young people with better quality and continuity of care, more accessible information and support for young people dealing with these services (including availability of child advocates to support them in their interaction with these services), and greater co-ordination between the various agencies.

Health services

- Many are not accessing medical help because they do not know what is available (free).
- All health services should be free to all children, this should never change at the whim of govt. This is an appalling reflection of our present society - we subject our children to market change, how bad is that? Our children need protecting, this is not happening at present in Aotearoa/NZ.
- The problem with free care for dentistry is that they often don't turn up to appointments - they feel no responsibility because it is free.
- Adolescence need specific services to meet their needs. We already have them for children but very little specifically for youth in the health area.
- Proper medical care is a big concern. Immunisations done at schools/early childhood centres are a good idea. Perhaps greater input by public health nurses at school would help.
- Limited services and access difficult. (Particularly mental health) Re-instate public health nurses.
- Am stunned to learn we do not have a rights based health service in NZ.
- Free GP visits up to age 18.
- At W.O.A High we have a medical clinic with a nurse and doctor. Since opening young people have more access to medical care. Assumptions are that youth are only interested in family planning medical services. Once at secondary school parents tend to let youth fend for themselves (big enough and old enough etc).
- Access to dental services is difficult for Maori children and their whanau because of high costs. However, health education and promotion strategies need to be implemented as early as preschool age i.e. importance of brushing your teeth on a daily basis.
- More resources for youth health.
- Adolescents need specific services to meet their needs. We already have them for children but very little specifically for youth in the health area.

Legal and social services

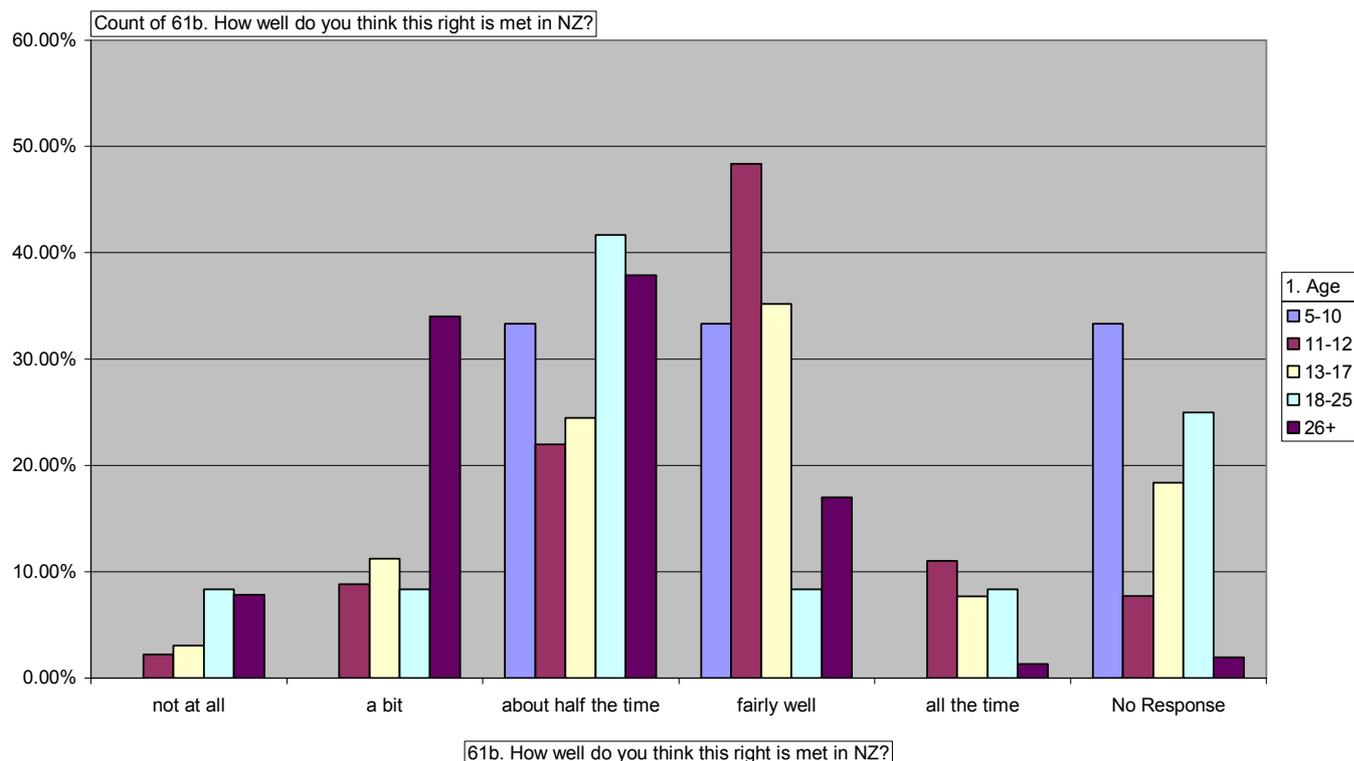
- Children's lawyers (counsel for child) need more training to be able to represent children better. They should also be appointed earlier in any proceedings.
- More education and easier access - support for youth advocacy services etc.
- Quality and continuity of care for children in CYF placements needs to be overhauled. Caregivers need to be valued, trained and supported. This is urgent.
- They need reliable social services such as CYFS who respond to notifications quickly and effectively.
- Societal adjustments need to be made in regards to physical abuse - but also we must provide state agencies REALISTIC funding in order to reduce social workers/teachers case loads so they better perform their roles as protectors (and investigators/referrer's) - maybe if social workers had less of a caseload, and time to commit to kids then we wouldn't have cases like James Whakaruruhau and Coral Burrows.
- Relationship counselling via a voucher system so that many agencies or individual counsellors could do the work.
- Should have access to advocates who can support them when dealing with these services and they cannot or do not wish to take family members with them.
- Social services I think their rights are not well respected (i.e. CYPS) due to under funding.
- I am really concerned about children in the care system - they need heaps more advocacy and much better service provision.
- We need more young people's advocates.
- Young people need protection and quick action and cases to be followed up immediately.
- I think agencies do their best but need to be better funded. A lot of publicity goes to the few high profile and shocking cases where things go wrong, but often young people are well cared for.
- More preventative and low-intrusion interventions.
- All resources are so stretched. There needs to be greater coordination between various agencies.
- Free legal advice for youth.

Information and support

- Children need to know what's going on, and so do their parents. Parents, who are responsible for their children, should not be left out of the information loop.
- Learn to talk to young people. Young people are not adults they need different ways of having things explained to them.
- Make sure they have an advocate with them so they are clear on what is happening for them. Are made aware of what they have right to access.
- Young people need to know processes for accessing FREE, CONFIDENTIAL advice and assistance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people need to understand the consequences of using particularly a health service and what it means, do they have an advocate/someone to 'translate' medical information for them, do they understand what is meant by the prescribed treatment and its side effects, sequelae. • It should be free and confidential and accessible. • Confidentiality, access to services, choice, affordability. • Personal knowledge and support. • Accessibility and confidentiality are major issues need more access to health, rights and legal especially in homes, preschools, schools and youth friendly areas in the community. • Things must be explained in a way and with sufficient time so they can be sure to understand. • In the cases of people with low literacy, I believe they need PAID advocates to assist them. They need this info written down in a "digestible format" for later reference. They need to have access to their files...and treated with respect.... not just as another number on another form. • Throwing these services at young people and telling them to get on with it doesn't work. Perhaps, in the absence of parents and caregivers who should normally shepherd the young person through these procedures, there could be extramural help or guides. • That someone will help them. They will be heard. • All young children are entitled to love, support and someone to listen to them, even if they are in the care of others apart from their family. This is very important even to those in foster care and group homes. • Kids need to have people around them who care, and to whom they know they matter.....sometimes young people are passed around and the message they get about themselves out of this is really not okay.
<p>Children's rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people's rights need to be respected. • I do not know currently how well some of these needs are met. They are all important if we are to grow our young people well. To do this requires education of society so that we do not have adults saying that young people know their rights but not their responsibilities. Some of the young person's needs can not be met when parents do not carry through with their responsibilities, such as the parent who asks a 7 year old child if he wants a filling when quite clearly to the health professional that there is a cavity that must be filled to prevent further damage to the tooth but the child is allowed to make a choice when s/he cannot and does not understand the consequences. • Need to consider the rights of the child in decision-making - the care of children bill covers this.
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to birth information for adopted people not to have an age limit. • Young people need free access to legal documents relating to their citizenship/identity/whanau/ e.g. parents marriage certificate - the need for parental consent stops them accessing this information if the parents have left/contact been lost and consent is unobtainable -they have the right to this information -this will be a major issue in the future as families fragment and contacts are lost. • Children's Rights to Protection & Safety are violated in New Zealand through: 1. Section 59 of the Crimes Act 2. No mandatory reporting of children abuse & neglect 3. Too few child advocacy programmes 4. Over-medication of students in schools 5. Few if any mental health resources 6. No Death Review for children's deaths 7. A Commissioner for Children's Office that has not legislative authority. • These services need to be more closely linked with education and access to services emphasized more. • Providing services to Youth is often about bandaiding - the child's well being begins preconception - need a broad approach not a few more patching up type services. • Encourage active participation at process level to ensure young people can shape goals, strategies & outcomes in health, legal and social services. • An awareness of what to be aware of can be the greatest gift for any child. • They need to feel "safe" in the respect that they know the services are separate from other areas that they may perceive as "authority".

Results for the structured survey question No. 61 indicated abuse was thought to be an issue for children in care or the youth justice system. The question asked 'how important is it for young people to be protected from abuse if they are in care or in the youth justice system?'. 83% of respondents thought this was quite or very important but 52% said they were only protected about half the time, or less (please see graph below).



Also of note was that most people (84%) thought it was important that young people know what's going on when they use health, legal or social services but 51% thought this occurred only about half the time, or less.

7.6 Other

'64. Please type in any other comments about what you think needs to be improved for young people in NZ and how this might be done (e.g. what do you believe are the top 3 issues)?'

11-12 year olds

Key themes were preventing abuse, racism and having a healthy environment (including providing counselling and dealing with drugs, alcohol and smoking).

Basic needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every young person must have a home/shelter and loving parents with food. • Homes for kids, food and more money.
Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse, lots of children are being abused and no ones doing anything about it. • To be guarded from abuse. • Abuse. • Abuse. • Abuse, neglect. • Abuse. • Child abuse. • Abuse. • Preventing abuse. • Abuse.

Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a say, getting to vote. • The sense of rulership of adults over children.
Having people who listen and help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to counselling and health services in the community and at school. • Children need counselling.
Discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism. • Racism. • Discrimination. • Racism. • Racism.
Jobs etc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs. • Jobs. • Getting better pay.
Drugs etc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol and Drugs. • Drugs. • Drugs - children are taking drugs and smoking at their schools.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn what your rights are. • Have more recreational activities for children at schools. • Better facilities at school. • Healthy environment. • Healthy environments. • Health, education. • Kids only get one chance to be a kid, just give us a fair go. • Nothing needs to be improved. • Diseases they get and all the weaknesses to stop it • Not to be poisoned(e.g. not to be near spray like foray 48b in any ones life time) • I think the labour government sucks!, because they are ruining our country. I also think the Outdoor Recreation Party should have at least one member in parliament.

13-17 year olds

These young people similarly thought that preventing abuse and discrimination was very important, along with having places to hang out and things to do. They also said bullying should be stopped, young people should have more pay, and that they should have better health and education.

Basic needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help available to anyone who is wanting of basic human needs (shelter, food etc). • Safe clean and healthy environment at home including space and time to do school studies like homework. • Children leaving home when situation is not worth living for.
Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse. • Child abuse. • Safety at home and school, there is too much domestic abuse affecting children! • Abuse. • One issue for young people is that there is a lot of child abuse in homes from parents etc. • Abuse. • Safety from abuse and neglect.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse. This happens in a lot of homes where I live. It is both physical and mental abuse. • Abuse. • Abuse. • Abuse at a young age.
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to have their views heard and acknowledged.
Places to hang out and things to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No places for teens to hang out • The top issue is hang out places - there are not enough places for teenagers to hang out so they hang out on streets on stead and turn to alcohol and drugs. New Zealand should think about that, most things that happen, happen on the streets and in each case they has been some alcohol or drugs involved. • Places to go and do fun things. Things to do is the main issue. • Freedom to have play when you're little at school and free activities to do on the weekend cos you are only a kid once. • There should more skate parks around. • Another issue would be sports and recreation. More and more young people are becoming lazy, and would prefer to stay a home and watch TV or play on their PlayStation. Communities need to start making an effort to encourage the young people to get into sports or some sort of physical activities.
Discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism and discrimination. • Racism should be stopped. • Racism. • Racism. • Racism. • Less, much lesser discrimination between different races within the country. • Discrimination.
Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying and discrimination at school needs to be addressed, people should be able to be happy at school no matter what their race, sexual orientation or physical appearance. • Bullying. • Bullying - bullies must be punished harder or even removed from school. • Bullying.
Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people should get paid the same amount as adults! • Suitable employment for teenagers. • Fair work opportunities but I'm not sure how these can be improved. • Big companies taking advantage of the youth minimum pay. • Well they should be able to get a job at an earlier age.
Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health - need more doctors, family support. • Less advertisements on junk food, encourage fitness and sports. • Healthiness/hygiene. • A healthy environment to grow up. • Heath, Education, Safety in community--at work or play.
Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They could, for a start, have better education. • Education - children need better teachers who can help them in their studies better. • Provide night school to young people who leave school early. • School issues: children skipping school, school fees, understanding of adult matters, discrimination free classroom involvement (not only racist but also "poor" and "rich" etc arguments).
Children's rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of rights. • Children knowing their rights and having access to help if they are at all worried.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should have more rights when 16 (e.g. parents shouldn't be so controlling). • We should have a right to do almost anything.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer pressure. • Alcohol and drug exposure. • Alcohol age should be raised. • Drugs - drugs, smoking, alcohol and anything like that needs to be cracked down on hard. • Should be allowed to buy smokes when they are 16. • Graffiti is art and a way of expressing themselves, should encourage them by having competitions etc. • More information on what is going on around them and what they can do to help. • Privacy. • The qualification system in schools is shocking, NCEA is definitely not the best it could be, sometimes it feels like we aren't being listened to on this, especially high achievers as many are being lumped into the same category and their potential isn't given the chance to show through. If these things, especially the first two were improved upon it would be much easier to grow up in NZ. • I believe that NZ European people should be known as the name we give ourselves not 'Pakeha' which is a name another culture has given us. Do we not have the right to choose our own name? I believe that Maori should not be an essential part of the curriculum when we are at school. We spend so much time learning Maori in school and how is that going to benefit the majority of us? We don't even learn how to speak the whole language, just phrases like 'kia ora' and 'morena'. And then when the teacher asks us our opinion on whether we enjoy learning Maori and we say we disagree with it, we get a bad mark for having an opinion that is not PC!! So much for free speech and being allowed to have our own opinion on things. I think whatever person in government who decided to mark us on an opinion of something should look at the UN list of rights and reconsider what so many children strongly disagree with.

18-25 year olds

Key themes were the need to address poverty, abuse and neglect, and to provide a greater degree of support for young people.

Poverty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the inequities between ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand. The rich are really getting richer and the poor are really getting poorer. With that the poor children are also getting poorer and their chances of participating positively in our communities, workplaces and education system are by no means equal to their wealthier and better off counterparts.
Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse. • Addressing all types of abuse in the home and community (that includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect as well as physical punishment of children). • Protection from abuse (whether physical, emotional or psychological). • To change the general public attitudes re. abuse and neglect of children (e.g. lower the level of tolerance of abuse and violence, both in the home and wider community). • Child abuse.
Young people's choices and opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have their views GENUINELY taken into consideration - this requires more than just token attempts to acknowledge their views.
Having people who listen and help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities need to embrace and listen to youth. • Lack of emotional support - many young children start off on the wrong foot and never get their balance.
Children's rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating children about their rights and enforcing those rights e.g. most(?) know that bullying breaches their rights, but knowing about them isn't enough.
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of education (life education included).

- CYFS .
- No tax (PAYE) for students.
- Less "boxing", and more *personalised* approach, we are talking about *people*, after all: so, less one-size-fits-all-ness in a school curriculum, for example.
- A change in the social perception of children and young people in New Zealand. Children and young people are special, they are our future and without them our country will lose. Investments that ensure that our children and young people grow up free from abuse, discrimination and injustice and will all be able to achieve equally well whether that be in sports, education or life...should be seen as more important by all New Zealanders. As a country we throw endless amounts of money at sports (such as rugby), arts and other things that we see as important. As a result it is always the organisations that are there to protect and work for our children that struggle the most and have to make ends meet without the million dollar grants that rugby stadiums get! Sure investments in sports are important but so are investments in our future namely our children and young people. Organisations like Women's Refuge, CYFS and countless community organisations that are working around the clock to ensure that all our children and young people are safe and able to do what children and young people ought to be doing are always struggling and screaming out for more funding. As a country we should value our children and families more and do more things socially and financially that support that.

26+ year olds

Key themes related to addressing poverty and ensuring all young people have their basic needs met, preventing abuse (including bullying), enabling young people to have a voice and participate, providing greater support for young people such as more counselling services, improved health, education and legal and social services, promoting children's rights, providing parent education and support, and assisting families to provide a favourable environment for their children.

Basic needs

- Lessen poverty or effects of it.
- Food, clothing, shelter and security.
- Family poverty.
- Better systems of welfare so not so many young people grow up in poverty and poor conditions.
- Causes and consequences of poverty (e.g. kids who have no breakfast, no lunch to take to school and no shoes) must be urgently addressed.
- Overall standards of living.
- The levels of poverty must be addressed.
- Adequate food and shelter.
- Absence of poverty.

Abuse

- Prevent abuse of all types.
- I would like to see s59 of the Crimes Act 1961 repealed because I don't think parents should hit/smack their children.
- Repealing the Sect. of the Crimes Act that allows "reasonable force" - Respect for children as human beings being the top issue that needs a clear statement.
- Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Neglect
- Child abuse needs to be stamped out.
- Bullying.
- Need to repeal section 59 of the Crimes Act.
- Breaking the cycle of abuse, drug use, crime, violence, etc. is of utmost importance.
- Safety in their own home.
- Increasing the protection systems (reducing social worker's case loads so they perform their jobs not just 'do them') and changing societal attitudes to reduce/eliminate physical/emotional abuse of our children/young people.
- Protection from abuse and associated services.
- Repeal of s59 Crimes Act.
- Protection from abuse/neglect.
- Abuse: Children should be able to talk to someone they trust, not ringing these youthline places and talking to

strangers. Every child at school should have to list 3 or more safe people they can confide in.

- Bullying/abuse - need more campaigning and education in schools.
- Protection from harm - a community responsibility.
- Non violent homes.
- Most important that they be protected from all forms of abuse in the home, school, work environment and from government officials i.e. police.
- Family environment – abuse.

Young people's voice and participation

- Enable young people to have a voice.
- A children's voice.
- Education - young people deserve inclusion with respect and an expectation that young people will give respect back when they receive this. Health - to be involved in decisions about the them, and to be a participant in the decision-making process but not to be expected to make adult decisions about abstract concepts beyond their cognitive level.
- Given the right opportunity, conditions and locations under which they can express their opinions, children and young people will give their opinions and tell adults what they want and need. They need to know their opinions count. They need to know that they are truly listened to. They can know this by the positive responses and changes that occur as a direct result of having been listened to. They need to know that they are very important members of society and this can be achieved when they can trust adults.
- Improving rates and quality of participation in decision-making, enhancing participation in all areas of society.
- Valuing young people - listening to them and involving them in important discussions and decisions.
- Participatory issues - young people need to be more involved in developing and evaluating policy. The Youth Development Strategy should remain in place, but be more focused and better resourced.
- Greater acceptance in the community of young people's views and ideas.
- Processes that allow them the opportunity for real input into the future of their country (and the world). They will, after-all, be inheriting this from us. For this to be effective, they would also require the ability to reason and foresee the implications of decisions. This can not just be condescension i.e., we cannot listen and then forget.
- Government proactive in its support for student involvement and student rights (e.g. 'Keepin' it Real' resource, Youth Affairs & 'Involving Children', Ministry of social development used in schools and/or at local government level.)
- A focus on Youth initiated, shared decisions with adults and Youth initiated and directed participation (respect and valuing young peoples views and role in the process - e.g. Health Promoting Schools philosophy)
- Informing & consulting with young people at all levels in society (home, schools, local government and government).

Having people who listen and help

- Processes for accessing FREE, CONFIDENTIAL advice and assistance must be heavily advertised to young people, so they know about them before they need them.
- Budgeting advice, stress management and anger management would arm them with essential skills to deal with adulthood.
- Confidential counselling facilities very important.
- To be heard - listened to.
- Greater access to career guidance while in secondary education.
- Much better access to information and support is needed.
- Having access to professional help when required.

Discrimination

- Race Relations - schools, workplaces and community centres need to take a stand against racism. Further campaigns should be run by the Human Rights Commission and resourced by the Government. The HRC campaign against racial harassment in schools needs to be expanded and better publicised.

Education

- Free Education for ALL children from early childhood through to tertiary.
- Access to really FREE education, especially at preschool level and tertiary education. Many children being born now have parents who are saddled with student debt that means they will never have the opportunity to buy a house or provide an improving environment for this new generation, and the grandparents are having to work longer and cannot provide the grandparent nurturing either, so we are on a downward cycle with our "educated" population/possible future leaders too.
- The cost of education.
- Education costs.

- Access to quality early childhood centres must be obtained. The fragmentation of services for young children need to be reduced.
- Stop kicking children out of school.
- Neighbourhood schools need to be protected.
- Free study opportunities! Knowing this can't be realised, why doesn't the govt pay 25% of the first year of study, 50% of the next year, 75% of the third year and the final year is free. That will give students incentives to continue and finalise their studies. There should also come more practical study opportunities for students who are not "Brainy" - a technical school that replaces high school, for mechanically minded kids who love to work with their hands. There they will be trained to become mechanics, carpenters, plumbers etc for we will have a great shortage of crafts people in the future.
- Reducing the workloads of teachers (minimising class sizes) and changing the education system to allow freedom for other learning styles.
- More kura kaupapas that are easily accessed by Maori.
- Free education tailored to needs.
- Free Education. This is not happening, and many children are missing out on important schooling.
- Greater education options from primary through to secondary - different facilities, catering for different styles of learning and behaviour needs.
- The education system needs to reflect the diversity of family structure as does local government considering the purchase of books for public libraries e.g. books about gay parents.
- Better education systems - different styles of learning be acknowledged and school become more like a business where they are still funded by govt but offer different types of learning to attract their clients.
- More one on one involvement with teachers so children understand the work in front of them and what is expected. Children need to be told, they are not mind readers.
- Training for young people needs to continue. Programs for school drop-outs need to be implemented to build their motivation to find sustainable employment.
- Ratio reduction - teacher to pupil at primary school.
- Quality secondary school education.
- I'm very saddened to see that early childhood education still have high number of untrained teacher/workers which doesn't ensure that children attending early childhood education are receiving adequate care and education.
- BIGGEST issue is that public education suits some young people but not others. Much greater variety of teaching methods, environments, etc re education is needed. School must be a positive, enjoyable experience which lifts each individual. We are letting down our youth in droves. They truant, don't learn, don't participate, hate school and what it stands for.
- Training/education that aims to develop young people as well-rounded and confident human beings instead of units for the economic machine.
- Education system needs to be re-structured to cope with the ever changing cultural, environmental and social changes.
- An appeal tribunal for young people and parents to take complaints against schools and teachers.

Health

- Free Health for All children. All aspects of health care.
- Mental health (we still have too many suicide attempts and successes).
- Health and well being - primary health care nurses can play a major role but must be appropriately educated and supported Children need opportunities to see nurses in their homes, preschools, schools and communities. Many Community health nurses still do not know the implications of UNCROC in relation to their practice an issue that can only be addressed by appropriate education. The health of NZ children will not be improved by free doctors visits (people go to doctors when they already have symptoms)- although necessary this does not work on prevention -- a more holistic approach is needed.
- Health services, from maternal/pregnancy through childhood. Early discharges of mothers and newborn babies is a disaster for a myriad of reasons and the "early days" support/understanding/follow up has been lost - which often has extremely negative consequences for the infants - literally newborns can disappear in this country today.
- Relationship counselling to reduce suicide ideation/attempt.
- Adolescent mental health inpatient services in local areas.
- Accessing health care in rural areas.
- Health care services readily available - free health services for young people as there is dental. Many of our children cannot access good medical services, e.g. specialist services so are having to live with undiagnosed conditions that

are impacting on their well being.

- Free health care with equitable access to good outcomes.
- Health: Information to children on where they can go for health advice (contraceptives, stds). We are telling out children they can get this advice but they just don't know where. Children are not openly going to ask an adult or peer on this.
- Health - mental and physical wellbeing.
- Health.
- Much better access to free health is needed.

Legal and social services

- Care arrangements for when kids cannot live at home. The UCB should be paid out the same as for kids in CYF care. this then covers kincarers, and GRG, and foster parents who take on children via PPU. (that is a clothing grant should be paid out, and medical expenses).
- More accessible and compulsory CYF placements - quality and continuity of care.
- Laws protecting children from abuser/s while court cases are being put through. During the process of some of the long court trials, families and children continue to be under direct threat of further abuse! It is a fact that this happens, which is a sad reflection of our court procedures and shows a serious flaw in the effectiveness and design of our laws relating to young people. Our Justice system needs to be revamped!! Ask any high court lawyer acting for children!!!
- Children in CYPS care - placement issues.
- More respite care within Child, Youth and Family services for longer care.
- More funding for social workers so care and protection issues are dealt with in a safe manner.
- People need to be monitored all the time when fostering or caring for other children.
- Parental custody matters not to get in the way of the best interests of the child and their sense of time. Parents to be held more accountable rather than blaming govt e.g. care, education etc for poor outcomes when children are disadvantaged or abused, so parents try harder to be better parents.
- Better linking and knowledge sharing between various agencies and services.

Activities

- Involvement/commitment to belonging to a group/club - support & encouragement from parents & families. Too easy for parents to let their children just give up on things. Assistance with fees and educating people not to ridicule their peers/ peer pressure.
- Communities need to be given funding from the government to provide activities and venues for children in the 13 to 18 year age groups. The children themselves need to be consulted as to the types of things they would like so the activities are well supported and successful.
- There need to be more community activities for young people that are free and more chances for families to go to things with their children that are free.

Parent education/Family support

- Parenting education.
- Parent education - needs to be more of it.
- Education and ongoing support for ill equipped parents.
- Family cohesion and education.
- Family support systems and structures need to be improved.
- The top issues are love, safety and justice. Most young people from secure loving homes have little to fear from justice but those who are alone in this world are quickly marginalised and face discrimination at school, in the community, for work opportunities etc. The plight of young people who are not appropriately supported needs to be recognised early so that support systems can be put in place. When young people start 'playing up' the adult world needs to take a little more time to see what is behind their behaviour. Too many young people have little chance from a very young age. Parenting needs support.
- Parenting that affirms and helps them grow into society.
- The key to improving things for young people in NZ is in the support and development of families. There are institutional forces opposing families. The government needs to abandon its current social engineering and begin deliberately building families in this country.
- We need a comprehensive program of positive parenting and family support in our country that is home grown rather than imported and which follows families from pre-birth right through adolescence to support families with children. There are too many social services working in isolation in many regions with no links to one another. Many families are falling through the cracks and we are not reaching our potential as a country because so many children

are disadvantaged. Recent OECD figures support this. Our country is the envy of the world in many ways, and we have exported the talent to prove it. Our values about children are not what they seem and are actually hidden within a harmful context of alienation, violence and making life miserable for children. In addition, the "we'll be right" attitude has harmed our concern for children's issues and anyone who tries to make a difference in this country has to really be strong and courageous in the face of despair, disdain and malaise that characterizes many adults -- even when it comes to concerns that affect their own children.

Favourable family environment

- Security.
- Safe and boundaried home and family.
- Help kids to realise that they can be achievers - setting goals outside their comfort zone and then achieving them- Loving kids, - kids who grow up in an environment where they can learn and grow and feel loved generally grow up into well functioning adults teaching kids skills that will enable them to solve problems and look after themselves.
- Growing up in a family that gives love, nurturing and compassion. 3 top issues - 1. brain growth that allows the full potential of a child to be reached 2. development that embraces empathy and an understanding of others to develop 3. support that allows self esteem and help for others to be created.
- Brought up in a sensitive environment from babies. I firmly believe this is when sensitivity is learned. Institutionalised care on the now huge scale is eliminating sensitivity.
- Responsibility should be taught by example, firstly in the home. There is often too much discipline, too little responsibility shown and taught. d. I also firmly believe that unless we have a curriculum of optimism our young people will continue to rank the highest in world suicide figures. You got it - you can't put old heads on young shoulders.... That's what parents and teachers are for. Let's start doing it!
- Children's nutrition - educating parents. Cut out advertising on TV of rubbish food during children's programs. Heavier jail terms for people dealing in drugs, porn. Stop porn on the internet, violent movies on TV and in the cinemas. There is so much violence on TV etc that our children think that seeing killing is no big deal. We are as a society being slowly desensitized to violence.
- Family.....whanau who care....and who meet the best interests of their kids always.
- Better example of behaviour from adults.
- Family responsibility, Family responsibility, Family responsibility.
- The number one issue is definitely the family unit. NZ is full of social problems with huge negative impacts on children.
- The young peoples first need is in their home and I strongly believe that parents should not have a defence for smacking their child. I also believe that society has a right to know what goes on in families. The use of confidentiality to avoid knowledge being more widely available is where I think we have a problem. Society picks up the problem when things do not go well in families so I believe very strongly we should have entry into homes [figuratively] when there appear to be issues [not just when a major issue blows up] and that we can expect some co-operation by parents, even if we have to pay the parents to attend courses.
- The level of mistrust and fears that parents and adults are exposing their children and young children, safety is often outweighing children's exploration and inhibits children's enjoyment and curious.
- Being brought up in a family where care is provided. Being brought up in a family environment free from smoking and drugs.
- I feel parents need support to set boundaries (which are for the benefit/ best interests of the youth) in a world where boundaries are breaking down. I feel that we need to re-create a culture of active entertainment of one's self. Too many high stimulation video games, movies, TV, etc is leaving youth over excited and our culture doesn't steer them towards constructive ways of channelling that energy/excitement.

Children's rights

- I think that the Government and schools and the media need to take a more proactive approach to promoting UNCROC in NZ.
- Programmes on the rights of children (and all people) could be included in the school curriculum so that children grow up knowing about their own rights and the rights of others.
- Responsibilities should go with rights for more advantaged young people. Adults need to respect young people and listen to them as they are people too just younger and less experienced.
- More awareness of the balance of rights and responsibilities. More awareness taken when there is advocacy for youth and children too often submissions etc are made but the lawmakers take little notice of it because it is about young people.
- Children's rights and needs should be regarded as the most important in this country.

- Rights for young people need to be promoted not just with the young people but with adults especially those working with young people, like teachers, staff of schools, counsellors, etc.
- Ready and freely available access to impartial information on their rights, obligations and what services are available when issues surrounding these affect them.

Other

- Drugs and alcohol (access is too easy). Sexually transmitted diseases and sex too early (the stats are appalling).
- Legal age for alcohol consumption to be put back up.
- Drugs, truancy - need more campaigning and education in schools.
- Truancy and the lack of parental management of children going to school.
- Responsibility in cars.
- The NZ Government and our society seriously need to make young people the most important focus in our country and not just say they are important - back these words with resourcing, policies, support etc, etc to ensure that our young people are safe, loved, educated, ready for work at the end of education etc - we need to "walk the talk" and do that now - not wait for another 10 years.
- Removing power from the police does NOT help! Some law changes i.e. police not being able to question children under 14 had a disastrous impact out in Northland communities that I as a teacher at the time witnessed first hand. I would like to know if ANY evaluation procedures and measures are put into place to adequately follow up on the law change results....out there at the coal face. Not in some shiny government office where consultants write responses and reports to give the feedback that the government agencies want.
- Much greater emphasis on responsible procreation. More status accorded to child-rearing. Vast input of resources to maternity and child care. What we fail to achieve in pre-birth, birth and early childhood attachment and stable family formation can never be recovered.
- Prompt attention and implementation of programmes and legislation that addresses the issues above.
- Work and training - the Government must ensure that the economy keeps moving and achieves high growth rates leading to more jobs, a stronger economy and a greater economic future.
- Creating better possibilities for their future - a better world, environment, with educational opportunities and jobs and a sense of meaning.
- I am a Child and Family Social Worker by profession, and have lived in NZ for 10+ years. Completing the questionnaire made me think, and confirmed my ongoing concern about the lack of priority given to children, their future and their right's in NZ.
- More action by the Office of the Commissioner for Children!
- Programmes in the community are available on paper. More accountability re where monies are going and what services are being provided, and how effective programmes are.
- Local body governments should have a child advocate position.
- Local areas need access to social indicators presented in simple language. We get economic indicators coming out our ears on radio and TV. But not important indicators such as is the CYFA office fully staffed this month, how many local young people were excluded from school this month, are all schools implementing the paramountcy principle this month (CYFworkers could answer that one).
- Children are the future of NZ should we as "Parents" or "Caregiver" or "educated adults" or even "highly trained/skilled and respected professional adults" fail to ensure how important it is recognise what is important for our children, then we are perpetuating what should be solved. I would speculate that those of us that may recognise what needs to be done are barriered by another or previous adults policy or plan that maintains authority and fear rather than positive resolving progress.
- It's more about individual responsibility and self help options than spoon feeding youth.
- Further breaking down of societal/cultural attitudes to various things (i.e. homosexuality) and an acknowledgement the world is evolving daily and children/young people of today (their wants/desires/goals/needs) may not be the same as they were yesterday.
- Values-based education. Abstinence-based sex education A renewed emphasis on the importance of committed marriage so that young people can grow up with security.
- To follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and to walk in truth. To fulfil the plan and purpose God has for them because he loves them and knows what's best for them. We have a tolerant society to the things that are against God and have fallen to the deceit and lies.

Summary

Overall themes were the need to:

- address poverty issues for some young people in order to meet their basic needs
- prevent abuse/bullying at home, school and in the community
- prevent racism
- ensure that education and health is free and accessible
- ensure better and safer legal and social services
- provide parent education
- ensure better wages for young people
- provide more things to do and more places to hang out for young people, and
- ensure there are more people to listen and provide help for young people.

PART FOUR: CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER'S SYMPOSIUM 11-12 FEBRUARY 2004 - *Children Call For An Aotearoa/ New Zealand Fit For Us*

CHAPTER 8: FEEDBACK FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

150 young people from all around New Zealand attended a pre-symposium day specifically for young people on 11 February 2004. During the course of the day they worked in groups of approximately 15-20 people to identify issues that were important to them. They then collated the information from all the groups under the following headings and reported back the following day to the conference as a whole. The following is a summary of their feedback.

8.1 Identity

- The right to be who you are
- Keep your own individual identities and not to be forced to conform
- Support for groups of different cultures
- Education and respect for other cultures and religions
- Elimination of racism and stereotypes

8.2 Education

- More education on issues such as alcohol and drugs
- Work experience
- Parenting and education for young mothers
- High cost of education
- Multicultural education
- Improve awareness of parental responsibilities

8.3 Health

- Sexuality information
- Child abuse
- Depression/suicide
- Drink driving
- More funding for health education
- Educate adults about the issues too

8.4 Youth Participation

- Not tokenistic
- Taking on individual roles
- Youth represented in government
- Young people involved in projects from start to finish

- Domino effect

8.5 Law

- Lower taxes
- Benefit for young mothers
- Uneven age restrictions
- Children and young people being more informed about the law and their rights
- Tougher gang laws

8.6 Rights

- Government listening to youth
- Education in schools on rights
- Education on using your rights and the responsibilities that come with them
- Improved awareness of human rights organisations for young people

8.7 Work

- Less tax for under 18s
- More incentives to work
- Equal rights in the work place
- Your rights at work - do's and don'ts

8.8 Other

- Focus on equality
- Resources for rural areas
- Better role models
- More recreational facilities

CHAPTER 9: FEEDBACK FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

The 150 young people who attended the pre-symposium on 11 February 2004 joined approximately 150 adults to attend the Children's Commissioner's Symposium on 12 February 2004. As part of the programme, all 300 people divided into groups to discuss a range of issues. Each group looked at one subject area and considered issues, possible solutions and who should be involved with these solutions. The groups then reported to the conference as a whole. The following are the notes summarising the feedback.

9.1 Young/teenage parents

9.1.1 Issues

Poverty:

- food
- nappies
- milk

Education:

- services for rural areas
- teen parent units
- girls getting kicked out
- 6 months pregnant, didn't have facilities
- bad name

Financial support:

- can't get benefit
- have to rely on in-laws or parents
- can't pay for creche (they could drop the price)
- rural areas

9.1.2 Solutions

Poverty:

- we need to break the cycle
- role models for our kids

Education:

- we need the Ministry of Education to help out a bit more
- teens need to know their rights all around
- why can't we have mobile doctors/nurses come to schools
- not to judge but to accept us

Financial:

- just to have an emergency benefit for under 16 yr old parents

9.1.3 Who should be involved?

Community:

- playgroup
- neighbours

Whanau:

- financially
- emotionally
- spiritually
- mentally

Doctors:

- provide contraception for free
- let us know our rights

Government/Councils:

- finding funding for us

Ministry of Education:

- funding for new parent units

Fathers:

- take part in this situation and get involved in more responsibilities

WINZ/CYFS:

- we need to know more about what they provide

Lawyers/ the Law:

- get the law out there so we know our rights

Schools/Creches

Other comments

There are so many of us young parents/mothers out there.
Educate us rather than say 'don't have sex'.

9.2 Reaching one's potential

9.2.1 Issues

Choices:

- to be able to have a range of options available
- the choice to have the lifestyle one would like
- to think outside the square
- the need for a range of choices re skills, education, work (resourcing issues)

Positive role models:

- to be able to promote trust
- to be of the highest quality
- enrichment in schools
- goal setting

Attitudes/expectation:

- discrimination
- belief in self

Expectations:

- provide challenges
- enable achievements

Other:

- the importance of family
- not being challenged
- schools - need to be more diverse
- education for parents - to connect with youth

9.2.2 Solutions

Attitudes/expectations:

- being realistic and positive
- walk the walk/talk the talk
- be realistic with expectations, be positive
- believe in yourself and others
- be able to motivate and challenge within reason
- encourage to carry on after failure (you and others)
- you need to be respected for who and what you are by family, teachers, peers, the community and yourself
- family being able to cater for needs differently for individuals and to give support unconditionally
- be able to make mistakes and try out things and change your mind!

Choices:

- opportunities - availability of information
- accessibility
- funding/money

To be able to recognise the barriers:

- the talents and the skills
- parents' expectations
- schools
- peers
- money circumstances
- organisational things
- accessibility
- discrimination

Role models:

- need to be positive
- a wide range
- need to be accessible
- range from close whanau.... to professional support
- this takes time, money and contribution
- parenting courses for particular aged children

Making it happen:

- speakers (school and community)
- enough funding and time
- realisation people are willing to give time
- parenting courses for particular ages

9.2.3 Who should be involved?

Choices:

- schools
- family/whanau
- internet
- community

Positive role models:

- peers
- sports organisations and sports people
- schools and teachers
- government organisations and NGOs (non-governmental organisations)
- churches
- tv and other media
- yourself
- religious leaders
- family
- society/community
- songs/music industry

9.3 Safety

9.3.1 Issues

- Child abuse - cut it out!
- Emotional/physical/sexual abuse of children
- Safety in schools - bullying
- Disabled children in schools
- Physical punishment
- No smoking
- Alcohol supply
- Drug abuse
- Video and tv censorship
- Injury prevention - wearing seatbelts
- When safety goes too far – e.g. O.S.H in children's playgrounds

9.3.2 Solutions

Child Abuse:

- education on alternatives
- remove section 59 Crimes Act
- all agencies sharing information and working together

Bullying:

- peer mediation programmes in schools - funded by MOE

TV/Video Censorship:

- raising these issues with children and discussing openly
- young people having a choice
- needs of disabled children need to be remembered

9.3.3 Who should be involved?

Child Abuse:

- section 59 Crimes Act
- politicians and parents

Bullying:

- teachers
- Human Rights Commission
- MOE
- community organisations
- MOH

TV/Video censorship:

- parents and caregivers

9.4 Poverty

9.4.1 Issues

- Lack of money
- Getting resources directly to youth
- More services etc for 0-5 year olds
- Domino effect - lack of money = poverty of spirit = cycle of despair
- Lack of information
- Lack of clear definition = lack of understanding = culture of blame
- Lack of parental information
- Lack of transport

9.4.2 Solutions

- Budget courses
- Basic living wage
- More money support at the base
- Housing for all
- Extra finances for parents of 0-5 year olds
- School should be free and accessible
- Entertainment prices subsidised

9.4.3 Who should be involved?

- Central and local government

- WINZ
- Teachers
- Community
- Schools
- Students
- Churches

9.4.4 Other comments

- Provide resources directly to youth e.g. free, safe, supervised activities both at school and after school care
- Safe houses for youth (especially for those with 'P' using parents)
- Support - education on parenting
- Education options for parents and childcare
- Parent activity
- Neighbourhood family friendly free events funded by church, council, government grants, to coincide with school holidays to make it more affordable for working parents

9.5 Meeting Basic Needs

9.5.1 Issues

- Basic needs are shelter, food, healthcare and safety.
- Security and safety – living free from violence and abuse. Everyone should have somewhere safe to go when they are not feeling safe or secure.
- Access to housing and the quality of housing is an issue.
- There is a clear link between inadequate housing and poor health outcomes.
- Health - some families cannot afford the basics, e.g. attending a GP, toothpaste or nit treatment. Young people should be able to have some choice over their health providers, e.g. the old family GP (who has been treating the family for 30 years) may not be the most appropriate choice.
- Benefits and low incomes are not enough to cover the costs of family living and this impacts on young people for example school costs, housing and health.
- Some services for young people are difficult to access (for example, counselling at school).
- Education needs to be affordable e.g. some families cannot afford to pay school 'donations' and there is a lot of pressure to pay them, affording school stationery is also difficult for some people
- Entertainment for kids – some things can be really expensive. If they are bored, kids are more likely to get into drugs etc.
- Knowing your rights and the law.
- Respite care needs to be more readily available
- Shortages of people with the right skills providing the services and providing them in a confidential and respectful manner, e.g. sometimes at school pupils are taken out of class to see the school counsellor and when this happens, everyone in the class knows. It should be done in a more sensitive way
- Shortages of school-based therapeutic services
- Stigma associated with accessing services, e.g. within schools there may be a stigma associated with seeking help from a school counsellor. There needs to be education within schools so people know that its OK to use these types of services.

- Services need to be focused on the needs of young people. Young people need to feel that their voices are being heard.

9.5.2 Solutions

Adequacy of income:

- this sits below a lot of the problems.
- the benefit does not cover basic needs which has flow on effects for some families
- the problems of income and poverty need to be dealt with in two ways: an income solution (Government responsibility) and a value solution (valuing children and young people).
- the wealth needs to be distributed more evenly.
- money is not necessarily the full solution – it is also about educating people.

Universal access to services:

- there should be a greater awareness of the financial assistance that is available for families, e.g. from WINZ
- parents/guardians and schools should all know about what scholarships and financial assistance is available.
- there should be a means by which everyone can get the level of education they feel is appropriate.

Respect:

- some of the solutions are about young people having a greater voice and treating people with more respect, e.g. providing stationery lists ahead of time so that people can decide whether to get their stationery through the school or through a shop in town.
- more respect and consideration of young people and their needs is needed.

9.5.3 Who should be involved?

- This is complex. There should be more government leadership.
- Community leadership e.g. Boards of Trustees, service providers etc should talk with young people about what will work.
- More information about services young people can use.
- There is no quick fix but everyone needs to do their bit.

9.6 Role Models

9.6.1 Issues

- Time pressures - too much to do and not enough time to spend with young people
- Not enough promotion of good role models
- Not all parents are good role models, especially those who smoke, take drugs, drink excessively or abuse their children
- Too much graphic sex and violence in the movies and music especially rap music
- Image is everything - too much pressure to be beautiful/good looking, to succeed at everything - school work, sports, school shows, youth council etc (not everyone is academic or sporty)

9.6.2 Solutions

- Parents and family need to communicate more with young people and not force their expectations upon them. They need to make enough time to talk with and listen to young people on a daily basis, e.g. to ask 'how's school, how's life?'
- Provide a better range of role models e.g. builders, plumbers etc and information for young people (the Gateway programme is good) - not everyone is academic
- Provide more examples of people who have achieved their dreams and attained their goals
- Show that more than image matters - adults should not model that image is so important
- Young people would like to have confidential peer support services as well as or instead of adult guidance counsellors
- Parents need to acknowledge that life and choices can be stressful - don't try to make decisions for young people but give them the choice

9.6.3 Who should be involved?

- Family, community
- Promoting youth issues via tv, internet and publications.
- Schools e.g. more of the Gateway programme - alternative careers information.
- Peer support groups
- Volunteers
- Adult training sessions

9.6.4 Other comments

- Role models - an ordinary person who has been at the bottom and has dusted themselves off and are on top (real role models)
- Find role models who are good and make them recognised
- 'With bad role models at home, some will learn and some will continue the cycle'
- Polynesian society - don't always let kids have their say or talk about contraception

PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from the background paper, the focus groups, the online survey and the Children's Commissioner's Symposium all suggests that in order to improve the situation for children and young people, New Zealand needs to take immediate action in several areas. Despite the wide variety of data and the variety of young people involved in the focus groups, the online survey and the Children's Commissioner's Symposium, some clear themes emerged across all aspects of this stocktake report, and across all groups of young people. They are outlined below.

10.1 Participation

An active programme to promote children's right to participation within the Government and non-government sectors is needed, along with the development and promotion of education resources, guidelines and other tools to assist organisations to involve children in decision-making and information giving processes. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has highlighted the need for there to be a mechanism to ensure that the right of young people to have their views taken into account in administrative or judicial processes affecting them is systematically included in legislation and regulations.

Feedback from the focus groups, online survey and the symposium also indicated the need to ensure children and young people are listened to, that their opinions are respected and taken seriously, and that their participation rights are implemented. In particular, symposium participants said that young people's participation should not be tokenistic and that young people should be involved in projects from start to finish.

10.2 At Home

Poverty

Research indicates that 3 out of 10 young people in New Zealand live in poverty. Consequently they do not necessarily have their basic needs met and are significantly disadvantaged in terms of their growth and development. This particularly affects Maori, Pacific and Asian children, and children in low income and single parent families. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that New Zealand take appropriate measures to assist parents, in particular single parents, and others responsible for the child to implement the child's right to an adequate standard of living.

Focus group, online survey respondents and symposium participants also urged greater assistance for children and young people whose families live in poverty and that there should be a higher level of awareness of the financial assistance that is available. Many young people identified a need for more money for rent, food, bills, activities and holidays. They wished for better housing, quiet space at home to study and more and healthier food. Free health care and education were also thought to be essential.

Abuse

A number of recent analyses suggest that some young people in New Zealand continue to suffer from abuse and neglect of all types. Further, a recent UNICEF report states that New Zealand has the third worst child death rates of 26 countries. Although there are a number of existing government initiatives, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends the Government repeal section 59 of the Crimes Act, expand services and programmes aimed at assisting victims of abuse, and ensure that they are provided in a child-sensitive manner which respects the privacy of the victim. In addition, the Committee suggested the Government increase programmes and services aimed at the prevention of child abuse in the home, schools and in institutions and ensure that there are sufficient numbers of adequately qualified and trained staff to provide these services and continue to improve the coordination of services for vulnerable families and victims of abuse.

Feedback from the focus groups, online survey and symposium overwhelmingly highlighted the need to prevent abuse. Many said there should be no abuse or fighting at home (from either parents or siblings) and although some said parents are good, others thought parents should go to parent school. They thought it was incredibly important that people at home listen to them, love and care about them and spend time with them.

Other

Some focus group respondents and symposium participants from other cultures (for example, Pacific and Asian), felt that their parents need to recognise that they are often required to live in two worlds, that of their traditional culture and also in New Zealand culture. These young people say it is difficult for them if their parents expect them to behave only in traditional ways.

Some other respondents in the focus groups thought they shouldn't always have to look after their younger siblings, especially if it's because their parent(s) are going out to party.

Survey respondents in particular identified the need for parent education and support.

Symposium participants highlighted the need for greater support for teen parents and for young people to have good role models at home and in the wider community (including those portrayed in the media).

10.3 At School / Early Childhood Centre

Accessibility, choices and activities

The evidence suggests that some families have significant difficulty paying costs associated with education such as school fees, exam fees and activity fees. Further, it appears that some young people who have been expelled from a school may find it difficult to find another school to accept them. There are certain factors which assist young people to feel a sense of connectedness, well-being and to reach their full potential at school/early childhood centre but these are not always provided for young people in New Zealand. The factors include quality educational help from trained staff, a chance to discover their own identity (e.g. being able to learn te reo Maori), trustworthy people (such as counsellors) to

talk to, time, space and resources for sport, leisure, cultural, musical and artistic activities and opportunities to be with friends.

Feedback from the focus groups and online survey indicated that although some teachers are good, the young people want all of them to listen and not to pick on them for no apparent reason. Most young people wanted to be able to choose the subjects they like, have more activities (sporting, musical, artistic and cultural), weekend trips and camps and enough money to afford these. A call for more sports facilities and equipment also featured prominently. There was a plea from focus group, online survey and symposium respondents for someone trustworthy to talk to at school and for everyone to be able to have an education even if they've left school. The teen parents at the symposium said this was very important for them. Most respondents said education should be properly free, and adult survey respondents made extensive suggestions regarding improving the learning environment at school. Younger respondents were very keen to learn about their rights and thought school was a logical place to do so.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child suggested the government take effective measures to address disparities in enrolment and drop out rates between ethnic groups, including by strengthening programmes for bilingual education and also to take all necessary measures, including the provision of quality counselling programmes in schools, to address behavioural problems of students while respecting their right to privacy. The UN Committee also commented on the need to ensure adequate programmes for teenage parents.

Preventing bullying and discrimination

Bullying is still a problem for a significant number of young people. Evaluation of existing programmes (e.g. peer mediation programmes in schools) is required to learn what works to prevent bullying, for whom, and in what circumstances. On the basis of this evaluation, more early childhood education and school-based violence prevention and support programmes can then be established.

Discrimination is a problem that continues to affect young people in New Zealand, both at school and elsewhere. It is suggested that a comprehensive strategy is needed to address this issue, perhaps starting with a programme in schools to cultivate understanding and awareness of other children's rights to be free from discrimination. There are significant overlaps with the bullying issue.

Focus group, online survey and symposium respondents overwhelmingly agreed that there should be no bullying or racism at school (or anywhere else).

10.4 Out and About

More places to hang out and things to do

Young people's healthy development is shaped by having positive connections with many social environments. As such, providing more space and resources for sport, leisure, cultural, musical and artistic activities (and making these and other entertainment affordable), places to hang out with friends, a chance to discover their own identity and more places to seek support from trustworthy people (not just at school) are all important, according to research.

Feedback from the focus groups, online survey and symposium also indicated a need for more affordable things for young people to do and places for them to hang out. All young people said there should be more and cheaper activities for them in the community, for example, clubs, gyms, theme parks, movies, places to hang out with friends etc, and affordable transport to get there. Their message was 'give us stuff to do and we will stay out of trouble'. They also thought there should be more support services for young people.

Safety and Discrimination

The comments on discrimination in the section 'At School' above are equally relevant here. Young people in the focus groups made requests to '*stop the police harassing us when we're not doing anything wrong*'. These requests came particularly from young Maori and Pacific people while requests to stop discrimination in general came from Maori, Pacific, Asian and Indian young people and young people with disabilities. The young people who attended the symposium thought there should be education and respect for other cultures and religions and the elimination of racism and stereotypes.

Some focus group and survey respondents highlighted the need for the streets to be safer for them.

10.5 At Work

Young people have indicated that youth wages are too low, especially for those who need to earn money to supplement the family income or to pay for their own clothing or education. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child was also concerned about the minimum age of employment and legislative provisions for young people in paid work. The Department of Labour is currently looking into some of these issues.

Feedback from the focus groups, online survey and symposium also indicated that young people wanted to receive better pay for their work and that there should be more opportunities for young people to earn. Various suggestions were made about increasing the minimum wage or reducing or removing tax, or both. There were also some comments about not being harassed or discriminated against at work. Some young people from the focus group with intellectual disabilities were very keen to work.

10.6 Health

Poverty reduces children's access to health care and can result in poor health outcomes for these young people. Further, New Zealand continues to have one of the highest rates of youth suicide in the OECD. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that New Zealand implement the Child Health Strategy and take all necessary measures to address the youth suicide issue. Young people need to be able to access more support both at school and in the community if they need it.

Virtually all focus group and online survey respondents and symposium participants thought young people should have free health care (including prescriptions etc) and free dental care until they are 18 years old. Everyone wanted easier and faster access to health care, saying there should be more doctors in the community and in the emergency departments. Quite a few young people showed a high level of awareness about the need for exercise and healthy food. Many also identified depression and suicide as major issues and thought there should be more emotional support for young people, for example,

better availability of counselling services. They also said there should be more funding for health education to learn more about drugs, alcohol (including drink driving) and sexuality issues.

10.7 Legal and Social Services

The evidence suggests that young people living in alternative care are not always served well by the care and protection system in New Zealand. The UN Committee recommended that New Zealand continue its efforts to strengthen the system of child protection by improving the qualifications of social workers and personnel working in the child protection system, enacting measures to retain qualified and specialised staff, taking effective measures to improve co-ordination between the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and organisations delivering services to children, increasing the financial resources allocated to alternative care, while ensuring that institutional care is used only as a last resort, and strengthening efforts to guarantee that all children placed in care have a periodic review of their treatment and all circumstances relative to their placement.

Research also suggests that young people in the youth justice system are not always safe. The UN Committee outlined concerns about protection of young people in the juvenile justice system regarding the low age of criminal responsibility and that special protection is not accorded to all persons under 18 in conflict with the law. The Committee was also concerned that juvenile offenders, both female and male, are not separated from adult offenders, and in some cases they may even be detained in police cells for several months.

Some feedback from the focus groups and online survey indicated a feeling that the police shouldn't be able to bash people and some young people in the youth justice system thought that some people working in these services have bad attitudes towards them and don't listen to them. They said some social workers are good but some have forgotten what it is like to be a young person. Some also thought that we should pay youth advocates more so they will do a better job. Some young people from a group home thought there should be more funding for resource workers such as the person working with them in their group home.

10.8 Belonging

Research indicates that a sense of connectedness to family, friends and community is very important for young people. Many focus group and survey respondents said that feeling as though you are part of your family is very important but some from the youth justice focus group thought this was less important if you have a 'crap' family. In order to belong, most thought you need *'someone to talk to inside and outside of your family'* who listens and whom you can trust. In addition, friendship with others was thought very important for feeling as though you belong.

Many also thought it is important to respect young people's right to their own culture and identity. Focus groups with young Maori, Pacific, Asian and Indian people thought this was particularly important, although they wanted their parents to acknowledge that they may be having to live simultaneously in two cultures, and to allow them some flexibility in dealing with this.

The young people who attended the symposium thought that young people had a right not to be forced to conform, to 'be who they are' and to keep their own individual identities.

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