WHAT MAKES A GOOD LIFE?

Children and young people’s views on wellbeing

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Office of the Children’s Commissioner

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Role of the Children’s Commissioner:
Advocate for the rights, interests and wellbeing of New Zealand under 18s

- Monitor how NZ children are doing, including how the State supports children in care & protection, youth justice
- Advocate for children’s rights and best interests
- Influence legislation, policy and practice
- Support children’s voices to be heard
child & youth wellbeing

DEPARTMENT OF THE
PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

MANA AKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI
Children’s Commissioner
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February 2019
Collaboration

A number of people and organisations contributed to making this work possible, including:

- the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- almost 100 schools from around the country that helped with the survey
- the Office of the Children’s Commissioner community partners
- Oranga Tamariki sites.

*We are most grateful to the children and young people who participated in the project for their time, wisdom and insights.*
What did we want to find out?

• What does it mean to have a good life for children and young people in Aotearoa?
• How do children and young people position themselves in relation to what they think is a good life?
• What hinders children and young people from having a good life?
• What will help children and young people to have a good life?
What did we ask?

- What does having a ‘good life’ mean to you?
- What gets in the way of a good life?
- What helps to achieve a good life?
How did we ask?

• Face to face engagements: 423 young people
  – Focus Groups using Activity Based Engagements
  – Small group discussions
  – One on One interviews

• Online survey: 5,631 young people
  – One survey for primary and intermediate age
  – One survey for secondary age students
Analysis

• Online survey:
  – Basic analysis through surveymonkey software
  – Used intelligent software to analyse qualitative responses

• Face to face engagements:
  – Two day ‘analysis hui’ undertaken with 15 people to read through transcripts of engagements and draw themes and consensus of meaning
5,631 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Gender

- Male: 2,273
- Female: 3,012
- Diverse: 50
- Not listed: 126
- I'd rather not say: 169

Age

![Age distribution chart showing the number of people by age group from 0-3 to 20+ years.]

Ethnicity

- NZ European: 4,000
- Māori: 3,000
- Samoan: 1,000
- Cook Island: 500
- Tongan: 10
- Indian: 10
- Chinese: 10
- Niuean: 10
- Other: 10
423 FACE TO FACE PARTICIPANTS

- 222 FEMALE
- 195 MALE
- 6 NON-BINARY

Bar charts and pie charts showing distribution of participants by gender and age range.
What did we hear?
What makes a good life?

- Being happy and enjoying life: 30%
- Having supportive family and friends: 20%
- Having basic needs met: 15%
- Feeling valued & respected: 3%
- Being healthy (incl. mentally healthy): 8%
- Feeling safe (incl. from bullying): 6%
- Experiencing positive education: 3%
- Other: 15%
The majority of children and young people are experiencing many elements of a good life ...

but not all children
I can cope when life gets hard
I feel I belong at school
I feel safe online
I feel fit and healthy
I feel respected and valued
I feel safe at school
I get enough time to spend with my family/whānau
I feel safe in my neighbourhood
I get to do fun activities in my spare time
I have a friend or friends I can talk to
I am able to make decisions for myself
I can go to the doctor when I need to
I have opportunities to build skills and knowledge for my future
I have a stable and loving family/whānau
My parents or caregivers have enough money to pay for basic stuff like food and clothes
I have a warm, dry place to live

strongly agree / agree
neither agree nor disagree
strongly disagree / disagree
1) Accept us for who we are and who we want to be
2) Life is really hard for some of us

“At our school people find mocking Māori culture to be a joke. ‘Māoris go to prison’, or ‘Māoris do drugs.”

Rangatahi from Auckland
3) To help us, help our whānau and our support crew

“If the parents are good then the kids are good.”

Rangatahi from Rotorua
4) We all deserve more than just the basics

“Enough for the basics, plus a little bit more.”

Young person from Dunedin
5) How you support us matters just as much as what you do.
Messages to the Prime Minister

- Jobs and employment make a big difference - 6%
- Everyone should have fair opportunities - 3%
- Value and respect us - 5%
- Support us to have good lives - 6%
- The environment should be cared for - 2%
- Everyone should have their basic needs met - 15%
- We all need family, friends, people that will love & care for us - 13%
- Support my health and mental health - 10%
- Education is important - 14%
- Keep us safe - 9%
- Money matters - 3%
- Other - 14%
Change is needed

Providing the basics is important, but not enough on its own

Family and whānau are crucial

Children and young people have valuable insights
Outcomes of this work

• These views have informed
  – Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, and
  – Oranga Tamariki Action Plan

• We are sharing finding widely
  – across community, schools, government, NGO’s and research institutes

• It is impacting front-line practice
  – including how people deliver support services, and how people interact with children and young people everyday.
What’s next?

• We are continuing to look at the views we heard
  – On-going analysis of different cohorts and issues to get the most out of the information
  – Analysis underway looking at the experiences of those in OT care, teen parents, disability, and more to come

• We are continuing to feed back to the community, and our community partners.

“Lots of love. A great supportive family and everyone being treated respectfully and equally.”

“I need stability”
Questions?

Contact: voices@occ.org.nz