# Exploring Good Outcomes for Young People

# A Research Report

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

As part of its family dynamics/family effectiveness research programme, the Ministry of Social Development commissioned research in 2000 to explore the views of families, young people and service providers on what constitute 'good outcomes' for young people. Good outcomes in this context include outcomes in the areas of education, employment, financial independence, living circumstances, relationships, interests and community involvement, qualities and values.

The Ministry of Social Development's organising framework for the various aspects of the family dynamics research programme recognises that the community, social, economic, institutional and policy environments have a direct impact both on family dynamics and on outcomes for children. Children's personal endowments and capacities also affect their outcomes.

The objectives for this research on good outcomes for young people were threefold:

- to investigate the views of New Zealand families, children and providers about what constitute good outcomes for children, and the plans they have to achieve these outcomes

- to investigate the views of New Zealand families and children and providers about what factors they consider promote good outcomes for children

- to describe any differences in the views of families, children and providers about good outcomes for children and to determine whether these views vary across different cultural groups or other groups within the sample.

The research was conceived as an exploration of families' and young people's hopes and aspirations. As part of that exploration families were asked to identify potential barriers to their achievement, although the focus of the study remained essentially positive.

## Methodology

The research comprised three linked studies: Māori, Pākehā and Pacific. The three components were designed collaboratively, then conducted and analysed separately. In this summary, as in the report, the findings of the three studies are reported separately, while the introduction, methodology and discussion sections relate to all three.

The research consisted of 60 in-depth interviews with parents, caregivers and whānau of young people between the ages of 7 and 18 years, and 57 interviews with young people. The family/whānau sample consisted of 22 Māori families, 20 Pākehā families and 18 Pacific families. In almost all cases, in-depth interviews were conducted separately with the young people from each of the families. In addition 29 providers of social services to families and young people were interviewed for the research: 12 providers for the Māori

study, 10 Pākehā providers, and 7 Pacific providers. The interviews were conducted during the second half of 2000.

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed collaboratively by the primary researchers for each study, and then adapted slightly for each one. The interviews sought respondents' views on good outcomes for young people at the ages of 18 and 25, as well as asking about the key supports young people need to achieve good outcomes. The ages of 18 and 25 were chosen carefully. By 18, most young people are in their last year of school or have recently left and are looking ahead to further training, education or work. Their maturity is officially recognised in the voting and drinking laws; they are entitled to undertake contracts, to engage in military service and are eligible for a range of benefit entitlements. By 25, most young people have finished their post-school training or education and are moving into full-time employment and taking on more adult responsibilities.

The sampling strategy was maximum variation sampling based on a range of characteristics of interest to the Ministry of Social Development. In each study the sample was obtained through personal networks, using a predetermined matrix to ensure that the sample included a range of family types, at different life cycle stages, from different socio-economic backgrounds and in different locations. Sample selection in each of the three studies varied slightly, although all three met the requirements of the sample matrix. Details of the sample characteristics are provided in Appendix 1.

## The Māori report

### *Whānau/family adults*

The overwhelming aspiration of most Māori whānau interviewed was that their young people would still be involved in some form of education at the age of 18. Qualifications were regarded as paramount for gaining access to employment. Whānau in small rural areas with high unemployment saw education as the key to breaking a cycle of poverty. Many parents and caregivers voiced concerns about the cost of tertiary education, and expressed the hope that their young people would not have to get a student loan.

Adults' second key aspiration was that their children would be strong in their taha Māori. Knowing one's whakapapa and therefore one's identity was important, as was demonstrating values such as manaaki tangata and whānaungatanga.

A third important element of a good outcome for Māori was that their young people would stay in touch with whānau as they moved into adulthood. Whānau were seen as providing crucial support in young people achieving good outcomes.

Hopes and dreams for young people at the age of 25 generally followed on from those at 18. By 25, it was expected that they would have finished tertiary education and be establishing or have established a career. Family would no longer be supporting them financially, rather they would be financially independent and self-sufficient – "definitely not on the dole". Many parents hoped their children would have a career rather than just a

job, be earning good money and not struggling for the next dollar, and be in control of their own destiny.

In addition to the importance of whānau, Māori families considered their young people would need support to stay with education, as well as emotional and material support and guidance. Nearly everyone regarded income as an important factor in the achievement of the goals they saw for their children. It was not regarded as the only factor, but for many people it was certainly a critical one.

Most whānau/family adults took the view that friends would play a large part in their child's life. Any influence, however, was as likely to be positive as negative. Although negative peer pressure was identified by many as a potential barrier to achieving good outcomes, most people felt that with good whānau support, young people could resist such pressure.

When asked to summarise the key things that whānau, the Government and other groups could do to help young people achieve good outcomes, most people reiterated earlier comments about the importance of whānau providing a loving and supportive base for their children. Most regarded building self-esteem and confidence and instilling a desire to succeed as critical for ensuring good outcomes and felt that this was primarily the role of the whānau.

Given earlier comments, it is not surprising that most whānau/family adults thought the key thing the Government could do was provide free education, including tertiary education, kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa. Some also saw the Government having a role in creating economic conditions that would lead to the availability of more jobs. Others suggested more work and training schemes.

Several people supported the idea of schools providing a broader range of education including drug education, safe sex classes, life skills and work experience.

### *Māori young people*

The Māori young people interviewed mostly shared their families' aspirations about continuing with education up to and beyond age 18, and linked the value of that education directly to enhanced job prospects. Young people were also concerned about the costs of higher education and several expressed a sense of responsibility to contribute financially to, or at least not to be a financial burden on, their whānau.

Māori young people also placed primary importance on whānau. They also saw the importance of money as self-evident, with nearly all seeing money as critical to their being able to achieve their goals. Some, particularly those from rural areas, felt that lack of money would be a real barrier to their leaving home and getting to university or other study.

Most of the young Māori people interviewed recognised that friends could have an influence on outcomes and were more likely to discuss negative than positive peer

pressure. Being "led astray" by friends who were into drugs, wagging school or other negative behaviour was seen as one reason why young people might not achieve their goals.

### *Māori social service providers*

Providers of social services agreed that young people should be encouraged to stay in education, but were also keen to see more employment and other options available to those who choose not to do so. Providers had no single view about where young people should be living or how they should be supported financially in their young adulthood; instead, they identified the basic criteria that any living and financial arrangements should meet – safety, support, security and independence.

The factor identified as most important for achieving good outcomes was a positive whānau environment and upbringing. This includes parents who are supportive and loving, encourage open communication and take an active interest in their children. All the providers interviewed regarded income as vital for achieving good outcomes.

As well as directly supporting families, the Government was seen to have a responsibility to put more resources into creating job opportunities as well as providing free education.

The qualities and values that parents and caregivers, young people and providers thought were associated with successful outcomes were very similar. Those qualities were confidence and self-esteem, happy, with a sense of identity, direction and purpose, respect for others, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.

## The Pākehā report

### *Pākehā parents/caregivers*

Virtually all of the parents and caregivers interviewed for the Pākehā report hoped and believed that their children would still be in education at the age of 18 in order to increase their future choices and to equip them better for a competitive labour market. Their aspirations were not restricted to university but included the prospect of study at polytechnic or other vocational training.

The financing of continuing education was a huge concern for many of the parents and other caregivers interviewed. Most expected to be at least partially responsible for funding their children's further education in conjunction with the young people's own contribution from part-time work, and in some cases a student loan.

Parents of non-academic children were concerned about lack of options other than further education. Some lamented the lack of work-based training such as apprenticeships.[1]

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[1] The Government piloted the Modern Apprenticeships scheme in 2000 (see NZ Government Executive Press Release by Hon Steve Maharey, 22.3.2000).

Almost all the parents in urban areas thought that their children would be living at home at age 18, largely because of the cost of any alternative. Families in rural areas were realistic about the need for their children to go away to continue their education.

When asked about the qualities and values they would like to see in their children at age 18, adults most frequently mentioned the young person feeling confident, happy, positive, independent and comfortable with themselves. Other desirable qualities included being tolerant, kind, sensitive to others and a good friend.

By age 25 most families imagined their young people would be employed and fully financially independent. Some recognised that the need to repay the costs of their education would dictate employment choices and may take their children overseas, either for a time or permanently.

Families considered that the support they give their children is crucial to good outcomes. This includes support for their education, practical assistance and encouragement for children's interests, emotional support, setting boundaries, helping their children with any difficulties they may encounter; and providing a wide range of experiences and opportunities.

Peer pressure was acknowledged as a potential pitfall for young people in reaching good outcomes, but most felt that the upbringing of their own children meant they had a firm base and were not particularly susceptible to peer pressure.

All families agreed that income alone was not the prime factor in assuring good outcomes for children and that family support and appropriate values were as, if not more, crucial. However, it was widely recognised that without adequate parental income children are denied the opportunity to participate in some of the areas that support good outcomes.

All the parents and caregivers interviewed thought that families should take their responsibilities for their children very seriously. This included being there for them, loving, caring and nurturing them and taking the time to attend to their individual needs.

Comments about the role of schools suggested that parents are looking to schools to provide more for their children than simply an academic education. They wanted schools to give their child more individual attention, a sense of belonging, and some affirmation of who they are. They would also like schools to be more active in providing young people with the information about their options once they leave school. Parents who considered their children to be non-academic felt that schools do not do justice to those students who don't want to go on to tertiary education.

Parents felt strongly that business could be offering more to young people by creating opportunities for them by way of apprenticeships and other training options.

Parents thought that the Government's primary contribution to good outcomes for children would be to fund education in such a way that cost is not a barrier to young

people. Many parents thought the Government could support good parenting by making parenting education readily available, having policies that show that parenting is valued, and initiating media campaigns showing support for parents and parenting.

### *Pākehā young people*

About half of the young people interviewed for the Pākehā report intended staying at school until the seventh form and then moving on to university. The rest were not so clear about a future direction but felt that the more education they could get the greater their opportunities would be in the world. Virtually all of the young people interviewed could see that education would be ongoing through their lives, and that while leaving school marked the end of one phase of their education, other phases lay ahead.

Most young people thought that they had enough information about their options when they left school, or that they would be able to get information when they needed it.

The qualities and values these Pākehā young people hoped for themselves at 18 were similar to those mentioned by their parents. They included being "confident", "balanced", "conscientious", "mature", "adventurous", "positive", "energetic" and "courageous". Many also included a quality describing their relationships with others. They used words like "friendly", "outgoing", "popular", "kind" and "trustworthy".

Most young people recognised the support they get from their parents and wider families. Key forms of support young people mentioned were their families believing in them, being given support to try things and to see them through, and families accepting them even if things don't work out.

About half the young people identified groups such as sports teams, church and youth groups as making a positive contribution to their lives. Many of these young people indicated that their relationships with their friends were important and would help them towards good outcomes. Friends were valued because they share common interests and provide emotional support.

Young people felt they contributed to good outcomes for themselves in two ways. The first and most frequently mentioned was the attitude they took to their lives, and their willingness to set goals and to work for them. The second was in choosing friends who would influence them in positive rather than negative directions. Most recognised the potential for peer pressure to work for positive or negative outcomes. Like their parents, most believed that they would be able to withstand any negative peer pressure, however a few were less sure.

Most of the young people interviewed thought that the biggest thing families can do for young people is to support, encourage and believe in them.

Many found it hard to think what the Government should do to help them achieve their goals, although they agreed that they wanted the Government to take action to make tertiary education more affordable, and reduce the debt burden for students.

### *Pākehā social service providers*

The providers interviewed for the report were mostly in agreement about what constitutes a positive outcome from education. Ideally, they wanted education to help produce young people who believe in themselves and see that they have a contribution to make, who have achieved at something in their schooling, who take responsibility for themselves and their actions, who have a sense of direction for their future, and who feel equipped to face whatever lies ahead of them.

Providers were also in agreement about young people's needs in relation to employment. They wanted to see more opportunities for young people to get exposure to different working environments through apprenticeships, training schemes, work experience or transition to work programmes. They indicated that many 18-year-olds want independence but are unable to manage practically, emotionally or financially. They saw an ideal living arrangement as one where young people would have some space to be themselves, but also have some support.

Providers felt it was unfair that the financial circumstances of young people at age 18 were so dependent upon their families' financial positions. They were also concerned about the stress put on young people who were trying to work and study at the same time, and the even greater stress on those from less advantaged backgrounds who might also be trying to make a contribution to the family income.

Providers considered that parental interest and involvement with young people was the most crucial factor determining good outcomes. The quality of the interaction between adults and their children was the critical factor, rather than the make-up of the family. These providers believed that extended family involvement can be hugely beneficial, and some expressed regret that Pākehā families on the whole have less extended family interaction now than in the past.

Providers had a range of ideas of how the Government could promote positive outcomes for young people, including the need for the Government to show leadership in putting a value on children and on parenting, and by doing more to support parents in that role. Adequately funding education, healthcare and social services was another way in which the Government could contribute to good outcomes for young people.

## The Pacific report

The families interviewed for the Pacific report were Fijian, Tokelauan, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Islands and Samoan. Each family was matched with an interviewer of the same ethnicity.

### *Pacific parents/caregivers*

Pacific parents/caregivers associated good outcomes with a good education. They saw education as a pathway to better employment opportunities. Most wanted their children to stay at school until the seventh form and to continue on to university or polytechnic if possible or some other form of training. A few parents/caregivers spoke of possible

careers for their children such as nursing, or becoming a doctor, accountant or engineer but most also recognised that in the end, their children would choose and that they as parents would support them in their choice.

Of equal importance to education, parents/caregivers spoke of wanting their children to grow up respecting others, maintaining a close relationship with their family and being involved with their church and community. Maintaining family ties and valuing the extended family relationship were seen as particularly important.

Some families felt a tension between wanting their children to stay in education, and acknowledging the importance to the individual and the family of their earning an income through full-time employment.

Although young people might find part-time work by 18, most families thought their children would still rely on the family as their main financial support. However, there were a few families where the children's part-time work already contributed to the family income rather than being for the sole use of the young person. Most parents assumed that their children would still be living at home with them at 18.

Interview discussions reflected the centrality of the church to Pacific communities. For many families, church and community were one. Several parents/caregivers spoke of wanting their children to help other young people in their communities who were 'less fortunate' than themselves, such as young people who were living on the streets.

Having 'good' friends was also seen as very important. Parents/caregivers acknowledged that friends influenced their children, so it was important to cultivate friends who would be a 'good' influence. The idea of dating and developing girlfriend/boyfriend relationships at 18 years of age was not always accepted by parents/caregivers.

Parents/caregivers talked about the values they had tried to teach their children. The values they hoped their children would be practising in their lives included caring, respect for others, being responsible, and honesty.

Many parents/caregivers spoke of the importance of maintaining Christian values and keeping faith with God. Most were practising Christians and had brought their children up in the church. Their hope was that their children would continue to practise Christian beliefs and practices as adults.

A few parents/caregivers were concerned about their children being able to maintain their cultural values. With their children growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand, the parents'/ caregivers' fear was that their children would move away from their own cultural values and traditions.

By the age of 25, parents/caregivers hoped their children would be settled in their careers, and be mostly financially independent of their families, with some possibly contributing to the family obligations.

The support these families said they gave their children to help them achieve good outcomes included: taking an active interest in their children's schooling; participating in family/extended family activities; support and interest at a personal level; and for many, promoting Christian values and involvement in the church.

Parents/caregivers also discussed how good teachers could make a difference for their children and the need for children and parents/caregivers to have access to good information about career options. They also mentioned the need for good relationships between schools and parents/caregivers.

Income was regarded as very important although some parents/caregivers added that money was not everything. A number of parents/caregivers spoke of the struggle to financially support their family on low-incomes. In some families lack of money to provide for the family's needs was an ongoing issue.

Families who were struggling to provide the basic necessities were less likely to be able to put aside savings for tertiary studies. Some accepted that a student loan was a possibility while others were totally against student loans. A lot of the fear associated with the student loan was about the inability to pay it and the accumulated interest back.

Parents/caregivers complained of not having enough information to be able to give advice to their children and of not knowing where to go to get the necessary information. They particularly wanted information about career options, courses to take, student loans/ allowances and scholarships.

When asked about what families, the Government and other groups should do to support young people achieving good outcomes, parents/caregivers said that families needed to love their children and give them support and encouragement. Spending time with children, paying attention to their needs and listening to them showed children that they were appreciated. If families believed in their children's potential they would be able to encourage them to achieve their goals.

Parents/caregivers made a number of suggestions for government action, including: more community development/awareness programmes to get information about issues that affect Pacific people out to the people; adult education programmes such as parenting skills, budgeting, planning for the future; acknowledging that youth is the most important time in a person's development and a time that needs urgent attention; making student loans interest free; and having cheaper housing and housing assistance for single-parent families.

Some believed that churches should do more to help young people. For example, they could buy computers so that children could have access through communities other than school, do more social work and education in their congregations and teach practical living skills like budgeting and planning, because people need help with daily things.

### *Pacific young people*

Most young people interviewed for the Pacific report wanted to stay at school until the seventh form because they thought education would increase their chances of gaining a good job or allow them to continue on to further education/training. Some were concerned about the financial difficulties they could see their families facing and wanted to start work so they could help out.

Among those who said they would go on to university or polytechnic, about half were unsure about what course they would take. A few thought that they would work until they had saved enough money to study. This would mean they would not have to take out a student loan.

In describing the sort of person they would like to be at 18, many young people used words such as "supportive", "thoughtful", "considerate", "kind" and "helpful". A number were health conscious and described themselves as "sports-minded", "health-orientated", "muscular" and "good at sports".

Young people relied on support and encouragement from family to achieve good outcomes. They thought parents/caregivers promoted good outcomes by giving them love and support, encouragement, discipline, and financial support if they could afford it. "Being there", and "believing in me*"*, were phrases often used.

They also saw the need to keep up with homework and school studies to be able to pass exams, which meant staying focused and motivated. They recognised that they would need financial support to study. Some families could not provide this, so part-time employment or scholarships were seen as a way of providing financial assistance.

A number of young people saw the support of the church and guidance from God as being crucial in their lives.

Young people identified a number of barriers that might stop them from becoming the person they wanted to become or achieving their goals. The most frequently mentioned included: getting married or having a partner; poor academic performance; lack of financial support; lack of information about the options available concerning courses and career possibilities; lack of family or friends' support for what they were doing; and giving up or losing interest in what they were doing.

Most of the young people saw money as playing a very important part in whether or not they would achieve good outcomes, particularly in the area of education.

Young people wanted the Government to assist young people into employment, possibly through apprenticeship schemes.[2] They also wanted the cost of education reduced, especially tertiary fees and the cost of the student loan.

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[2] The research was conducted prior to the introduction of the Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000 (094. Commenced 1 January 2001). See also Hon S. Maharey. (2000) *Modern Apprenticeships Close the Skills Gap.*

### *Pacific social service providers*

Providers identified several key outcomes that an 18-year-old should have gained from their education. These included achieving academically, which meant passing exams and having good study skills should they want to do further education, being clear about their future goals and knowing what they wanted to do when they left school, and having social and life skills and the skills to get a job. They also needed to have developed self-confidence and learnt some skills in how to relate to people and how to care for others, as well as skills in anger management, financial and time management, and goal setting.

Providers in the Pacific study echoed the tension parents had expressed between believing it is a good thing for young people to stay in education and recognising the importance of income from work to support themselves and to help their family. Providers recognised the need for adequate income to be coming into the family but some thought there could be more about reprioritising how money is spent. Some believed that financial commitments to the church were sometimes at the expense of children's needs.

Providers saw families as providing care, love and support. They thought families needed to be more involved in their children's lives and that there needed to be better communication between parents and children.

Providers wanted the Government to assist low-income families by providing financial assistance, and affordable homes for big families with little income. They thought education also needed to be appropriate to everyday life and wanted to see more life skills taught at secondary level.

## Discussion of the three sets of findings

This report is based on what families, young people and providers *believe* to be good outcomes for young people and what they think influences the extent to which these outcomes are achieved. Whether or not these are *actually* the factors affecting outcomes is a different question to be answered by a different type of research. A quick reference summarising the research findings is attached as Appendix 3.

Participants in the research had high aspirations in that almost all talked about the need for young people to have some kind of tertiary or post-compulsory education, ranging from university, polytechnic and vocational training to apprenticeships and training through work. Parents/caregivers and young people from all three groups saw education as a way of increasing choices and employment opportunities and, especially in the Māori and Pacific studies, as a key to improving social status and financial circumstances.

Nevertheless, while participants' aspirations were high, they were also aware of the obstacles young people face in seeking to achieve their educational goals. Many parents/caregivers felt unable to help their young people as much as they would like because they lacked information about career options and education and training opportunities.

The cost of higher education was a concern for all participants. Although parents did not want their children to begin their adult lives in debt, many acknowledged that a student loan would be the only way their young people could acquire a qualification. The cost put further education quite beyond the reach of some families who saw the burden of debt outweighing the advantages of higher education. Affordability was an issue particularly for Māori and Pacific families, where not only the cost of education had to be taken into account, but where the income a young person could earn sometimes made a significant contribution to the family budget. Several respondents in the parents/caregivers and providers sample considered it unfair that young people's opportunities are tied to the financial circumstances of their families.

While education was a key focus of the interviews, it was clear from respondents, particularly in the Māori and Pacific studies, that education was important as a prerequisite to getting a good job. All participants in this research put a high value on stable employment as a positive outcome for young people.

Families and providers mentioned the lack of opportunities for young people who are not academic. They noted that the focus on training has become increasingly 'academic' rather than practical, disempowering those who are not suited to this form of learning. While the move to reinstate apprenticeships met with approval, most wanted far more opportunities at the practical end of the training spectrum, as this would give young people the opportunity to learn by doing. At the same time, they would acquire a work ethic and a sense of self-worth, rewarded by a modest income.

Māori and Pacific participants, more than Pākehā participants, put an emphasis on their desire for young people to have a strong sense of their cultural identity. For Māori this included absorbing cultural values such as manaaki tangata and whanaungatanga, that is, respect for others and a concern for the wider family. In both reports adults and young people alike spoke of the importance of young people maintaining cultural knowledge and traditions.

The importance of constructive kinship and friendship networks was central to all three studies. Without such relationships, all participants could see a poor future for young people. Family/whānau were perceived as the most important source of ongoing support for young people but the part played by friends should not be underestimated. Young people themselves acknowledged the need to maintain good relationships with their family and to choose their friends carefully.

Pākehā respondents were less vocal than the other groups about the importance of young people participating in community. Māori participants believed that continued involvement in kapa haka, cultural groups and marae activities would help young people learn skills such as organising hui, looking after guests, budgeting, public speaking and childcare responsibilities. Such involvement would also anchor them in their community. Pacific respondents mentioned similar benefits from participation in church, voluntary and family activities.

All participants were asked specifically about the importance of income in achieving good outcomes. All agreed that while income is not the only factor in assuring good outcomes for young people, it is a critical one for many people. Without adequate income, families find it hard to feed, clothe and house their children. They cannot fund children's activities or support them in tertiary education.

Families' attitudes, values and beliefs universally supported pro-social outcomes for young people. All were concerned about the possible negative influences of peers, particularly in relation to drugs and alcohol and antisocial behaviour or poor attitudes to education and work. They believed in the need to inculcate positive values in their children to counteract such pressures and many sought support in this task, through parenting skills programmes and other strategies.

All participants saw the family as being the key source of support for young people to achieve good outcomes. Families gave that support in a variety of ways including: supporting children in their education through being active in school management, attending parent/teacher interviews and being involved in sports days and school trips; providing help with homework; and encouraging children to value education. They also provided encouragement, transport and financial support for children's interests; spent time with children; helped young people sort out problems; provided a clean, safe and secure home environment and a range of experiences and opportunities; talked about and modelled desirable values and behaviour; and set boundaries and provided guidance.

All groups, but particularly Pacific and Māori respondents, stressed the importance of maintaining family/kin ties, participating in activities of the extended family and drawing on their support.

Parents/caregivers and young people placed great store on the family as the primary influence on outcomes for young people. Most of those interviewed hoped and believed that their positive input would be strong enough to outweigh negative influences, particularly from young people's peers. However, they also recognised that some parents are too busy, too tired or too stressed to spend enough time with their children. Some lack parenting skills, others have too many problems of their own to deal with. In these situations, the positive impact of families can be severely reduced or non-existent. In all three studies, parents and providers identified a need for more support for families in order to strengthen their abilities to promote good outcomes for their children. Some talked about support for improving parenting skills, others mentioned the need to value parenting which can be achieved in a number of ways, including by having more family-friendly government and workplace policies.

Family adults, young people and social service providers believed that the cost of tertiary education was the single most important constraint on young people achieving desired outcomes, because the cost inhibits access to education. They also saw cost limiting choices, restricting young people's ability to experiment and take risks, and forcing them into what may be premature career decisions.

Anxiety about employment opportunities pervaded the research. The availability of work was of special concern to families in rural and provincial areas. With the decline in regional employment, they could see few alternatives to sending their young people out of the area to find work, with all the costs and anxieties that involved.

The importance of involvement in sports, music and other interests in helping young people achieve good outcomes was a key finding of the research. The adults thought that involvement in such activities can promote young people's physical health and fitness, provide focus and constructive use of leisure time, encourage relationships with like-minded peers, and give access to other adults who may share their interests and be able to fulfil a mentoring role.

Adults and young people agreed that the single most important contribution the Government can make is to provide free education. Most referred specifically to tertiary education but Māori participants also mentioned kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. They believed that the Government should also support the creation of more jobs for young people, particularly in rural areas, and promote more work and training schemes, including apprenticeships.

All groups of respondents agreed that business could provide more support for young people through providing more apprenticeships, work experience and other training options, and mentoring. Some recognised that some businesses may need support to do that. Businesses could also support good outcomes for young people by sponsoring events and supporting homework centres and educational scholarships. Truly family-friendly workplaces were seen as a very practical way by which businesses could support families in raising children.

Both adults and young people thought that schools could strengthen young people's chances of achieving good outcomes by focusing more on non-academic skills and knowledge. They specifically mentioned the need for more careers advice and life skills training.

The similarities between the three ethnically differentiated groups were greater than the differences between them. All focused on the need for a good education for young people, all wanted their young people to obtain good jobs, to have a sense of self-worth and to have respectful and supportive relationships with others. The ability and confidence in being able to achieve those were more likely to be related to income (i.e. being able to afford the necessary things to achieve outcomes) and to the educational background of parents (i.e. having the knowledge and information about what to do) than to ethnicity.

Nevertheless, there were some differences. As noted above, Māori and Pacific participants articulated more clearly than Pākehā respondents their wish that young people have a strong sense of their cultural identity. This difference may reflect all groups' acknowledgement of Pākehā cultural domination in New Zealand. Māori and Pacific participants were also more likely than Pākehā respondents to expect young

people to have an active involvement with the extended family throughout their young adulthood. This included living with family/whānau, living nearby or having space for family members to stay and, particularly for Pacific families, taking on a greater share of family obligations, including financial obligations, as they grew older. Many of the young Māori and Pacific people interviewed perceived their family ties and responsibilities in the same way as the adults and already had a sense of reciprocity and mutual obligation.

Māori and Pacific respondents were more likely than Pākehā to describe education as a key to improving social status and financial circumstances. Māori and Pacific families and young people in particular indicated that more information would be helpful to them in making decisions about the future. Pacific providers noted the importance of study support and homework centres. Among Pacific respondents, a good outcome was sometimes linked to sporting achievement rather than academic achievement.

The church plays a central role in all Pacific communities, and the sample interviewed for this study was no exception. Both adults and young people saw church activity as a source of spiritual strength, an avenue for community service and an opportunity to develop leadership skills. Some Pacific providers, however, were critical of the dominance of the church in some families' lives, implying that obligations to the church sometimes took priority over family needs, to the detriment of the children. They called for a better balance between church and family commitments.

## Conclusion

This report draws together the findings of three exploratory studies into the views of Māori, Pacific and Pākehā families, young people and service providers on what they consider to be positive outcomes for young people. The three individual reports revealed a high level of agreement on positive outcomes as well as on barriers to achieving them and key sources of support. The findings support the Ministry of Social Development's family dynamics/family effectiveness model that identifies the interrelated effects of:

- the family itself, through its form, functioning, financial and other material resources, labour market achievement, attitudes, values and beliefs

- the social, institutional, economic and community environment

- a young person's personal endowments and cumulative capacities.

The families in this study valued their children and wanted the best for them. While families/whānau recognised the need to provide a strong, secure base for their young people, there is a clear need for other sectors to play their part if young people are to reach their potential.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

New Zealand, along with other countries, is investigating the impact of family dynamics and family resources on outcomes for family members, especially children.

The Ministry of Social Development's organising framework for the various aspects of the family dynamics research programme recognises that the community, social, economic, institutional and policy environments have a direct impact both on family dynamics and on outcomes for children. Children's personal endowments and capacities also affect their outcomes. Patterns of family operation, family structure and resources, and attitudes and beliefs are critical moderating factors influencing both environmental and personal contributions to outcomes for children.

The differences between various cultures' values, patterns of family operation and interaction and beliefs are also important mediating factors.

Within this overall framework, this exploratory research project provided a closer focus on young people themselves. To implement this focus, the researchers considered a number of areas in which young people need to achieve competence. A useful guide to the range of outcomes for the research to include was derived from Ziglar's identification of physical, spiritual, mental, marriage, career, financial and social[3] competencies.

In New Zealand, a variety of agencies provide supportive services to children and families. Some provide services to all families regardless of their ethnic background or circumstances. Some seek to provide services in a culturally appropriate way to particular cultural groups, while others focus their attention on families considered to be at risk or in stressful circumstances. All these agencies will have either an explicit or implicit understanding of what constitute good outcomes for children. Whether articulated or not, this understanding is likely to inform the aims and objectives of their programmes and modes of operation. It was important therefore to include also the views of such providers in this research to explore outcomes for children, as well as the views of the young people and their family/whānau adults.

## 1.2 The research

As part of its family dynamics/family effectiveness research programme, the Ministry commissioned research in 2000 to explore the views of families, young people and service providers as to what constitute 'good outcomes' for young people. Good outcomes in this context included outcomes in the areas of education, employment, financial independence, living circumstances, relationships, interests and community involvement, qualities and values. The research is one among several pieces of work contributing to a wider examination of family dynamics and family effectiveness.

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[3] Ziglar, Z. (1992).

The research design allowed for separate studies into the views of Pākehā, Māori and Pacific families, young people and service providers. Each component was designed, managed and executed in a culturally appropriate way. The studies used one questionnaire adapted for each group, but were conducted without reference to one another and reported separately.[4] Each report has integrity in its own right, with its own style of reporting. This report draws together the findings of the three studies. It discusses a number of methodological issues, highlights key similarities and differences between the pattern of responses in the three studies and identifies areas for further research.

## 1.3   Research objectives

The research objectives were threefold:

- to investigate the views of New Zealand families, children and providers about what constitutes good outcomes for children, and the plans they have to achieve these outcomes

- to investigate the views of New Zealand families, children and providers about what factors they consider promote good outcomes for children

- to describe any differences in the views of families, children and providers about good outcomes for children and to determine whether these views vary across different cultural groups or other groups within the sample.

The research was conceived as an exploration of families' and young people's hopes and aspirations. As part of exploring those aspirations families were asked to identify potential barriers to their achievement, but the focus of the study remained essentially positive.

# 2.   Methodology

## 2.1   Some key concepts

### 2.1.1   Outcomes

The concept of an 'outcome' is likely to be unfamiliar to many families and children. It is often used in relation to programmes and policies but is less usual in family discussions. It is professionals rather than family members who define appropriate outcomes or areas of competence for young people.

When considering the future, family members and children are more likely to talk about goals, dreams, hopes, aspirations and achievements rather than outcomes, so these terms were used in the interviews. The researchers were aware that many families may not have

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[4] The Māori report was prepared by Paula Martin, the Pākehā report by Helena Barwick and Alison Gray and the Pacific report by Lanuola Asiasiga.

clearly articulated sets of desirable outcomes for their children, and therefore focused on what family members and children consider as positive achievements, skills, attitudes and goals when children leave school, and when they are young adults. The researchers also recognised that providers' views about 'good outcomes' for children may be rather different from families' views, as providers may focus more on children's competence with processes such as decision-making and social interaction, than on specific goals.[5]

Providers of social services to families and children are likely to work predominantly with disadvantaged families. This may influence their views of good outcomes in a different way from the other informants in this research, who are more likely to be considering the perspective of essentially functioning and intact families.

### 2.1.2  Family types and the 'unit of analysis'

The concept of 'family' is multi-dimensional. While research undertaken by the New Zealand Immigration Service[6] has shed some light on cultural differences in definitions of the family, it was the complexities of Pākehā, Māori and Pacific families that were of particular interest for this project

In designing the study, the researchers acknowledged that all young people belong, at some level, to an extended family or whānau. In Māori and Pacific cultures, the term for family specifically refers to extended family: *whānau, aiga, anau, kaiga, kainga, magafoa* and *yavusa*. In Pākehā culture, too, the extended family is central to some, and for some Pākehā families members of the wider family actively contributed to raising children.

All three groups also included young people whose parents had separated and, in some cases, re-partnered. The families into which these young people were born now lived in different households, and in several cases the young people lived in households with adults to whom they had no blood tie. This raised the question of who should speak about outcomes for these children. Should a step-parent or parent's partner be asked to speak about outcomes for the partner's child? Should the child decide who are appropriate adults to ask about their future? If the study had been larger, it would have been interesting to know what both the resident and non-resident parents of children in this situation perceived as 'good outcomes', and to obtain the views of both parents in shared custody arrangements. The Māori sample also included two young people who could be described as *whāngai*: children brought up by others in the extended whānau e.g. by aunts, uncles and/or grandparents.[7]

Because of the practical difficulties associated with attempting to interview all the adults who might contribute to a young person's upbringing, the researchers decided to make the young person the prime 'unit of analysis' and to interview the adult/s living full-time with them. Other adults were free to join the interview as appropriate. In most cases

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[5] See Martin, P. (2000).
[6] Elliott, S. and Gray, A. (2000).
[7] Definitions of whānau and whāngai used for the purposes of this research do not exclude other meanings that may also apply to these terms.

interviews with adults were generally with one or both parents, but parents' partners, grandparents, aunts, uncles or siblings also participated on occasions.

There were some differences in the sample configuration in the three studies. In the Pākehā and Pacific studies, interviewers were able to retain the focus on the children and seek out families where the young people were willing to talk. This was because interviewers were located in the research areas, and had time to find families who fitted the sample matrix.

The Māori sample was somewhat different, in that the focus was on the whānau rather than on a particular child. In several of the research locations, interviewers had a very limited time frame within which to complete the interviews. Although they originally intended to interview a young person from each of the whānau selected, in some cases there was no child old enough to be interviewed and in others the young person was unavailable during the time the interviewer was in the area, or simply unwilling to participate. The young person sample therefore consisted of seven children whose parent/caregiver was interviewed and 12 from whānau similar to the other family types in the whānau sample.

### 2.1.3 Ages selected for 'outcomes'

The interviews sought respondents' views on good outcomes for young people at the ages of 18 and 25. These ages were chosen after careful consideration.

By the age of 18, most young people are in their last year of school or have recently left and are looking ahead to further training, education or work. Their maturity is officially recognised in the voting and drinking laws, they are entitled to undertake contracts and to engage in military service and are eligible for a range of benefit entitlements. The researchers did contemplate using age 17 as the cut-off point, as this is the age at which young people are no longer the responsibility of the Child, Youth and Family Service. However, many young people are still at school at this age, and asking about outcomes at this point seemed more confusing than at 18, when young people are more clearly moving into young adulthood.

By the age of 25, most young people have finished their post-school training or education and are moving into full-time employment and taking on more adult responsibilities. This is also the age under the current student loan scheme at which parents are no longer expected to support their 'children' financially and is in line with the Ministry of Youth Affairs' definition of adulthood. Researchers also anticipated that this would be as far ahead as young people and adults could reasonably plan or foresee.

## 2.2　The sample

### 2.2.1　Families and young people

A purposeful non-random sampling strategy was used for this research. The particular design was based on maximum variation sampling, based on a range of characteristics of

interest. In each study, the sample was obtained through personal networks using a predetermined matrix to ensure that the sample included a range of family types, at different life cycle stages, from different socio-economic backgrounds and in different locations. The characteristics of the achieved sample are set out in Table 1 below. More detail of each sample is included in Appendix 1.

The research brief required that families be asked to explore their values and belief systems in some depth, as well as to share their hopes and fears for their children's future. As random sampling was inappropriate for this type of research design, it was considered that there were significant advantages to be gained by using researchers who were known to and trusted by the families to be interviewed.

All three studies met the requirements of the sample matrix. Each one included families in a range of financial circumstances and families who had experience of personal trauma, as well as families whose lives were more comfortable.

Each family or whānau was given a koha of $50 in recognition of the time they gave to the project. In the Māori study the young people who participated were also given a koha of $20.

The Pacific study included people from the six Pacific cultures most numerous in New Zealand, and included both New Zealand-born and Pacific-born families. The small sample size meant that it was not possible to cover any one group in any depth, or to make comparisons between the ethnic groups or New Zealand-born Pacific people, compared with recent immigrants. Quotes by parents/caregivers included in the report identify the Pacific culture of each speaker.

Other groups, such as new immigrants or people living in remote rural areas, were not the specific focus of this research, and may have different aspirations for their young people from those reported in this study. They may also face different difficulties in meeting their aspirations, have different sources of support and identify different strategies for improving outcomes for their young people.

The sampling strategy chosen mostly resulted in the views of essentially functioning and intact families being gathered for this report. If a larger, more representative study were to be designed, consideration should be given to including the views of less well functioning families.

The research brief specified that interviews should be with children, rather than with young people or young adults. For this reason, all those interviewed were aged 18 or less. This means that they were all speculating about a future about which they were not necessarily well informed, although many of them were in the position of having to make choices that might affect their future, for example, subject choices in school.

**Table 1: Matrix of families' and young people's characteristics**

| | *Māori Whānau* | *Māori Young People* | *Pacific* | *Pākehā* | *Total\** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Family Type* | | | | | |
| Sole parent | 11 | 4 | 3 | 5 | **12** (19) |
| Two parent | 7 | 8 | 10 | 9 | **27** (26) |
| Step/reconstituted | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | **9** (8) |
| Extended | - | - | 4 | 3 | **7** (7) |
| Whāngai | - | 2 | - | - | **2** (-) |
| *Location* | | | | | |
| Large urban | 14 | 16 | 18 | 10 | **44** (42) |
| Small urban/rural | 8 | 3 | - | 10 | **13** (18) |
| *Socio-economic status* | | | | | |
| Beneficiary | 9 | 5 | 1 | 6 | **11** (16) |
| Low to medium | 10 | 9 | 17 | 6 | **32** (33) |
| Medium to high | 3 | 5 | - | 8 | **13** (11) |
| *Age of young people* | | | | | |
| 7 | | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| 10 | | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | | - | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| 12 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| 13 | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12 |
| 14 | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| 15 | | 4 | 3 | 6 | 13 |
| 16 | | 5 | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| 17 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 18 | | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| *Gender* | | | | | |
| Male | | 8 | 7 | 10 | 25 |
| Female | | 11 | 11 | 10 | 32 |
| **Total** | 22 | 19 | 18 | 20 | 57 |

*The totals for the three samples based on the Māori young people's sample are given in bold; the totals based on the Māori whānau sample are given in brackets.

### 2.2.2 Providers

Within each study interviews were completed with a number of providers of health and social services. In the Māori study, iwi providers were also included in the sample. In the Pākehā sample providers were chosen to give a cross-section of a range of services, and individual respondents were approached for interview because they worked for that organisation. In the Māori sample participants were selected because they worked directly with Māori whānau or young people, and their views should not be taken as representing the organisation as a whole.

In the Māori study a koha of $30 was given to providers, in recognition of their contribution.

A list of providers interviewed for the study is included as Appendix 2.

## 2.3 The interviews

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed for parent/caregiver interviews and adapted for children and providers. The core interview schedules were modified slightly to make them appropriate for each ethnic group but each study covered the same topics with each of the three respondent groups.

The topics covered in the interview schedules were education, employment, finance, friendships and family relationships, interests and involvements, qualities and values and personal relationships. Given the focus on good outcomes, the interviewers did not ask directly about risk-taking behaviour or mental health issues, although many participants did raise health issues at various points in the discussions, for example under friendships and family relationships, interests and involvements and personal relationships. Participants tended to identify health issues as possible barriers to achieving good outcomes.

### 2.3.1 The interviewing process

Most interviews with family/whānau and young people were conducted in the respondents' homes, with adults and young people being interviewed separately. In the Māori study, some young people were interviewed at the interviewer's home by choice. In each study the interviewers were of the same ethnic group as the respondents.

In both the Māori and Pacific studies respondents were given the choice of which language they wanted to be interviewed in, the majority opting for a combination. The interviews were taped and the tapes returned to those families who wanted them for their own use.

Interviews with providers were generally carried out at their workplaces.

As the research was exploratory in design, the interviews included open-ended questions and not all interviews covered exactly the same ground. Interviews were long; most took between 60 and 90 minutes, with some taking up to three hours.

It was apparent with all the respondent groups that both adults and young people found it more difficult to comment in detail about anticipated outcomes at the age of 25 than at age 18. Uncertainty over what might happen during that seven-year period made it too difficult for most to respond in anything other than generalities. It is also likely that young people's and their parents' expectations will change over that period.

Young people also found it difficult to identify ways in which agencies other than their family might provide support and who should be responsible for providing particular

kinds of support. This may reflect a lack of familiarity with the responsibilities of various agencies.

## 2.4    Methodological issues

### 2.4.1  Three strands

Undertaking research in three relatively autonomous strands as was done in this project is not new. Two examples are the Intra Family Income Study, *The Common Purse: income sharing in New Zealand families,*[8] and Janet Chambers' report on attitudes to family violence.[9]   As with those studies, the approach was selected in this case as the most appropriate way of allowing issues to be defined according to the values and priorities of each cultural group. To paraphrase Fleming,[10] the aim was to minimise the imposition of Pākehā social policy assumptions on the understanding of family aspirations/related issues in non-Pākehā families, and to avoid interpreting Māori and Pacific aspirations according to categories and meanings associated with Pākehā families.

In reality however, those social policy assumptions and Pākehā values and priorities were inherent in the project brief. The project was not designed as three separate studies from the start. The research questions were included in the research brief in some detail and the methodology, including the size and nature of samples, was predetermined. The contract was held by the Pākehā research team, with the Māori and Pacific teams holding sub-contracts. The Pākehā team was also responsible for preparing the overview report. For a truly cross-cultural study to be achieved, devolution needs to occur earlier in the process of designing research.

Another possible interpretation of the research design is that significant differences in family aspirations will be culturally based. The findings of this research do not necessarily reflect that interpretation, and suggest that families' aspirations are influenced as much by their relative wealth or poverty as by their culture.

### 2.4.2  Definitions

Defining 'family type' was more difficult than might appear on the surface. For example, the Māori research team chose not to include 'extended family' as a distinct category. Instead it took the approach that all family types may or may not identify themselves as part of an extended family whose members do not necessarily reside together.

In the Pacific sample too, a particular household may consist of a one-parent, two-parent or extended family, but the people within that household usually have practical and financial obligations towards family members living in other households.

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[8] Fleming, R. (1997).

[9] Synergy Applied Research (1988).

[10] Fleming, R. (1997) pp xxii –xiv.

Similarly in the Pākehā sample, grandparents in three families were involved on a daily basis in caring for family members but lived elsewhere, next door in one instance. These three families were counted as extended families because of the degree of involvement the grandparents had.

In future studies, it would be useful to define an 'extended family' more precisely i.e. is it based on co-residence or can it refer to a level of financial commitment or some level of practical support?

Determining socio-economic status was equally difficult. Interviewers gathered information on the occupations of family adults and the composition of families, but did not gather details of family income. Fleming's study shows quite clearly that in Māori and Pacific families, in particular, household income is an unreliable indicator of the level of access to resources within the family. Fleming concludes that "while the Pākehā households were, by and large, self-sufficient economic units, the boundaries of the Māori and Pacific Islands households were more permeable to money, and their economies were, either occasionally or on a regular basis, part of the economy of the wider family group."[11] Comments made during interviews confirmed this finding, with examples of adults from more than one nuclear family pooling money, families relying on a number of adults working part-time, and family income being used to support people outside the household.

Family members' occupation was the most useful guide to socio-economic status, but again, occupation descriptors can cover a range of economic circumstances – managers, for example, operate at many levels and the incomes of self-employed business people can vary from negative to modest to extremely high.

Because this was a small exploratory study that was not designed to produce definitive results, it was decided to assess socio-economic status partly on the basis of occupation, and partly on the basis of additional information gathered during visits. To some extent, therefore ratings of socio-economic status were subjective. Future studies will need to take into account the complexities of today's families' work patterns, the changing nature of work itself and the lack of a direct relationship between education and income in establishing measures of socio-economic status.

### 2.4.3 The analysis

Each interviewer listened to and transcribed the tapes of interviews. The analysis sought to identify, for each group, the key factors determining good outcomes for children and young people, including factors that promote and hinder good outcomes. The analysis also paid attention to the words used to describe outcomes, and this report contains many direct quotes. Given the small sample, the researchers were cautious about imposing their own value judgements on the findings, which are therefore essentially descriptive.

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[11] Fleming, R. (1997) p.122.

The analysis was conducted manually and the report reflects the structure of the interview, which was based closely on the questions identified in the research brief. In the analysis an effort has been made to present the range of views on each topic covered as well as to indicate the weight of opinion.

Although some material has been included on comparisons between the views of parents, children and providers, and between the views of higher- and lower-income respondents, and children of different ages and genders, it must be remembered that this small-scale, exploratory study does not provide robust comparative results for these groups. Rather, the material shows where the range of possibilities might lie.

### 2.4.4 The report

Following the introduction and methodology, three chapters report on the interviews with Māori, Pākehā and Pacific families and providers. A discussion then provides more analysis of the collective material in relation to the research objectives, and the report concludes with recommendations for further research.

In the Pacific report, quotes by parents/caregivers identify to which Pacific culture the speaker belongs. All three reports identify the age and gender of speakers. Other identifying factors have been omitted.

# 3.    The Māori Report

## 3.1    Introduction

This chapter focuses specifically on the views of Māori whānau and providers who deliver services to Māori whānau.

The sample in this study consisted of 22 whānau located through the personal, whānau and community networks of the interviewing team. Efforts were made to obtain whānau representing a range of family types, income levels, life cycle stages and locations. This included sole-parent, two-parent and step/reconstituted families in Wellington, Auckland, Taupō, Rotorua and Murupara. Interviews were carried out primarily with parents/caregivers although in several cases other whānau members, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles and sometimes older siblings, were also present at the interviews. A total of 19 interviews with young people were also carried out. The young people included eight males and 11 females, and their ages ranged from 12 to 18.

The Māori research team comprised:

- Paula **Martin** (Ngati Kuia, Rangitane), responsible for design, analysis and report writing
- **Nan Wehipeihana** (Ngati Raukawa, Whānau-a-Apanui, Ngati Porou), responsible for design, fieldwork management and interviewing
- **Laurie Porima** (Ngati Manawa, Ngai Tuhoe, Tainui)

- **Sharlene Olsen** (Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Kuia)
- **Maraea Rakuraku** (Ngai Tuhoe, Ngati Kahungunu).

## 3.2 Interviews with adult whānau members

### 3.2.1 *What are good outcomes for young people at 18?*

*Good outcomes at 18*

The overwhelming aspiration held by most adults interviewed related to the young person still being involved in some form of education at the age of 18. This means either still being at school finishing off (year 13) or being at university, polytechnic or some other training institution or preparing to go. Education, and hence qualifications, were regarded as paramount for gaining access to employment.

Several parents spoke of the importance of education for providing choices and options about what type of employment the young people would be able to undertake. A number mentioned being able to get a "good" job with future prospects that would provide independence, self-reliance and the ability to move between jobs. One person commented:

> *It is important they get a good education or decent training so they will have choices of which job they want instead of getting lumbered with a manual job with no future prospects.*

For those whānau in small rural areas with high unemployment, education was seen as the key to breaking a cycle of poverty:

> *Tertiary education is important because it will prepare him to face the outside world. It will give him qualifications to be able to seek a career of his choice. There are hardly any jobs here and I don't want him ending up on the dole.*

> *I don't want my kids to stress about where the next dollar is coming from.*

A few parents mentioned specific areas in which they would like their children to study or train (such as law, business, computers, teaching, health, the police or navy) but most spoke in general terms about not minding what they studied as long as they had skills and qualifications that would allow them to get a good job.

The second key area whānau adults mentioned was a hope that their children would be strong in their taha Māori. For some parents this was expressed as a desire that their children would be fluent in te reo or learning the language. Others said they hoped their children would be involved in kapa haka or marae activities. Others wanted their children to be doing something to help Māori. Knowing one's whakapapa and demonstrating values such as manaaki tangata and whānaungatanga were also important. Underlying all these comments was the importance of knowing one's own identity

> *I also want him to know his roots, his Māori culture. This is important because it will enable him to have an identity. It will allow him to know who he is and where*

*he comes from. Knowing this will give you the confidence to seek out opportunities and to go into adult life and seek challenges.*

*I want her to know her whakapapa and be proud to be a Māori. I want her to be able to move easily and with confidence between the Māori and the Pākehā worlds.*

*Hopefully he will still be learning te reo Māori. This will enable him to know who he is and where he comes from and to become an independent, free-thinking person. This will be achieved by him being able to stand up and be proud of where he has come from and who he is.*

### Living and financial arrangements at 18

When asked where they saw the young people living at 18, most whānau expected they would still be living at home. If a young person needed to move away from home in order to pursue education or training, it was hoped they would be able to live with whānau wherever they went. Few saw their children flatting at 18, unless they were in full-time employment. Most felt that it would be too difficult and financially not viable for them to be in a flatting situation at that time. Almost all mentioned the importance of continued whānau support at this age, both financially and emotionally.

*Still at home. I want to be around to help and support him emotionally and hopefully financially if I can.*

*Not only is it cheap, but he will have support for him i.e. food, shelter, parental guidance.*

Several people mentioned that living with whānau would be both "safer and cheaper" at this stage of life. There was a feeling that young people were not generally ready to be out on their own at this time and needed continued whānau support:

*If he is at university, I see him staying with whānau for his first year because it will be cheaper and they can keep an eye on him. I want him to be in a stable environment that is clean, has kai, and is warm. Somewhere that is conducive to learning. It costs a lot to go to university and I don't want him wasting his time.*

*It's cheaper and safer. His mother can keep an eye on him because at that age they are still impressionable when it comes to drugs, sex and girls.*

Because most parents anticipated their children would still be in some form of education at 18, they also saw themselves as being the main source of financial support. Often this would be supplemented by a part-time job for extra spending money. Many whānau commented on the importance of learning how to manage money; some said they had already taught their children the value of money and skills such as budgeting; others said a part-time job would be important for learning these things:

*I would like him to have a part-time job so he can learn things like time management, work ethics, money management as well as having his own spending money. Having some kind of job gives them a little independence, too.*

Only a few parents mentioned grants, scholarships or savings schemes for education. Most mentioned student loans but nearly all of those hoped their children would not have to take out such a loan to pay for their education because of the resulting debt

> *I hope he doesn't have to get a student loan because it will put him into debt before he even gets a chance to start a career.*

> *I think student loans are not good because this puts our kids into a lifetime of debt – this burden should not be placed on them at such a young age. Schooling should be free even at university. Otherwise only the rich will be able to get degrees.*

> *I will discourage him from getting a student loan because I don't want him having a heavy debt before he gets started in life.*

### *Other activities, interests, community involvements at 18*

As well as the major outcome areas mentioned above, respondents were asked if there were any particular activities, recreational interests or community involvement in which they would like to see the young people participating at age 18. Most people felt that being involved in some sort of activity outside of the primary ones of education or work was important for providing balance in the young people's lives. Although many commented they would not force their children to do anything they did not want to do, nearly all felt that this 'outside activity' would 'broaden their horizons' in some way:

> *Other interests will make him broaden his outlook on life, make him want to see other things in the world such as other cultures, other languages, possible career paths.*

The most commonly mentioned activity was sports with nearly every respondent commenting that they anticipated this would be a major part of the young people's lives. Sports were seen to provide many benefits including physical, social and emotional. Development of social skills and teamwork were primary concerns here

> *Having physical activity helps your mind be creative and it makes you feel good. Sports should teach you how to live and be with people; they teach you social and people skills.*

> *He'll still be involved in sports, as this is a way of building upon his people skills. Socialising and meeting people is one of the basic requirements for living a balanced and meaningful life. Being involved in sports and community groups will help him achieve this.*

Few specific activities other than sports were mentioned. Adults were happy for young people to pursue whatever interested them as long as the criteria of balance, socialisation and a broader perspective on life were met, but few examples of activities were given apart from sports.

When asked about community involvement, most parents hoped their children would be part of wider community activities. Several people mentioned cultural groups, kapa haka or involvement with their marae. Learning about taha Māori from kapa haka or cultural

groups was regarded by many as being important for developing a strong sense of identity and self-confidence (as noted above). Being involved in the marae was also seen to provide other important benefits:

> *I want him to be involved in his marae as well as kapa haka because these things will teach him his Māoritanga ... The marae is also a place where our kids can learn skills, such as organising hui, budgeting expenses, looking after guests, public speaking, childcare responsibilities, historical information gathering. This will prepare them for the outside world.*

Most whānau said they would be supportive of any activity that helped develop social skills, a good work ethic, life skills not able to be taught in a classroom, a broader outlook on life and humility, respect and kindness towards others. Suggestions were generally not very specific, however, with a number of parents saying it would be up to the young people to decide what, if anything, they became involved in. Education and sports were considered by a few to be the priority at that age.

### Relationships with others at 18

Respondents were asked about the role relationships with family and friends would play in the young people's lives at 18 and whether these would have changed from the present time. Most people commented on the strength of whānau relationships and said that, if anything, these bonds would only get stronger over time. Relationships between the young people and other whānau members were clearly considered to be crucial:

> *There is a very strong bond with whānau now and I don't see any of that changing. The extended whānau play a large part in the family activities e.g. uncles and aunts regularly look after each other's children. Whānau tend to support each other emotionally and at times financially.*

> *No changes to relationship with whānau. It will be strong then as it is now. The kids have been taught to get on well with their cousins and other people. Children need to know their whakapapa. This is all part of keeping their Māoritanga.*

Relatively little was said about friends – no one foresaw any major changes in friendships and a few people commented on what they thought would constitute a good friend. Qualities of a good friend included

> *... look after one another and talk to each other and care about one another.*

> *... are there when you need them, are honest with you, are not afraid to tell you the truth even if it hurts and still be your friend.*

Relationships with partners at 18 were not mentioned. It was expected that relationships with whānau would be the most important ones young people would have although friendships, especially long-term ones, would also be valued.

### Values and qualities at 18

In addition to discussing what they hoped young people would be doing at age 18, respondents talked about the values and qualities they hoped they would have. Responses indicated a concern that children would turn out to be happy and confident in themselves

but were also focused on how they would relate to others around them, especially whānau. As noted above, qualities such as manaaki tangata and whānaungatanga were considered desirable by many parents/whānau. Specific qualities and values mentioned included:

- responsible, motivated, hard working, determined, focused, having high standards

- confident, independent, high self-esteem, having mana, knowing who they are, having dignity

- honest, trustworthy, loyal, kind, caring, helpful

- respectful to elders, courteous, having good manners and humility

- happy within self, easy-going.

Comments included:

> *The main qualities for anyone to have are honesty, trust and respect. If you have these then other things like being non-judgemental, a good listener, kind and caring will all come out as well. We just want him to be a kind, caring and committed person.*

> *I want him to be a self-reliant, caring, emotionally stable person. He'd have the qualities of respect, honesty, confidence and independence. Most of all to respect his kaumātua.*

> *Happy in life, go with the flow. Whatever he does, he does well and sets high standards. Have no stress in life. I just want him to get himself sorted out – get a good job, not tied down (i.e. having kids). I want him to be able to enjoy life while he is young.*

### 3.2.2   What are good outcomes for young people at 25?

Hopes and dreams for young people at the age of 25 generally followed on from those mentioned for when they were 18. By 25, it was expected that tertiary education would be finished with and a career established or being established. Family would no longer be supporting them financially, rather they would be financially independent and self-sufficient – "definitely not on the dole". Many parents said they hoped their children would have a career rather than just a job, where they would be earning good money, not struggling for the next dollar and in control of their own destiny.

It was also expected that by 25 the young people would not be living with whānau, except as a temporary measure. It was not expected by many that home ownership would be a reality yet but that was a goal for later on. At the least, they should be building up assets by 25. The importance of continued whānau relationships was demonstrated, however, in comments by a number of people indicating they hoped their children would be living nearby or would have spare room in their homes for whānau to come and stay. Whānau would still be there to provide a base of emotional support, but less so a financial one.

In terms of relationships with others, it was expected that young people would have formed more relationships away from their whānau, although these would still be central to their lives. They would be making their own choices about relationships and would have well developed people skills. Partners were mentioned more frequently than at 18, although only a few mentioned the possibility of having children at this time. It appeared that 25 was still regarded as a time for getting established financially and in a career rather than having children.

Involvement in things Māori was also expected to continue. They should continue to be involved in Māori organisations and still be coming back to the marae. Active involvement in helping Māori, either in a career or outside work, was still regarded as desirable.

### 3.2.3 Supports and barriers to good outcomes for children

Respondents were asked a series of questions about what they felt were the factors that promoted and hindered the achievement of good outcomes for children, including the role they thought they themselves played in this. Specific attention was given to the resources necessary to achieve good outcomes, particularly income.

*Factors and resources promoting good outcomes for children*

The role of whānau was regarded as critical in the achievement of good outcomes for children. The views of most parents were summed up by this comment:

> *Most things that a child needs to succeed in the world come from home and from the parents. If a child comes from a stable, clean, healthy and supportive home then it is highly likely that the child will have the foundations to succeed.*

When asked what they currently do to help achieve the outcomes they identified as desirable for their children, several key themes emerged. Active participation in the child's schooling and education was one of the most commonly identified activities. Examples given included being a member of the Board of Trustees or PTA, participating in fundraising activities and being involved in sports days or school trips. At home, encouragement and help with homework and learning in general, such as teaching children to use a computer, were considered important. Relatively few of the respondents mentioned a university education of their own. Those who did felt they could be important role models in this area. One said she felt she could "plant the seeds in order for him to go to university".

Most people also explicitly mentioned the importance of providing love, encouragement and support to their children. The importance of spending time with children and being interested in them was a common theme

> *Encourage her in her sports. Take time out with her. Let her know that there is support for her from home and from the whānau.*

> *Tell him we love him. Encourage his learning e.g. do homework with him. Take an interest in his sports. Take time out to play and spend time with him. Have*

*open communication with him so that he will know that we are interested in his life and support him.*

*I am gentle with her. I don't raise my voice to her. I try and talk with her and give her space. I hate violence and don't show any towards her. I try and be patient with her and let her figure things out before stepping in.*

*Tell them that they are allowed to make mistakes but to learn from them and push themselves to do better. Give them encouragement in all things that they are interested in.*

In addition to this emotional support and encouragement, several people commented on the need to provide material support such as financial support and a sound physical home environment:

*Try and provide a secure, clean home for her to grow up in as well as set a good example to her.*

*Making sure that there is food on the table for the family and that it is hot. Keeping a clean house.*

*Try and set a good example by having a clean house and teaching all our kids how to do the same.*

This emphasis on physical factors appeared to be part of a larger picture of providing a secure and stable environment in which children could flourish and achieve. It may also reflect situations where being able to provide hot food on the table cannot always be taken for granted.

Many parents also spoke of their efforts to guide young people in how to relate to others and encourage positive interpersonal relationships

*We try to guide him to healthy relationships. We lay down guidelines such as how to respect elders and look after people, especially his friends.*

*Teach them to listen to what people are saying, then to speak. We try to show them how to behave around people, socialise, interact.*

*Encourage them to seek out and get to know other cultures. This is for them to both appreciate their cultures as well as respect others.*

Other activities mentioned that whānau can do to help promote good outcomes included: paying for boarding school; establishing an education trust; ensuring children have access to a computer and the internet; helping organise concerts or sports events; encouraging kapa haka, te reo and marae activities; and encouraging a range of hobbies and interests.

The other key area that participants thought has a role in promoting good outcomes was schooling and education. This is not surprising given the emphasis placed on the importance of becoming well educated and qualified.

A number of people talked about the need for education to include opportunities for work experience and to develop "work ethics". This should be aimed at developing career aspirations:

> *Schools can offer kids meaningful work experience such as business management to show them that there are more than just bush and forestry jobs available.*

> *... kids need to know what is out there in the world for them to possibly explore. They should send the seniors out into the workforce for a couple of hours a week to learn some kind of work ethics and experience. The community and businesses need to get behind this to support it. Perhaps they need to know how to work from the bottom up, then they will try harder at school so they don't have to start way at the bottom.*

Schools themselves could also contribute, particularly in the quality of teaching provided and the subjects offered

> *At school she will need teachers that can inspire and encourage kids to learn because at this age they are easily impressionable. There is a need for schools to offer a wider variety of subjects to help stimulate learning as well as broadening their horizons.*

> *Schools need to make sure they teach our kids in a way that gives them excitement and enthusiasm about learning. Strategies should be put in place to cater for different learning styles.*

A few people mentioned the teaching of te reo Māori in particular:

> *Schools are going to have to cater more for those kids that come through kōhanga and kura kaupapa. They are going to have to have "on to it" teachers. Teachers that are competent at teaching te reo Māori.*

> *Te reo Māori should be compulsory in schools the same as English and mathematics.*

Several people mentioned free education and/or healthcare as factors that would contribute to good outcomes. Free education, in particular, was thought to be necessary. The importance of income in achieving good outcomes is discussed below.

### The importance of income

Whānau were asked specifically about how important income is in achieving good outcomes. Nearly everyone regarded income as an important factor in the achievement of the goals they saw for their children. It was not regarded as the only factor, but for many people it was certainly a critical one. A few people focused on the other things needed to achieve good outcomes:

> *Income helps and it is important but not as important as having belief, desire and the motivation to succeed – and all this starts from encouragement within the whānau.*

*Income is not important for achieving goals – it is the desire and hunger that will make you succeed. Income helps though!! What kids need is positive support from all sectors – government, parents, whānau, schools, the community.*

Income is very important. However, it is only part of the sequence – you need also to have the drive, desire and the enthusiasm to succeed. This needs to be started when kids are young and encouraged as they grow up. You have to sow these kinds of seeds when kids are small. Most people, however, emphasised the importance of income in achieving desired outcomes.

*Without income we will struggle to be able to give our kids the things we want for them. You can have the desire and the dreams but you need the dosh to make it happen.*

If you are not financially placed then it will be almost impossible for her to achieve her goals. Money is a big obstacle for most poor families when it comes to getting their goals. We will definitely have to look at ways of raising money for her to go to school and to lessen the amount she will borrow on a student loan. Being able to buy certain things was one reason identified:

*Income will help to buy the equipment for work or to help pay for school things i.e. computers and software. Income just makes the struggle a little bit easier. It will also help gain extra skills that otherwise wouldn't be possible if still poor.*

*Very important for things such as living expenses and school fees.*

Another reason given for the importance of income was the stress created when there is not enough money for the basics:

*It will make her more stable because she won't have to worry about where the next dollar is coming from. She will then be able to plan her goals in order to work towards getting them.*

*It will be less of a burden and he can then concentrate on the kaupapa of getting his goals.*

*Income will be very important for achieving goals because if no income, no goals. The desire and the motivation to achieve eventually go out. If they had an income coming in then they will be more motivated to try and achieve more for themselves.*

One person commented on another possible consequence of limited income:

*Parents who are not working or struggle to get money have a big influence on their children's future. They could put pressure on their kids by telling them how tight money is and that child feels guilty about going to a higher level of education.*

*Factors and resources preventing good outcomes for children*

When asked what might stand in the way of the young people becoming the sort of people the respondents hoped for, many people identified traits or characteristics of the young people themselves. Principal among these was a lack of confidence or self-esteem:

> *She will be her own worst enemy. It will be a lack of self-confidence and belief in what she is capable of doing.*

Most people felt that it was the role of the whānau to make sure young people had the "inner strength" and confidence to deal with problems that might arise:

> *Coming up against a lot of failures may lead them to just giving up and not striving for something better. But most failures come from not having the inner strength to deal with it and learn. This is where it is important for family to come in and help out. They need to be there to support their kids.*

> *Lack of self-esteem and/or self-confidence. This will probably occur if they haven't been shown what opportunities lie out in the big world. Not having whānau support could make them feel as if they are alone and therefore they may end up giving up.*

The stability of the whānau was also mentioned by some respondents, with a few people suggesting that separation could have a negative impact on young people:

> *Stability of the parents' marriage. Break-ups can have a damaging effect on how kids behave physically and emotionally. This can cloud their focus or even stop their motivation to go out and achieve their goals.*

> *Peer pressure and/or the influence of other people was thought to be a potential barrier by a number of parents. Negative influence by friends and peers but also by other significant people, such as teachers, was identified as possibly causing problems: Most probably peer pressure. He may fall into the wrong crowd and easily follow them down the wrong path, such as drugs, wagging school, stealing and being a hoodlum.*

> *Her friends will be a major influence in stopping her getting anywhere because they are all close to each other and if something is happening then they will all be involved.*

> *Some kids can be easily influenced by negative things and these could have an effect on impressionable kids. Put-downs from school and other people, such as teachers calling kids "dumb idiots".*

One issue identified by over a quarter of the families interviewed was teenage pregnancy. This was mentioned by the parents of both girls and boys as something that would create a serious impediment to achieving goals:

> *Having a teenage pregnancy will just blow my kids' dreams away. It would be babies making babies.*

> *Being involved in teenage pregnancy. He won't have had the chance to experience life without responsibilities.*

As in the previous section, several families again mentioned lack of money as a significant barrier to achieving goals, particularly in relation to the cost of getting an education.

### Impact of peers on good outcomes for children

Most people took the view that friends would play a large part in their children's lives. Any influence, however, was as likely to be positive as negative. Although negative peer pressure was identified above as a potential barrier to achieving good outcomes, most people felt that with good whānau support, such pressure could be resisted.

> *Because we try to teach our children good values now, we hope that they will not be swayed by any of their friends to do the wrong things. Friends play a large role in kids' lives, especially ours. But again, it is the strength our kids have within themselves – knowing who they are and where they come from – that will give them the confidence to make good decisions.*

> *He will be a level-headed person and probably won't be easily distracted. He will have the background from being at kōhanga and kura that will guide him to do what is right.*

> *Some friends are good and some are bad. There will be the odd one that will come into the group and at times lead them astray. But if children are focused and stick to what they have been taught by their parents, they will know right from wrong.*

Few people gave specific examples of how they felt friends would influence their children's lives other than to comment on the importance of having good friends. Many parents felt it was important to teach their children the meaning of friendship:

> *Our kids need to know the difference between friends and acquaintances. True friends look after each other through thick and thin. Friends will have a big influence on what kids do.*

> *Friends and relatives are important to each other because they can be confidantes, listeners, advisers and just good mates. A friend is one who shows unconditional love, has mana, is trustworthy and shows a lot of respect.*

A few respondents felt the impact of friends would be negligible on young people. Instead, it was felt that whānau would have a much more powerful influence:

> *He will have friends but he won't be dependent on them. They will be there purely as friends. Family are likely to be more influential than friends.*

> *We believe that the biggest influences on her life will be her whānau. Everything that she will do when she is an adult will be as a result of what she has been shown by us and other members of her family. Her friends will not have much influence on her decisions as an adult.*

*Impact of community and social change on good outcomes for children*

Respondents were asked to think about recent changes in society and the extent to which they might impact on outcomes for young people. Overall, the most commonly mentioned issues were the increasing use of computers and the internet, and the impact of drugs.

Most people felt that an ability to use computers was critical for employment opportunities and that all young people should be familiar with computer technology, including the internet:

> *The IT world will be a must for our kids to grasp because that will be where most of the employment will be. If not, then computers will have some part to play in their jobs.*

> *Every child now should be made to learn the computer because almost every job has to use computers in some way.*

> *Computers are the way of the world so our kids need to know how to use them to keep up with the rest of the world.*

Several parents mentioned that they themselves were committed to ensuring their children had computers at home along with internet access. Others emphasised the role schools had to play and said that learning to use computers should be compulsory at school.

Drugs were also a concern for many parents. Several made comments to the effect that "drugs are already here" and there was no point trying to hide the reality away from young people. Instead, the focus was on finding ways of dealing with the pressure young people were likely to face. Again, many respondents emphasised the need for a loving and supportive whānau to equip young people to deal with such issues:

> *If lessons on how to cope with teenage sex, drugs, alcohol and suicides don't begin during primary schooling then it is pretty much too late. Most college kids already know about or have started experimenting in some of these things. Again, a big responsibility belongs with whānau, including relatives to guide our kids through these challenges and changes in the community.*

> *There will always be changes in the world but if kids have love and whānau support then they will be much more equipped to handle any change. We will always have drugs and suicide but if they're taught good habits by their parents, children will at most times choose the right way – not to take drugs or kill themselves.*

> *Concerning drugs, if the communication skills are open and honest between parents then together they will be able to work through issues that will affect their kids.*

### 3.2.4  Who should do what?

When asked to summarise the key things that whānau, the Government and other groups could do to help young people achieve good outcomes, most people reiterated earlier comments about the importance of whānau providing a loving and supportive base for their children. Most people seemed to regard building self-esteem and confidence and instilling a desire to succeed as critical for ensuring good outcomes and felt that this was primarily the role of the whānau. In addition to the many suggestions about the role of families made in the preceding discussion, the key things for families to do included:

- "being there for our kids"

- teaching kids they are special

- saying "I love you" more often

- communicating openly and honestly about taboo subjects such as drugs, abuse and suicide

- sharing knowledge and experience with children, especially knowledge of tikanga and te reo.

There was also a recognition by most respondents that others also had a role to play in contributing to good outcomes, particularly the Government. In line with the earlier comments about the crucial role of education and the barrier low-incomes could create to accessing education, it is not surprising that most people thought the key thing the Government could do was provide free education, including tertiary education, kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa:

> *There should be free education and free healthcare. If you do not have those burdens hanging over you then you will be in a better position to concentrate on your goals.*

> *The Government should also make education either free or more accessible to people especially poor people because living in the country area it is hard enough trying to survive on a benefit let alone trying to encourage our kids to go to university or even school.*

A few people pointed out that the benefits of education were not just for the individual:

> *Free education at all levels. The benefit to the country is that more people may opt for subjects that lead to high paying jobs like dentists, doctors and lawyers.*

> *There should be free education up to university level so our kids are able to seek opportunities they never would've considered. Knowledge is power and therefore it will benefit the country and society as a whole.*

Several people supported the idea of schools providing a broader range of education including drug education, safe sex classes, life skills and work experience.

Employment was a major concern.  The Government was also seen by some to have a role in creating economic conditions that would lead to the availability of more jobs and others suggested more work and training schemes. A few respondents thought that it

should be more difficult to gain access to benefits, particularly the DPB, as they felt these could be detrimental:

> *Make it harder for people to get benefits … Making benefits less accessible will force people to look harder for work but also make people see how important their education is and hopefully make them stay longer.*

> *Access to the DPB must be made harder. Our people have been in a welfare state mode for too long and must now try and work their way out of this situation.*

Even those who stressed the paramount importance of whānau in achieving good outcomes for children believed the Government could play an important role also:

> *Whānau need to take responsibility for their families and stop blaming the Government for everything that goes wrong. We as a society must bring back to people what it means to have a sense of familiness. Everything starts with the whānau. If they are strong, then they will overcome anything. Parents need support and for some they need parenting skills. This is where the Government can become involved. Have agencies that help parents be good parents.*

One whānau thought the Government did not appreciate the reality facing many families:

> *The Government needs to take note of what parents are saying. They need to find out what is really happening to poor people so they can get a good understanding of what we as parents have to face on low incomes.*

Apart from the Government and whānau, the only other group or sector thought to have a major role in contributing to good outcomes was business. This again reflected the emphasis on employment as an issue for the whānau interviewed. A number of people thought that businesses could support young people by providing mentoring or work experience schemes:

> *Businesses can help by offering work experience for kids, giving out scholarships and grants – these can be tax deductible.*

> *Businesses should be offering work experience for our kids so they know what it is like in the workforce. This will broaden their horizons to look for more opportunities.*

> *Business people should take time out to share their experiences with the young people.*

Overall, those parents and other adult whānau members interviewed felt that it was whānau that played the most important role in determining outcomes for young people. All those interviewed regarded providing a secure, loving, encouraging base from which to venture into the world as critical. It was felt, however, that there were certain key things the Government could do to support families, such as providing education about parenting skills. The reality of life for low-income families also needed to be recognised and support provided through free education and healthcare and the creation of jobs.

## 3.3 Interviews with young people

### 3.3.1 What are good outcomes for young people at 18?

*Good outcomes at 18*

Young people were asked how far they would like to get at school and whether they intended to carry on with further education or other training after leaving school. Most of those spoken to said they planned to stay at school as long as possible. Most were aware of the importance of gaining education and qualifications in order to achieve their ambitions. The majority had a clear idea about the sort of career they wanted to pursue and several had already made the effort to find out exactly what qualifications and subjects would be required to get into the jobs or training they wanted.

The value of education was generally related to 'getting a good job':

> *At school you study hard, you get qualifications. If you don't get no qualifications, you end up on the dole. If you work hard you get a good job, if you don't then you get nothing (male, 15).*

> *I'll probably stay until the end of Seventh form – hopefully – so I can get into university or polytech and get the qualifications to get a real good job. Something that I enjoy and something that pays good. Not something I don't like doing (male, 16).*

> *If you don't have a job then you'll be sad, no car, no house or if you do it will be a hakari one (male, 12).*

A few young people, particularly those in more rural areas, specifically mentioned that getting a good job was important to them for family reasons, particularly so that they would be able to contribute to the wellbeing of the whānau:

> *I want to get a good job so I can earn money and help out the old people. I want to do this because some of them can't help themselves (male, 12).*

> *I just want to work so I can help my family and we don't have to struggle. I want to look after my nanny (male, 13).*

> *I want to get a good job and get good money so I can look after my nanny. A good job is a doctor or a dentist because you can heal people or fix their teeth. People with false teeth can't eat hard kai (female, 12).*

Some were not yet sure what type of job they wanted but still planned to stay at school until year 13 [Seventh form]:

> *I want to do everything I can at school. I come from a family where my mum didn't get to third form and my dad didn't pass fifth form. I want to show them that I can do what they couldn't do. I want to go as far as I know I can go. If I don't stay at school, I would be wondering if anything would have been different (female, 15).*

*I want to try and get into university. I've never thought of myself going to university because a lot of my family haven't. I want to try and do better than my parents and aunties. I'm the fourth oldest of my sisters and cousins and none of us have finished school (female, 14).*

A few of those interviewed had already left school for one reason or another and expressed some regrets about leaving school without qualifications:

*I know now that it is important to go as far as you can get in school because no one is going to look after you but yourself. Whānau will help but you shouldn't bludge off them all the time. Education is the way to get good paying jobs (female, 16).*

*I regret not putting in the effort, just bumming around and thinking that everything would be handed down to me and stuff. So I kind of mucked up big time there (female, 18).*

Most seemed committed to completing their schooling and could not really anticipate what might make them change their minds about staying on:

*I don't think I'll give up on school because I really want to go to university and get a good job. I don't want to go on the dole. Nothing is going to get in the way (female, 14).*

Two people mentioned being "led astray" by friends or not getting on with teachers as possible factors that might lead to their leaving school early, while a few others said the only reason they could see would be if they were offered a really good job with lots of opportunities. On the whole, however, it seemed that most were committed to staying on at school.

Most people also had some plan to go on to further education or training related to their career ambitions. About half planned to go on to university while others mentioned polytech, some kind of trade training or a specific course such as acting or singing. A few had plans to go into the air force or army, with one of the primary reasons being that the armed forces can provide training and qualifications "to fall back on".

### *Living and financial arrangements at 18*

About half the young people interviewed thought they would still be living with family at the age of 18 while the others said they would be flatting with friends. A few did not know. For those who planned to still be living with their parents, the main reason given was cost i.e. it was cheaper to be at home. These respondents were more likely to be also planning to be in some kind of tertiary education or study at that age. A few whose university plans were expected to take them to another region also thought they might be flatting.

Those who wanted to go flatting reflected a desire for some kind of independence:

*I want to have my own flat. There's just not enough space left at home for me to do my own thing. The kids are good but I get no privacy. I'm still sharing a room with one of my younger sisters (female, 16).*

> *I think I will be flatting. I really don't want to stay home all my life with my mum (female, 13).*

Some of those in more rural locations felt they would have to move away from home for employment purposes:

> *I'm going to be living in Wellington because there is nothing in X. No jobs or flash ones anyway (male, 12).*

Most young people thought they would be supporting themselves at least partially by means of a part-time job. For those who planned to study, any kind of job to help support their education would be fine – job satisfaction at that stage was not the primary motivation. McDonald's, KFC, cleaning or working in a café were the most commonly mentioned jobs young people studying expected to be doing.

Young people wanted jobs to help with fees, to avoid getting a student loan and for extra spending money. Several also expressed a sense of responsibility to their whānau, saying they either would contribute directly to family expenses or wanted to help ease the burden on their parents:

> *I'll get some money from my parents but not much because they're on a benefit. Hopefully I'll have a part-time job. I'll work anywhere that will help pay for any schooling that I need and also to help buy kai for the whānau (male, 15).*

> *I'll try and get some part-time work while I'm at polytech so I don't have to scab off my parents. I know they'll give me some but we just have too many kids and I feel stink asking them for money all the time (female, 16).*

Those who thought they would still be living at home expected at least some measure of support from their parents. The fact that living at home would be 'cheaper' was the primary motivation for staying at home but, as discussed above, most of those also thought they would be contributing through part-time work. Several, however, were adamant that they wanted to be financially independent and would turn to parents only if "desperate". Some of those from rural areas thought some reliance on parents would be unavoidable:

> *I'll be getting money from my mother or other whānau and from a part-time job. There are not many jobs here anyway so you have to ask parents for some spending money (male, 13).*

Those young people who did not clearly anticipate being in further study tended to have less clear plans about how they would be supporting themselves:

> *Yeah, I'm not going to university, it costs too much. I'll still be learning things like in a job but I won't go to university… Hopefully I'll have a job. Part-time or full-time, it doesn't matter. A job is a job (male, 16).*

### Relationships at 18

Relationships with family and friends were important to all the young people interviewed. Nearly all commented specifically on the importance of whānau and

expected that at 18 family relationships would still be as strong as at the present time. Relationships with friends were also considered important but there was less certainty overall about whether they would still have the same friends at 18. Some thought they may have moved to a different location which would affect friendships, others wondered if they would maintain the same common interests and others felt ambivalent about current friendships and did not anticipate them surviving.

The most common reasons given for avoiding people were if they had a "negative attitude", were dishonest or were into drugs. Several young people commented that people into drugs are "ruining their life" and "wasting my time".

Few young people saw themselves with a partner by the age of 18. Some said they didn't mind if they did have a partner but others were adamant that they did not want one. Both boys and girls said the major drawback of having a partner was that it would somehow interfere with their reaching their goals:

> *They get in the way. If you are aiming for a job and you find some fella, they will take you away and you will not focus on your job anymore (female, 14).*

> *It would stop me from doing the things I want to do because you have to make choices between your boyfriend and what you want to do (female, 13).*

> *I don't want to be tied down, worried about someone when I can be doing what I want to do without worrying that I'm gonna hurt someone (female, 16).*

The most important thing to be avoided was having children at 18:

> *I won't be having any kids at 18. All my friends that I went to intermediate with have kids now and they wish they hadn't. You just lose your freedom. There's plenty of time. I need to get my qualifications, get a career and then after that have kids (female, 16).*

Young people were far less equivocal about their relationships with their family. For many it was quite simply the most important relationship in their life and would continue to be so:

> *It's important to see my family … because they are family. Your parents brought you into the world and they love you. They're your family. They should be the most important things in the world and they are (female, 14).*

> *I want to keep in contact with them, know what they are doing. When something goes wrong with my sisters or brother I don't want to be left out. I don't want to miss out on anything they do in their life, don't want our family to drift apart. Everyone has to have family. Family is always gonna be there but most friends drift away. Family are there through thick and thin whether you like it or not (female, 14).*

> *If you have no whānau, then you have zilch (male, 15).*

> *Without whānau you're lost (male, 15).*

## Interests and activities at 18

Young people mentioned a fairly narrow range of interests and activities. Like the parents interviewed, the most commonly mentioned interest was sport, in which nearly everyone was involved at the time of the interview and anticipated they would continue to be when they were 18. The few people who expressed reasons for their sports involvement were likely to mention social and health reasons:

> *I'll still be playing rugby just to stay fit and to find me some new mates. If you don't do any sports then you end up being lazy and you don't want to get up and do anything (male, 12).*

> *I wouldn't mind trying out for waka ama ... they have heaps of whānau "get-togethers" where everyone just has fun on the water. Plus it is one way to stay healthy and to socialise and to meet people (female, 16).*

Activities relating to taha Māori, such as kapa haka and helping out on the marae, were mentioned by several young people:

> *I'll still be doing kapa haka. We have to hold on to our Māoritanga because that's where it's at. If you don't have your Māoriness then you probably don't have your whānau. Without whānau you're lost (male, 15).*

There were few other activities or interests mentioned to any great degree. Those that did come up were friends, computers, learning different languages and acting. No one anticipated that their interests would change much when they were 18.

## Values and qualities at 18

When asked what kind of person they would like to be at 18, young people had a similar list of qualities and values as the parents interviewed. These included being:

- honest, trustworthy, thoughtful, caring, loving, respectful and kind:

  *Kind. I just want to be kind. If you are not kind, everyone's all bitchy and that is not good (female, 16)*

- sensible, reliable, studious, mature, role-model, hard-working, responsible:

  *Responsible – knowing when to sit down and work and not muck around (female, 15)*

- happy, positive, good friendships:

  *I'd like to get on with heaps of people. I don't want to be an outcast or a loser (male, 16)*

  *Don't dis my friends. Help out my friends, loyal, support my friends. I hate people who don't give a damn about their friends. I wouldn't bail out on my friends (male, 16)*

A few young people said they would be whānau-oriented or whānau-based, including "looking after the old people". Others wanted to be "on to it", motivated, adventurous, goal oriented and intelligent, which one person described as:

> *Intelligent. There's a difference between smart and intelligent. Smart is having knowledge. Intelligent is being able to use that knowledge. I won't waste my time and brains on the wrong things. I'll make good decisions, based on good facts (female, 14).*

### 3.3.2 What are good outcomes for young people at 25?

By 25, most young people saw themselves as financially independent and either owning their own home or travelling overseas. Tertiary education would be finished and they would be established or getting established in their chosen careers. These included bio-technician, doctor, nurse, computer programmer, electrician, chef, business person and hotel owner. Several of those who wanted to be in their own home specifically mentioned wanting a big house so there would be room for whānau to come and stay. A number hoped they would have a partner by that time, although others said a partner was not necessary for happiness. Few said they expected to be married with children. Travelling and "seeing the world" was an expectation for nearly a third. The key outcome, however, was to be financially independent and there was a clear expectation of earning "good money", if not at 25 then very soon after.

### 3.3.3 Supports and barriers to good outcomes for children

#### Factors and resources promoting good outcomes

The main factors identified as necessary for achieving good outcomes were whānau support and money. Whānau were important for providing love and positive support, giving encouragement, direction and guidance, helping with homework or taking part in other interests and providing financial support such as paying fees for courses. The importance of being loved by family was summed up by one young person:

> *They love me. That's very important. You can't get anywhere without love because it makes you feel happy and wanted. When you feel happy, you do better at things (female, 14).*

Friends, while regarded as important, did not generally feature as a factor in promoting good outcomes. Negative peer pressure was more likely to be mentioned as a barrier to achieving goals (see below).

Only a few people explicitly mentioned schools and education as factors promoting good outcomes, although given the number who planned to stay on as long as possible to get good qualifications it can be assumed that education was regarded as an important factor. When asked to finish the sentence: 'the most important thing that is going to help me be the person I want to be is … ' only a few identified their own effort at school:

> *Me doing the hard work studying and getting the good grades (male, 15).*

Schools were seen to be able to provide certain resources such as skills in computer technology, work experience, the necessary subjects to get into university courses and encouragement from teachers:

> *My teacher at school said that knowledge is power and you get that from education. That's what I need to get myself on the way (female, 16).*

Young people made a range of suggestions for additional support they felt they might need to achieve their goals. A number of people identified having more information about careers in which they were interested. A few had very definite ideas about what they wanted to do and had already actively sought out advice and information. Many others, however, did not know where to go for information or had not accessed careers advisers at schools. Several people said they would like to meet people working in their field of interest as a way of finding out more about career options:

> *Someone to show us what else is out there apart from the bush. People with flash jobs coming to tell us how they got their job and what they had to do to get it (male, 13).*

> *Somebody that has already been doing these jobs to tell me about them. Tell me if it's good, if they enjoy it (male, 16).*

> *Getting to meet some biotechnicians and asking them how to become one too (female, 12).*

Very few mentioned being able to get specific information about careers from family or friends. Only one person, both of whose parents were university educated, commented quite confidently that she knew she could get this information from such a source:

> *My parents, relatives and their friends. My friends and my friends' parents. Depends who I ask. X's mum is studying to be a lawyer. Y's dad is a scientist, her mum's a mathematician with a science degree (female, 14).*

Other support mentioned included having access to a computer, work experience, more support from particular family members and more job opportunities in rural areas.

### Barriers to achieving good outcomes

When asked if there was anything that might stop them from achieving their goals, the most common reply was "lack of money":

> *If the fees for polytech are too expensive. That will kill my dreams. It always comes down to money (female, 16).*

> *Money, money is the main one (male, 16).*

The influence of money on outcomes is discussed more fully below. Being led astray by friends, in particular in relation to drugs, was mentioned by a few young people:

> *Bad influences from friends. Those that might put pressure on you and you end up doing bad things like stealing, wagging school (male, 15).*

*Friends that lead you in the wrong direction. Those that make you steal or take drugs or give you the bash (male, 13).*

Getting pregnant or getting someone else pregnant was another concern. Pregnancy was as likely to be mentioned by boys as by girls:

*Probably if I get a girlfriend and accidentally have a child (male, 16).*

*Getting someone pregnant. Having kids just makes life hard for you when you are growing up. You need to look after them and feed them and clothe them. This will mean that you can't do the things that you have set yourself up to do (male, 15).*

A withdrawal of whānau support was mentioned by a few as a hypothetical barrier even though they did not expect that this would happen. One young person described the impact of lack of support in this comment:

*Probably if my family doesn't support me. No support at all. No back-up from my parents. I need my family to be there, family have always been there for me. If they're not there when I need them it would stop me doing what I wanted to do. Cause I need their support (female, 14).*

### The importance of money in achieving good outcomes

The importance of money seemed self-evident to most of the young people interviewed. Nearly all felt money was critical to their being able to achieve their goals. Many seemed well aware of the difficulties facing low-income families and commented on money as a necessity to buy basics such as food, shelter and clothes as well as school, polytech and university fees. Although most talked about the expense of tertiary education, some talked about other costs:

*It's very important. Because money pays for schooling, pays for transport to get to a job, pays for the food you eat and where you live. That's why money sucks – because we are so dependent on it (female, 14).*

*If you ain't got no money, you've got nothing. It's really important. Sometimes families can't afford things and kids get held back because their families can't afford for them to do certain things. A school course might be $200 but you might have three or four brothers at the school. Basketball fees might cost $60. It's OK if there's only one child but it's a big bill if there are three children. It really restricts what they want to do (male, 16).*

Some, particularly those from rural areas, felt that lack of money would be a real barrier to leaving home and getting to university:

*Money is very important because you need it to buy food and to help other whānau when they are desperate. Money will also help me get to university and pay for my fees. Otherwise I may not get there (female, 12).*

Some were determined, however, not to let lack of money stop them:

*Money will be real important. I need it to get what I want and I need it to do courses. It won't stop me though. I am determined (female, 16).*

*If my parents can't help me I will take out a huge loan. I don't care how long it takes to pay off. I want to go to university. I don't want to live a crap life (female, 14).*

### Impact of peers on good outcomes

As noted above, most young people mentioned the importance of having good friends around them for support, fun and companionship. Most recognised that friends could have an influence on outcomes and most were more likely to discuss negative peer pressure than positive. Being "led astray" by friends who were into drugs, wagging school or other negative behaviour was thought to be one reason why young people might not achieve their goals.

Others commented that the type of influence would depend on the friends one had i.e. influence could be either positive or negative:

*They're a good influence. We all want to get good jobs, have a lot of money, buy things. None of us are into drugs or stuff like that (male, 16).*

Even though many young people commented that friends could be a negative influence, they generally felt they were not in any danger of being affected and that it was up to them to resist any pressure:

*Friends can be a big influence on your life if you let them. I don't know about mine. Sometimes they're good and sometimes we all get up to mischief. You just need to know right from wrong and to say no when things look bad (male, 15).*

*As long as they are good friends then they should be ok. At 25 I'll be big and have to fend for myself. I can tell them to stay or go. Whatever (male, 13).*

*We all have to have friends but if they are no good you just lose them and get better ones. But some friends can get you into trouble and it is up to you to stay out of trouble. You have to do whatever to keep away from them (female, 12).*

*When I get older I'll be able to pick out the ones who are good and the ones who are bad because I would have experience by then. My nanny said I should follow my wairua because it will tell me if people are good or bad (male, 12).*

The importance of whānau was again emphasised by several young people when discussing friends:

*My friends are ok but if you have some that get into drugs or alcohol then that could get you into trouble. But we hang out mainly with whānau and so we look after one another (male, 15).*

*My friends won't have much influence on my life because we are too whānau oriented. Even though we hang out together I know myself what's right and what's wrong and plus my whānau will step in and pull me back on track whether I like it or not. That's what I would do if one of my cousins got into mischief (female, 16).*

*I want to get a lot done between 18 and 25. I don't want people around me who ain't gonna be there, who are gonna stop me from getting where I want. Only my family can stop me from getting where I want to (female, 14).*

### 3.3.4  Who should do what?

According to young people, the main things whānau needed to do were to "be there for us", provide positive support and encouragement and give direction about study and career options. Whānau were also seen to be important in passing on tikanga Māori and te reo to young people.

The key thing for the Government was to provide free education. The prohibitive cost of getting a tertiary education was mentioned by nearly everyone:

*Government should make it so we don't have to get into debt to go to kura and to university so more Māori can go to school (male, 13).*

*Government should bring down the cost of university papers, the cost to study at a university or polytechnic. They should bring up the minimum wage so that people can pay off their loans faster and give a higher student allowance so people aren't living crap arse lives. They should be supporting younger people, the future leaders, farmers, secretaries, inventors. Why should they have such a bad start in life? If they have a bad start then it will be bad all the way (female, 14).*

*I hope I don't have to get a loan. I know cousins that have one and they say it sucks. Education should be free (male, 15).*

Other suggestions for Government included work experience schemes, more police in certain areas, bringing back apprenticeships, not legalising marijuana, and ensuring schools were "more exciting so kids want to stay and learn".

Few people had suggestions for other groups, with many respondents saying they did not really know what other groups there were. One or two suggestions were made for businesses, including work experience schemes and then providing references and being more open-minded: "don't just look at a person's appearance – give them a go".

## 3.4  Interviews with providers

### 3.4.1 What are good outcomes for young people at 18?

*Good outcomes at 18*

Providers were asked to describe what they thought the key things were young people should have got from their education by the age of 18. Most respondents described outcomes in terms of attributes and qualities they thought were desirable rather than specifying what young people should ideally be doing at that age (as parents had done).

Some mentioned that young people ought to still be in education or training while others said that by the end of schooling, young people should value education and knowledge and feel motivated to continue. No one commented on what qualifications young people should gain, although one person said young people should regard gaining qualifications as a positive thing in itself.

Having options, particularly regarding employment, was seen as particularly desirable. This included being aware of what kinds of jobs there are and taking subjects that would lead to the jobs they wanted or to achieving other goals. Having a sense of direction and clear goals was thought to be important although most people did not specify what such goals might be:

> *At 18 they have been through the education system. A good outcome would be some idea of what their abilities, strengths and weaknesses and limitations were and some idea of what they would like to do in terms of further training or pursuing job options. They should have short-term plans or short-term goals.*

> *Leave school with a good healthy optimism for life. Have some direction, an idea of where they're going and hopefully some belief that they can achieve.*

A few people mentioned that schools should provide work experience opportunities as further preparation for employment by teaching skills such as time management, commitment and interaction with other people. Good interpersonal and social skills were regarded as a good outcome at 18:

> *They should have gained good people and social skills like respect for all persons and their property. To be responsible young people.*

> *They should also have gotten social skills from their education, how to act and mingle with people. How to respect other people and their culture.*

The last major area mentioned was a feeling of self-confidence and identity, particularly that which comes from a grounding in tikanga Māori, te reo and their whakapapa. Other desirable attributes and outcomes are discussed below.

### Living and financial arrangements at 18

When asked about desirable living arrangements for young people at the age of 18, providers tended to emphasise the need for a stable and safe environment, rather than specify where that might be:

> *A place that is clean, has food, personal space, free from abuse, where all the financial commitments to the place are met. Whether this arrangement is with whānau or in a flatting situation, if an 18-year-old has most of those elements in place, then they are living in a very stable environment.*

> *Whether they are living with whānau or flatting, as long as the bills are paid, the house is clean and warm and there is food in the fridge, then that is a good house for an 18-year-old.*

*Support from parents wherever they go whether it's with peers, friends or family. So long as they are living where they feel valued and nurtured.*

Providers also emphasised that the ideal living situation would vary depending on the young person's personality and what they happened to be doing at that time:

*At 18, that depends on what they are like as individuals e.g. independent, sensible, mature.*

Several people commented that living with whānau was for many young people the best option, but that it should not be assumed that this was always ideal:

*Home is usually a very safe environment. The best place to be but only if it's safe. There are lots of families out there that aren't safe. But if it's a very safe environment, home with mum and dad and the rest of the whānau. That's the right place for them to be living.*

Several respondents pointed out the importance of acknowledging 18 as being a time of transition to adulthood. This meant that young people need a certain amount of independence and autonomy, whether at home or living away from home:

*At home with the whānau with a degree of privacy – acknowledging their transition into adulthood.*

*There is tremendous pressure on people to live with whānau and it hinders the growth of everyone … There are unreal expectations that a living arrangement between young people and whānau should be harmonious. How can it be where young people have no space for them to enjoy their own identity and self-worth?*

*Still close to whānau but they should have a taste of flatting and living independently.*

Responses about how young people were likely to be managing financially at 18 varied. A number of people made a general comment that money management would more than likely be difficult for many young people, particularly if they had not had previous experience of being responsible for money:

*They don't manage financially unless they've been doing it since they were a little child and they're used to it, they can handle it. But if they haven't and they get power over their own money, they've got this money, they don't even think about paying bills. They think of their next good time … they just want to have a good time, which is normal.*

*At 18 they are not good at managing money. At this age, a lot of them are not thinking about their future and the importance of putting money aside for the future – rather, they're thinking about the nightclub scene.*

It was expected that whānau would support those still living at home or at school or university. Part-time work was considered to be an option by most people even when young people were being supported primarily by family. Some kind of work was regarded as beneficial in the independence it could provide and also because it would teach some kind of money management skills, such as budgeting:

*For most young people of this age they should be supported by whānau if they are still going to school. They should also be taught to appreciate money and to learn about saving money. This means part-time work, if it is available. Some places don't have many opportunities for young people to get part-time work. Hopefully having their own pocket money will also teach them to spend wisely and to pay bills on time.*

Only a few mentioned student loans, possibly because it was not widely assumed they would be in tertiary education at that time. Those who did tended to be critical of the debt burden placed on young people:

*It is criminal to put our young people into debt before they have had a chance to start making money. That is why we are having a brain drain. Kids will graduate with a student loan and then end up leaving the country and not returning home. We will have mokopuna being born overseas. Education should be free.*

On the whole, however, there was no uniform view about where young people should be living or how they should be supported financially. Providers stressed, instead, the basic criteria any living and financial arrangements should meet, such as safety, support, security and independence. Beyond that, arrangements were likely to vary for each individual.

### Interests and involvements at 18

Providers generally believed that interests and involvements outside the core activities of education and work are important for providing balance and exposure to a range of opportunities and experiences. A wide range of possible activities was mentioned, unlike parents who tended to focus on sports. Providers mentioned cultural activities e.g. kapa haka, community groups and clubs, travel, music, computers as well as sports. Like parents, providers regarded sports in particular as important for learning to be part of a team and developing social skills. Again, providers tended to focus on the benefits to be gained from these types of activities rather than specifying what they should be doing. As one said, "anything that has a positive result is good." Other comments included:

*Community work, belonging to a club or it could be sports or kapa haka and cultural activities. The more choices they have, the more experiences they will be exposed to and the more they will know and be aware of. Balance is important.*

*Young people need interests that encourage them to be leaders. To be accountable to something in order for them to learn principles like responsibility, caring, respect and team work.*

*Being involved in any type of sport, community or voluntary group is healthy for young people. It is another way for them to learn to be with, socialise with and interact with people. Kapa haka groups are good because you have both young and old people there and the young ones get an opportunity to be in a whānau type environment and learn from the older ones.*

*Qualities and values at 18*

Providers had very similar views to parents and whānau about the qualities and values thought to be desirable in young people. Confidence and self-esteem were important along with a sense of direction and vision, a desire to explore new things and not being afraid to face the world. Also important were honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. Interpersonal skills and how they relate to others featured in most comments:

> *Respect, compassion for other people less fortunate.*

> *Respect for everything, people in general, elders, other people's property ... the ability to mix and mingle is really important, to be able to talk to people, all different types of people. Also, that they have a sense of humility about themselves.*

> *... respect, honesty, kindness, aroha, manaaki tangata.*

> *... the quality of aroha to your whānau, learning to value other people, knowing how to treat people.*

A few providers, when discussing qualities of confidence and self-esteem, specifically mentioned that it is important that young people have a sense of belonging and inclusion:

> *A sense of self-worth that you are actually doing something that is satisfying and fulfilling and means something to you ... Most of all to feel like they have a place in the world through encouragement from their family, extended family or the education systems that we put them into or the interest groups that they belong to.*

> *What we should try for are young people that are confident and not afraid to go out into the world and experience it. The confidence comes from knowing who you are, where you come from and having strong ties with family.*

### 3.4.2  What are good outcomes for young people at 25?

Most people thought the key changes in outcomes between 18 and 25 were that young people should be more settled, more financially stable and in full-time employment. Tertiary education would probably be completed and they would be living away from family, probably flatting but hopefully on the way to buying a house. Home ownership was thought to be unlikely for most at 25.

Values and qualities would probably be much the same and peers may be less likely to have an adverse influence at 25. Relationships with friends were likely to be more important as young people moved away from family. A clear sense of direction and looking to the future should be continued and they should be more focused than at 18. Overall, there should be a greater degree of responsibility and maturity, although some providers said this was not always so and one noted that many young people do not actually settle down until their late 20s unless they have had children.

### 3.4.3 Supports and barriers to good outcomes for children

*Factors and resources promoting good outcomes*

The factor identified as most important for achieving good outcomes was a positive whānau environment and upbringing. This includes parents who are supportive and loving, encourage open communication and take an active interest in their children. The importance of the family was summed up by one respondent who said:

> *Everything starts from within the home. If the whānau is right then most things will fall into place.*

The role of whanau and specific activities that are necessary are discussed below, as is the importance of income, also identified as a major factor in achieving good outcomes. Providers also mentioned a range of other factors and resources that contribute to good outcomes, with one of the major ones being a strong sense of cultural identity:

> *Young people need to know their roots and their whakapapa. Māori kids especially need to know their Māoritanga which will help them understand who they are and where they come from so when they go out into the world they won't get lost emotionally.*

A variety of suggestions was made about other factors and resources, although apart from the major ones of family, income and cultural identity, none was mentioned by a large number of respondents. Comments included:

- access to free education so that education is not dependent on parents' ability to pay

- information and education about safe sex, drug abuse, relationships, personal development and self-esteem

- the opportunity to learn about computer technology and to become computer literate

- practical work experience.

*The importance of income*

All the providers interviewed regarded income as vital for achieving good outcomes. In response to the question of how important income is, a common reply was "very, especially when there's not enough of it". Like parents, a number of providers commented that income is not the only factor in achieving outcomes and that desire, motivation, encouragement and hope were also critical. As one person said:

> *I know money doesn't buy you happiness but it helps. Whānau support is more important than income. Money is just another part of life.*

The consequences of not having enough money were discussed by most of those interviewed. It was apparent that when talking about having "enough money", providers were often talking about basic survival i.e. having enough money to adequately feed, house and clothe one's family. It was insufficient income to do these basic things that was of concern to many:

*Income makes sure that you are able to get the things you work for. It helps feed you, clothe you, keep you warm and pay your bills. With all these stresses taken care of, the pressure is eased a little.*

The main consequences of not having enough income or of struggling to provide basic necessities were thought to be stress, a short-term focus and inability to pay for the resources needed for good outcomes, such as education:

*Income is important for getting good outcomes because if whānau struggle for money then most of the focus is around the immediate future of where the next dollar is coming from instead of the long-term focus.*

*If there is a lack in the household it reflects on all those members of the household e.g. if a child does not have anything to eat before he goes to school that will affect his learning and perhaps his ability to perform well within the school and consequently will have an impact on the whānau.*

The cost of tertiary education was an obvious barrier for families with low incomes but providers mentioned a whole range of issues that might be affected by inadequate income:

*An adequate income is important. A lot of social issues come into play if families are unable to feed, clothe and house their families. If families are struggling to survive then educating their children may not be a high priority. A lot of families can't afford the clothes and shoes, so their children steal them. Transport would be an issue if there wasn't any public transport available. A car is essential for those with young children especially those with health needs. Transport allows contact with family members.*

Low or inadequate incomes were thought to sometimes result in a sense of hopelessness:

*Kids want a lot of things. They know that money is important to getting ahead. Not enough money can sometimes close down their dreams. They get frustrated, think, "what's the point? It won't happen".*

*No money can also mean if they can't get anything, they give up. They leave everything and they just don't want nothing. They become bummish.*

Overall, providers tended to suggest that although money is not the only thing required for good outcomes, without it choices are much more limited and the struggle is that much harder with some options, such as tertiary education, simply being beyond the reach of some families.

### *The role of parents/whānau in achieving good outcomes*

As discussed above, providers regarded parents and whānau as critical in the achievement of good outcomes for children and young people. Like parents, providers emphasised the need for encouragement, support, love, and making time for children:

*Just being there for their children and providing positive support through the good and the bad times. Being supportive will mean more to most children than having lots of money and no emotional support from parents and whānau.*

*Yes, often it is enough, particularly those parents who do a lot of positive things like expose their children to experiences such as music lessons, the library, using a computer, reading, taking an interest in them. I see other parents who are busy with their own lives and interests – their children tend to have negative outcomes.*

It was acknowledged that although most parents tried to do their best, spending time with children was not always easy:

*Some parents think money is the answer, just giving them money. Often they need less money and more of the parents' support and time. But parents may be out working to get the money, two parents working just to get by. They're too tired to give time so they give money.*

A few providers emphasised the importance of good parenting not just for their own children but for future generations:

*Statistics reflect that we don't do enough and it is cyclical. Young people that come from families where their parents gave them positive support and interest carry on mimicking that behaviour and there are good outcomes. Those that come from families that didn't receive that tend to have negative outcomes. For them, we don't do enough.*

*They try and do their best. Often there is a lack of role models for these parents and caregivers. That's why there are children being brought up by the state – it is generational.*

There was little consensus about whether parents feel that their actions can make a difference to outcomes for their children. Most thought it depended on the parent, with some being aware of the impact their actions would have and others being less aware or only realising too late:

*Some parents do but those who don't often realise it too late. When children are older and have developed the lifestyle habits parents don't like, then they realise that their own actions could have had a different influence on them.*

One person commented it is the conscious effort to help children achieve goals that is important:

*It is the conscious effort that makes the difference because the actions and support they give will be consistent and not just a flash in the pan.*

Others said that most of the parents they deal with do want to make a positive difference in their children's lives but may lack the knowledge or resources to do so:

*Most parents we deal with do wish the best for their kids. Those that don't probably never had any support when they were younger and so don't know any better. With the high unemployment rate in our area our parents are struggling.*

*Most parents want to make a difference in their children's life but may lack the knowledge of good parenting. Most people that struggle with this probably did not have parents or whānau supporting them in their young days.*

*Impact of peers on good outcomes*

Providers tended to think that friends play a large part in influencing outcomes for young people:

> *Friends will determine how a person turns out. Because they play, laugh, share and experiment with things together, then that will have a big influence on how they behave.*

Like parents and young people, they thought this influence could be either positive or negative:

> *Peer pressure can be really ugly for the kids. They can take it in the wrong way; pressure from their friends to get in with the right crowd. Sometimes the pressure's positive – it can inspire, challenge them to go, to hang in there.*

> *If you have friends involved in education, study and sport you will tend to have the same interests as them or be led along that path. If you mix with people who drink and smoke pot, you will tend to do that because, at 18, you need to fit in with them. You need to be like them, to be part of a group and belong.*

The key factor in resisting negative peer pressure was once again said to be the values and upbringing instilled by the whānau:

> *Friends have a big influence and before they get into that whole peer thing at 14, 15, or 16, unless they have the values and belief in themselves instilled, there may not be a good outcome. The work needs to be done before this.*

> *If the grounding is set, then the friends they choose will hopefully be someone with the same qualities and values as them. Friends do make an influence on how our kids behave and live.*

> *If you've raised your children to respect others and to have integrity, then the friends they choose will probably be the same as them. Friends have some influence but it is the lessons that they learn from home that really shape a person.*

> *Most young ones will follow their friends either to experiment or go along. But if they have the right values instilled in them from home then they will be able to make the choice to see whether what they are doing is wrong or right.*

### 3.4.4 Who should do what?

As discussed in previous sections, the importance of the whānau in promoting good outcomes for children was emphasised throughout all the interviews. Families were said to be fundamental in providing a sound basis from which children and young people can go out into the world. Providers also recognised, however, that there were influences outside a family's control that had major impacts on outcomes and also that there were times that some families would need support to provide the necessary home environment:

*It starts with the whānau but some of our whānau are not in a position to support our children. You need to support the whānau in order to support the child.*

*Families should instil really good values and beliefs in their children ... Government should provide a safety net to catch those people who require support.*

*Whānau have to learn to support their children. Perhaps they need to learn parenting skills or learn how to listen to their children and be there for them. Resources have to be directed towards the home.*

As well as directly supporting families, the Government was seen to have a responsibility to put more resources into creating job opportunities in rural areas – "we need to make opportunities for our young people to aim for" as well as providing free education:

*Tertiary education should be free. Our kids need incentives to go to university and the thought of having a big student loan scares a lot of them from even thinking about higher education. Most kids come from a poor or modest background and therefore think university is only for the rich – which it should not be.*

Schools, which some people described as "the next most important after family" were seen to have a crucial role in further developing what has been instilled by the family, such as supporting children to see education as valuable, believe in themselves and see themselves as valuable people. Schools also need to focus on giving children a sense of direction – an idea of where they are going and how they can get there. Schools must also ensure that they provide education in a way that suits Māori.

Like parents, providers mentioned the role businesses could play in promoting good outcomes. Suggestions included offering work experience to learn about work ethics or to stimulate interest in a particular sector or supporting the community by sponsoring projects that would help foster leadership qualities amongst young people. Community groups providing services to families were seen as a further safety net that should be supported by the Government.

## 3.5    Comparisons within the Māori report

This section of the report summarises and compares the major findings from the three groups. Overall, there was a high degree of consistency between what adult whānau members, young people and providers said. Comparisons between various subgroups within the sample (such as income level, family type or location) have not been included. Although such analysis would be of interest, the sample size in this study is too small to yield reliable results.

### 3.5.1  What are good outcomes?

### Education and qualifications

There was very little difference between adults, young people and providers in terms of what they regarded as good outcomes for children. All three groups emphasised the

importance of education, training and qualifications. Although education was identified as a desirable outcome in itself, it was apparent that it was regarded as the primary mechanism for achieving good outcomes such as a "good job", generally defined as one that would pay well and "make you happy". Many young people had clear ideas about the job or career they wanted, although, as discussed below, were not always sure how to get there.

Parents also saw education as important for a career although they were less likely to specify exactly what career they wanted their children to pursue. They were generally happy for the young people to decide what path they wanted to take but emphasised that they wanted them to have options and not be restricted to low-paid work. Providers also emphasised the importance of education, particularly that young people had a positive attitude to education and knowledge in general. Underlying the comments of all three groups was the desire for young people to have choices and options. Education and qualifications were generally regarded as the key to having those choices.

By the age of 25, the education and qualifications being pursued at 18 were expected to have resulted in the desired career being achieved.

### Taha Māori

The other key outcome area for parents, in particular, was being strong in taha Māori including knowing one's whakapapa and having a knowledge of tikanga and te reo. Exhibiting values such as manaaki tangata and whānaungatanga was also important. Being strong in taha Māori was related to security in identity and sense of self. Young people and providers also regarded this as an important issue although were sometimes less explicit than parents about it. Like education above, taha Māori was regarded as both a positive outcome in itself and a factor in achieving other outcomes. This knowledge was considered crucial for providing a sense of identity, self-confidence and self-esteem and thereby a strong basis from which to go out into the world.

### Living and financial arrangements

In terms of what was regarded as a good outcome regarding living and financial arrangements at 18, there was some variation between the groups. Parents were almost unanimous in their view that at 18 they hoped their children would still be living at home with them or, if they had moved to another region for education purposes, that they would be living with other whānau. The main reasons for this were cost and a belief that, at 18, young people still needed to be with their family.

Young people themselves were more likely to express a desire to be out flatting with friends at 18. Many acknowledged that financially it would be better to be at home, particularly if they were studying, but others felt it was both feasible and desirable to be flatting. Providers tended not to specify where the ideal place was for young people to be living but instead outlined the criteria an ideal living place would meet. These included safety, emotional support and nurturing, a recognition of an 18-year-old's need for some independence and basic needs being met. If whānau could provide these conditions then that would be an ideal place for them to be living. Providers, however, acknowledged that

not all whānau were able to provide such environments, in which case it would be better for young people to be living elsewhere. By 25, all three groups expected that young people would be living independently of their families. Home ownership was generally regarded as the ideal although most adults recognised it would be unlikely by 25.

### Activities and interests

All three groups emphasised the importance of having activities and interests outside schooling and employment. Parents and young people most commonly mentioned sports, along with cultural activities such as kapa haka or involvement in their marae. Providers mentioned a range of potential activities but, again, were more likely to discuss the benefits any such activities ought to bring, rather than specifying what those activities should be. The benefits emphasised by all three groups included developing social skills, learning to work with others in a team, and having balance and being "well rounded".

### Qualities, values and relationships with others

There was also a high degree of consistency in what were considered desirable qualities and values for young people to possess. As noted above, self-confidence and self-esteem were regarded as particularly valuable along with being responsible, mature, happy, positive, motivated and adventurous. Numerous comments were made about how young people ought to be in their relationships with others. Manaaki tangata was a value many parents and providers wanted young people to demonstrate. Being kind, caring, generous, honest and a good friend were all thought to be important.

A number of people in all three groups mentioned being respectful, particularly towards older people. Parents and young people frequently talked about having strong relationships with whānau and many young people demonstrated a sense of responsibility to whānau through comments that indicated that they fully expected to be involved in supporting and taking care of other whānau members. This was one reason several young people, particularly those in rural areas, gave for wanting successful jobs i.e. so they would be in the position to give financial support to others.

Supportive and caring relationships with friends were seen as an important aspect of young people's lives. By 18 few expected, or wanted, to have a partner. Young people tended to regard partners as a potential barrier to achieving goals. By 25, more young people and parents seemed to regard having a partner as desirable although very few mentioned wanting children by this age. A number of parents and young people commented on the paramount importance of whānaungatanga.

### Summary

Overall, desirable outcomes for young people were seen to be that they were happy, confident, respectful, responsible, secure in their identity as Māori, with strong whānau and peer relationships, and with the education and qualifications necessary to give them options and choices in their lives.

### 3.5.2  What factors affect good outcomes?

*Whānau*

All three groups emphasised the importance of whānau in achieving good outcomes. Virtually every respondent commented on the importance of children having a loving and supportive family where parents take an active interest in their children's education and outside interests. Such an environment was thought to be critical as a foundation for children to become self-confident, secure, motivated and able to face the challenges of the outside world. Parents were also likely to comment on what they saw as their responsibility to provide a sound physical environment, which included such basics as hot food, clothing and somewhere to live.

Providers, and to a lesser extent parents, also commented on the challenges facing parents in raising children. Providers, from their perspective of dealing with a range of families, emphasised that most parents want to do the best for their children but that sometimes they lack either the skills or the resources to do so. Parents and providers mentioned support for families and for agencies working with families as something the Government needed to give. The type of support mentioned included such things as parenting skills programmes and/or financial resources, in effect a "safety net", for low-income families. Providers also mentioned that the effects of whānau support and functioning, and in particular the lack of this, were intergenerational. Young people who were not supported, encouraged and nurtured would be less likely to be able to provide those things for their own children.

*Schools and education*

As discussed above, education was regarded as a critical factor for achieving good outcomes. Nearly every parent and the majority of young people mentioned the need for some form of post-secondary education or training. A number of people specifically mentioned the importance of education and qualifications for breaking out of a cycle of poverty. Relatively few parents mentioned any tertiary education of their own but were no less supportive of their children getting qualifications than parents who were university educated. Those parents who had some kind of university education felt that they could definitely be role models to their children in that respect.

Schools were mentioned by a number of people, although perhaps not as many as might have been expected given the perceived importance of education. Parents and young people made comments about making school interesting, enjoyable and catering to a range of learning styles. A few parents specifically mentioned that schools needed to cater better for kōhanga and kura children. On the whole, however, it was providers who emphasised the importance of school education, with several regarding it as the second most important factor after whānau in achieving good outcomes.

The overwhelming comment made in relation to education was the prohibitive cost of a tertiary education. Nearly everyone felt that education should be free and there were strong feelings expressed against the student loan scheme. Both parents and providers felt

it was wrong that young people should have to take on such a debt and some thought it might be a disincentive for some families to send children to university or polytech. This was confirmed by some young people although others said they were determined to get an education and did not care what it cost.

### Income

All three groups regarded income as a key factor in promoting good outcomes, although they also emphasised that it was not the only factor. The prohibitive cost of education was the most commonly mentioned issue, with virtually everyone saying that tertiary education should be free. Student loans came in for particular criticism. Many people also mentioned the consequences when families struggled to provide basic needs of food, clothing, healthcare and shelter. They also mentioned stress and an inability to focus on long-term goals as consequences of inadequate income that had a negative impact on long-term outcomes. Several young people mentioned their determination to achieve their goals despite lack of money but all acknowledged how much more difficult it would be.

It was apparent from the comments made during the interviews that respondents were not generally discussing the difference between being wealthy and having an adequate income, but between an adequate income and struggling to provide even the basic necessities. The consensus view clearly seemed to be that when families are not struggling to provide basics it is that much easier to look ahead, plan for and achieve long-term goals.

### Peers

Views on the influence of peers were generally consistent between the three groups, although mixed overall. Most people acknowledged that the influence of peers could be both positive and negative, although most respondents commented on the potential negative influences of friends rather than the positive. Being "led astray", particularly in relation to drugs, was mentioned by many parents and young people as a possible barrier to achieving good outcomes.

Parents tended to take the view that it was impossible to hide young people from drugs as they were a fact of life. They felt it was up to them as parents to ensure their children were able to resist the pressures of others around them by raising them to be strong and confident and able to say no. Many young people shared this view saying that people who were into drugs were "wasting my time". Providers, many of whom deal with young people who have been "led astray", placed greater emphasis on the potential negative effects of peer group pressure and counted it as a major influence on young people.

### Other

Other factors with potential to affect outcomes identified by the three groups were fairly consistent, with the key ones being work experience schemes for young people and the need to be competent in using computer technology. Young people also mentioned the need for more information about the careers in which they were interested with several saying they wanted practical advice from people already in the field about what they had done to get there. The need for work experience was expressed by a significant number of

people in all three groups and was thought to be important for developing work ethics, basic skills, being given an opportunity by employers to get references and for deciding what kind of work they wanted to go on and do.

Few respondents mentioned lack of information about careers as a significant barrier when asked directly about factors affecting outcomes. It was apparent from the interviews, however, that many people, both parents and young people, lacked specific information about career options. This included, for example, exactly what many careers (apart from the obvious ones of doctor or teacher) involved and what subjects and training would be needed to help them in their chosen career paths. It is likely that one of the major reasons behind so many people identifying "work experience" as something young people need, is that it is a means of finding out about different careers. The desire by young people to meet "role models" seemed to be motivated by a need for information about how to get into a particular career.

Teenage pregnancy was also mentioned by a number of young people, both boys and girls, and parents as a major potential barrier to achieving goals. Many young people were clear that they intended to delay having children until at least 25, if not longer, until they were settled in a career and financially secure. While the participants in the study appeared to be well aware of the risks of teenage pregnancy, in 1997 the teenage birth rate for Māori was nearly five times higher than for European/Pākehā and the estimated total pregnancy rate was nearly three times higher.[12]

### *Summary*

All three groups regarded whānau as the most critical factor in achieving good outcomes for children and young people. A positive family life was seen as the most important thing necessary for young people to be happy, secure, motivated and have a desire and ability to achieve. Parents, in particular, all recognised the key role they themselves had to play in their children's lives. Many gave very specific examples of the types of things they do to promote good outcomes, especially good educational outcomes. Providers took more of an overview and made the comment that most parents want to do the best for their children but that some lack the resources or skills to do so. Income was also seen as a key factor in achieving good outcomes. Although it is not the only factor needed, people in all three groups pointed out that without adequate income to pay for basic necessities, the likelihood of success becomes that much more remote. Free education was identified as one of the most important contributions the Government could make to good outcomes for children. Lack of specific information about career paths was also identified as a barrier for many young people to achieve their goals.

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[12] Dickson, N. (2000) p.242.

# 4.        The Pākehā Report

## 4.1    Introduction

This chapter reports on the views of Pākehā families, young people and providers of social services on what constitute 'good outcomes' for young people.

## 4.2    Methodology

The families selected for interview for this component of the study were all Pākehā, and were chosen to give as great a range as possible of family type, socio-economic status, location and age of children. They included single parents, reconstituted families, extended families and two-parent families and were located in Wellington, Christchurch, the Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay. The sample included 11 boys and nine girls. Ten of the 20 young people were aged 13 and under and 10 were aged between 14 and 17. As well as the families, 10 providers of services for families and children from urban and provincial areas were also interviewed.

The research team consisted of:

- **Helena Barwick**, responsible for interviewing and report writing
- **Alison Gray**, responsible for interviewing and report writing
- **Sue Blyth**, **Karen Fagan** and **Sarah Wylie**, all of whom were interviewers.

## 4.3    Interviews with parents and extended family caregivers

### 4.3.1   Good outcomes for young people at age 18

Parents and other caregivers were asked to talk about their hopes and aspirations for their child at the age of 18.

*Education*

Virtually all of those interviewed hoped and believed that their children will still be in education at the age of 18. Some young people will be completing a seventh form year at age 18, others will be embarking on the next phase of their education. Very few talked of the possibility of their children leaving school before completing the seventh form. While the desire to see their children move into some form of tertiary education was almost unanimous, this was not restricted to university but included the prospect of study at polytechnic or other vocational training.

A few parents lamented the lack of apprenticeships for their children. Parents of non-academic children in particular were concerned about the absence of training options other than further education.

The reasons given for wanting to see their children continue in education were to increase their future choices and to equip them better for a competitive labour market.

A number of parents accepted that their children might want to take a year out before continuing with their education. Most considered this a reasonable option as long as it was only a break in their education, rather than heading them off into another direction.

## Employment

Most parents saw their children in some form of part-time employment at age 18. Some saw this as an important step on the road to adulthood and independence; others viewed it as necessary to contribute to the costs of education and lifestyle. These different perspectives are illustrated by these comments:

> *I'd like him to get some part-time work. That's an important part of becoming an adult and becoming financially responsible. It's an important adult experience to be working in the world and meeting different people in different contexts.*

> *(At 18) I would expect him to contribute very actively to the household. We wouldn't expect to support him totally when he was 18.*

Several parents expressed concern that the energy young people put into work can be at the expense of concentrating on their education, and felt the financial pressure on young people in study is significant. Some, but not all, of the parents who saw themselves in a financial position to do so indicated that they would prefer to support their children financially so that they could put their energies into study. One parent said:

> *Reality, as I see it today, is that he's more than likely going to have to apply himself to find work if possible. I don't myself, however, accept that that is the way I'd like it to be for young people at tertiary training level in New Zealand. I think it places young people under terrific stress if they have to work as well as study.*

## Living situation

Almost all the parents in urban areas thought that their children would be living at home at age 18, largely because of the cost of any alternative. A couple of city families in higher income groups indicated that they would be keen for their children to study in another centre and experience life away from home.

In most cases parents in rural areas accepted that for their children to continue in education they will have to leave home and move to a city. This was a cause for concern both because of the cost, and because some felt that at age 18, their children would still need the support of family close at hand.

## Financial support

The financing of continuing education was a huge concern for many of the parents and other caregivers interviewed.

All but one of the parents interviewed indicated that they would still be at least partially responsible for the financial support of their children at age 18. Most believed that very

limited state support for further education will be available to their children, and that the income threshold for state support is unrealistically low.

Three parents viewed student loans as an acceptable way of funding tertiary education. All the others saw them as a real burden for their children's future, and one that they will try to avoid or minimise if they possibly can.

Some parents from higher socio-economic groups indicated that they will be prepared to give their children significant financial assistance if it meant they did not have to take out a loan, or could keep that loan small. However, a couple of families considered the responsibility of funding further education belonged with their children, irrespective of their own financial position.

Parents on more restricted incomes accepted that they will not be in a position to help their children significantly with the costs of tertiary education and most saw a student loan as the only way their children could fund further education. These comments illustrate the range of views:

> *She will have no option but to get a student loan. The Government can't afford anything different as far as we're concerned.*

> *Although the thought of [daughter] getting a student loan is a horror for me, I will just have to accept it. There is no other way any of my children could have a tertiary education.*

> *A student loan? Over my dead body. I would sell everything rather than let him do that. I'm saving my super payout for that. I'd help him and he'd work.*

> *If he decided to go to university or polytech here [home town] we would pay his fees and provide food and lodging. We would discourage him from getting a student loan. Getting in debt is no way to start life.*

## *Interests and involvements*

Most parents thought their children's interests and involvements at age 18 would be an extension of their current interests. Many indicated that their children are very involved with sport, and anticipate that this would continue. Similarly, families with children involved in music, drama, or with the church thought these things would still be important in their lives at age 18.

About half of the parents interviewed saw some sort of community involvement as important for their 18-year-olds. Several mentioned that their children might become involved in coaching the sport they enjoyed, and saw this as a way for their children to make a community contribution. Others anticipated a maturing involvement with the church. The other half of those interviewed indicated that they did not have expectations of community involvement for their 18-year-olds, nor did they consider this particularly important.

*Relationships*

In their own relationships with their children, most parents saw the age of 18 bringing a more mature form of the relationship they had with their children now.

Those parents who felt close to their children believed this would not change, although they acknowledged that by age 18 their children would be more independent, and that as parents they would be less in touch with the detail of their children's lives.

> *I don't think we'll see many changes because she's always been open and friendly to us, and I can't see her shutting herself away. It will just carry on growing.*

The small number of parents who talked of some tensions with their children were divided between those who saw these tensions as age-related issues which will largely pass by age 18, and those who saw them as the early signs of a breaking away. They thought that by age 18 their relationships with their children would be even less close.

> *I hope his relationship with us has matured by the time he's 18. He tests relationships a lot at present. He abuses our trust. I'd like to think we'd be well past that. He'll have more autonomy in the world and may not be as frustrated with our authority as he is now. Hopefully we will have negotiated a set of rules we can all live with.*

> *I think our relationship with her will be better when she has left home. At the moment we can get on each other's nerves big-time. I don't imagine she'll come home all that often.*

Those families for whom contact with extended family is an important part of life believed this would still be so for their children at age 18.

Most parents acknowledged the importance of friends to their children. Almost all agreed that peers have a strong influence on teenagers, particularly in the early teenage years. Most believed that should their children reach age 18 without being derailed by peer pressure, that influence would be waning as their children progressed towards adulthood.

Although they recognised the influence of peers, the majority of parents had faith that their own children were then, and would be in the future, able to make good judgements and therefore not be too susceptible to peer pressure.

The majority of parents saw age 18 as a time of experimentation in close relationships for young people, and many expressed the hope that their children will not have embarked on anything "too serious" at this age.

*Qualities and values*

Parents were asked what sorts of qualities and values they hoped their children would have at age 18. While there was a wide range of responses, some common themes emerged.

The most frequently mentioned qualities were to do with the young people feeling confident, happy, independent, positive and comfortable with themselves. Parents wanted their children to feel OK about who they were and their place in the world.

Many parents mentioned qualities concerned with how their children related to other people. Desirable qualities included being kind, tolerant, honest, sensitive to others, and a good friend.

A number of parents wanted their children to retain and reflect 'family values', the things they had been taught were important through their childhood. Some families mentioned the importance of Christian values as part of these.

Several parents wanted their 18-year-olds to exhibit social values that showed some understanding of themselves as a part of a community.

### 4.3.2  Good outcomes for young people at age 25

Having talked about their aspirations for their children at age 18, parents and other caregivers were asked to reflect on what would be different for their children by age 25.

#### Education

Most, but not all, parents saw the formal stage of their children's education as being complete by the age of 25. A few thought their children might pursue extended tertiary study and that if they did so, this could well take them to another country.

#### Employment

Most parents anticipated, and hoped, that their child would have been equipped for a job by their education, and that at age 25 they would have embarked on their working life.

> *By 25 he'll be qualified at something and in full employment.*

Some parents added that they didn't necessarily expect their children to be doing the same job for the rest of their lives, as might have been the expectation for earlier generations.

> *Working maybe, but not with a career direction worked out. It's not important to us that he's on the career path by then. We'd like to see some progress towards a vocational direction but keeping his options open and developing his interests is important.*

> *He's not entirely a mainstream type person and I would hope that he could find ways of making a living which don't confine him to … being another cog in the big machine. I think he's got a lot more to offer than that and I'd like him to be able to [fulfil himself]. So I don't have aspirations for him to, you know, get a degree and get a good job and stay in it for the next 45 years or whatever.*

Parents who believed their children were likely to go to university were less concerned about the prospects of employment at the end of education; however they did believe that the opportunities for their children might well lie out of New Zealand.

*I would hope he'd have finished a degree by 22 or 23 so he'd be in the phase where either he's decided to get a job with his degree or he's decided to take time out and go overseas or whatever. In the current environment a lot depends on the type of degree he comes out with and therefore the job prospects he'll have … he might actually have got a job overseas, there's not a job at the end of every degree.*

Parents of children who may pursue forms of tertiary education other than university were fervent in their hope that by the age of 25 these adults would have full-time work.

## Location and living arrangements

None of the parents believed their children would still be living with them at age 25. Many of those parents who anticipated their children going to university thought those children might be overseas by the age of 25. This could be either as part of an OE or being permanently based in another country. Several parents held the view that New Zealand offered limited opportunities for young people, and that it would be no surprise to them if their children chose to base their adult lives elsewhere. Parents expressed regret both for themselves and for the country that the options for rewarding and fulfilling employment in New Zealand were restricted, and that so many of our successful young people were choosing to live elsewhere.

*I believe I might actually not have my children in my own country, which is quite a grieving thing for me to consider at this time. I love this country, and I'd like to be here now with an unquestionable confidence that they can live here for the remainder of their lives – that there will be no question that they will have the ability to forge a work path for themselves that will meet their need, and that they will put back into this community to help build and create the next generation of society in New Zealand. But I honestly don't feel I have that confidence.*

For those young people living in New Zealand, parents saw age 25 as being a time of perhaps flatting with other young people. Few parents saw home ownership as being within the reach of a 25-year-old. Some also considered it undesirable as they thought that age 25 should still be a time of relatively few responsibilities.

## Financial support

By the age of 25 all parents, even those whose children may still be in education, saw their children as being completely financially independent of them.

*Financially independent. Not just financially but completely independent, and by that I mean in his own care, not in the care of someone else. I want to see him making his own decisions.*

Most hoped their children would be self-supporting through employment. Several parents mentioned the need for their children to move directly from tertiary education into work in order to start repaying the student debt they would have incurred.

*Interests and involvement*

Parents found it hard to imagine what interests and involvement their children might have at age 25. Several commented that they expected their children's adult interests to be formed during the years of tertiary education, and that as yet it was hard to know what those interests might be.

A few more parents could foresee some community involvement by age 25, but in general they saw it as no more or less a feature of their children's lives than at age 18.

*Relationships*

Parents looked forward to a mature relationship with their children at age 25. Many commented that while they no longer expected to be providing practical or financial support they would still be happy to provide emotional support to their children.

> *I like to think he'll still be involved with us. We'll give lots of emotional support but the practical support will be over.*

Parents had less well developed views on their children's relationships with friends by age 25, reflecting perhaps their recognition that they will no longer be observing those relationships in the same way.

Several parents hoped that by age 25 their children would have had some experience of a close relationship. Most parents however expressed the hope that their children will not be in a life partnership, or with children, by age 25.

> *I would probably hope he's not married with young kids at that stage. He may be in a serious relationship with someone. I hope he is. I hope he has had relationships by then.*

*Qualities and values*

The qualities and values parents hoped for their children at age 25 were a development of what they hoped for at age 18. Parents wanted their children to be more confident at 25, to have their values well sorted out, and to be able to express who they are, their opinions and those values to others.

> *More sure, more confident, values well sorted out. 18 is experimentation, 25 should be a bit more sorted out.*

> *I would be glad if he were doing real life work towards the revaluing of community, of people caring about one another, of undoing prejudice in all its forms.*

> *I think we both have views about which side of the fence we'd like him standing on, but the most important thing is that he realises there is a bloody fence and that it has an impact on your life and that you have a potential role in shaping some of that.*

### 4.3.3  Support for and barriers to good outcomes for children

*Family*

Families consider that the support they give their children is crucial to good outcomes. The support takes many forms.

Many parents said they provided support for education. They demonstrated this by helping with homework, providing a place to study, and through involvement with the school.

> *We ask him often about how things are going with his schoolwork. We give him quite a lot of encouragement and try to be aware of what he's actually doing. We make time to look at his books a bit. I let him know that I can't do his maths!*

Other support included giving encouragement and practical assistance for children's interests through providing money for fees and transport to events.

> *We take an interest in his interests. An active interest, not just a passive interest. We provide transport, lessons for anything he's interested in, we go to his games and so on.*

Helping young people sort out problems by talking though options and actually getting involved in the situation if required, was another means by which parents said they supported their children.

> *We try to let him make decisions and sort things out, but we take his hand on occasions.*

A number of parents contributed by providing as wide a range of experiences and opportunities for their children as possible.

> *I think a wide range of experiences and opportunities. We try to instil a broad-minded approach to the world.*

Talking with children about responsibilities, relationships, values and behaviour, as well as modelling desirable values and behaviour, are other ways parents try to ensure their children grow into healthy, happy adults.

> *I think that learning personal responsibility is a pretty central thing … you know, if you go out and stay out late then you'll probably be tired, but that's a choice you make. I don't think you can just spring that on someone at 18. I think they have to learn that when they're tiny, like, you know, if you overeat at a birthday party you'll be sick.*

The parents interviewed tried to set boundaries and to provide guidance and appropriate discipline.

> *We give him unconditional love, sensible discipline, setting boundaries. Giving him a sense of inner discipline, motivation, understanding of consequences. Show him the reward for putting in the effort.*

A number of families also mentioned the positive contribution made by the wider family, and the value to young people of having other adults who are interested in them. Parents

and families being too busy to spend time with their children was identified as a potential barrier to children achieving successful outcomes. Parents agreed that being there for your children was one of the most valuable things you could do for them.

## School, business and community

School plays a large part in the lives of young people. While parents were not specifically asked their views on how much schools contribute to good outcomes for children, several mentioned the contributions schools can make.

Several parents thought that schools could be giving students more information about career options. Most acknowledged that schools give some information, but they believed that more could be done to help young people think through what they might do after they leave school. Parents who considered their children non-academic felt that few alternatives were presented to young people who really don't want to continue in education.

A theme arising from the interviews was the disappointment of some parents that apprenticeships for young people are now uncommon and hard to obtain. The security and prospects that an apprenticeship can provide were highly valued.

The value of mentors – adults beyond the family who are interested in young people and concerned to help them find the right path in life – was mentioned by several of those interviewed. Mentoring through school, through further education and into employment were all mentioned as things that could support young people to reach good outcomes.

> *I believe that having other adults, adults who are interested in you, adults who can maybe broaden your horizons [would be good] … I'm increasingly conscious in the whole area of career choice I'm not feeling very confident in helping my children. So I would hope for [son] that there would be people in vocational areas who would take an interest, that he could go and talk with and get ideas from.*

## Peers

Parents recognised the importance of friends to their children. Most valued the support that young people draw from their friendships with one another.

Peer pressure was acknowledged as a potential pitfall for young people in reaching good outcomes, but most felt that the way they had brought up their own children meant the children had a firm base and were not particularly susceptible to peer pressure. That said, several parents believed that falling in with the wrong peer group could jeopardise their children's future.

Parents were very concerned about drugs and alcohol possibly threatening their children's future. Those who talked about the nature of the risk indicated that it was the potential for dangerous behaviour – such as drinking and driving – that was of most concern.

*Drugs are an enormous worry, alcohol in particular, and boys and cars.
[Daughter] is quite impressionable and would be very easily led.*

## Income

Parents and caregivers were asked about the importance of income in affecting good outcomes for children.

Everyone recognised that income is important. All families agreed that income alone was not the prime factor in assuring good outcomes for children and that family support and appropriate values were as crucial, if not more crucial. However, it was widely recognised that without adequate parental income, children are denied the opportunity to participate in some of the areas that support good outcomes.

*I look at our life situation relative to other members of our family, both my side and his father's side, and I say I have the same aspirations for my children, and my children have the same abilities, but in so many ways I can't provide things, opportunities for them to the same extent. It's just financially driven.*

There was considerable dissatisfaction among those interviewed that the parents' financial position is in some cases the deciding factor as to whether or not a child can access tertiary education.

*I come from a university background, I have a parent with a university background, grandparents who in fact did, and I guess I've grown up believing that my children should have that opportunity if they showed an interest and had an ability. And it just feels like all of that is in doubt.*

Some parents recognised that the impact of income on outcomes is not necessarily a direct impact in the sense that it is not only about what the income can buy. One father from a high-income group described the advantages having a high income gave them:

*There's not a direct relationship between our income and [son's] achievement. It's not the income itself, but it gives you a degree of discretion over how you spend your time. Income alone doesn't make the difference to a child's development, but being at survival level does have an impact. We'd have so much more time and energy tied up in income creation there would be less for the kids.*

Some parents gave examples of things children had not had because the family could not afford them, including holidays, out of school activities, space to study, access to a computer and private transport.

## Other issues

Other issues mentioned by parents as having the potential to threaten their children achieving good outcomes included:

- the death of a parent – three or four parents commented that if they or their partner died before their children reached adulthood it could have a serious impact on their children's achievement of good outcomes

- loss of motivation, direction or focus – some parents mentioned the part played by their children's motivation in the achievement of good outcomes and were aware that a loss of motivation could seriously threaten their future

- lack of opportunity e.g. job opportunities – this was a particular concern to parents whose children were not equipped, or did not want, to continue on to tertiary education

- accident or illness – some parents acknowledged that an unforeseen accident or illness could seriously threaten positive outcomes for young people

- early pregnancy – a few families mentioned the impact that early and unplanned parenthood could have on their children's futures.

### 4.3.4  The impact of community and environmental factors

Parents and caregivers recognised that family make-up has changed dramatically in recent generations. While some were concerned that this might have an impact on whether their children wanted or sustained long-term relationships, most felt that the demise of the stereotypical nuclear family was a reality with which children were very familiar  and had adjusted.

> *Kids these days seem to be far more accepting – divorce, separation, it's more common. Now at 16, 17 it's almost normal, which is a worry really because that's obviously having an affect on him … he's accepting it as normal so will he accept that as normal for his life?*

Parents were concerned that it is becoming harder and harder to get secure, adequately paid employment, and they wondered about the impact of this on their children. Many reiterated their earlier comments about the necessity for young people to have tertiary education to maximise their employment prospects.

> *More people are becoming marginalised. People are living without a sense of confidence about their ability to survive, survive financially, and then from that survive in positive social, emotional and psychological terms.*

Some were unconcerned about the increasing gap between the rich and the poor in society, believing it had little impact on their children's future. Others were very concerned:

> *It's just so visible now in New Zealand. I hate to sit here now and think of my children living in a society any more divided than now.*

A number of parents commented that they felt both children and parents today are under much more pressure than in the past. The pressures parents identified for children included peer pressure, the availability of drugs and alcohol, the pressure to succeed in education, and living costs.

> *I worry a bit about the boys' achievement thing. It's a bit uncool to be good at school. That's a peer pressure thing that could potentially trip some of them up. He's part of the peer pressure. To him at the moment the opinion of his friends is vastly more important than anything we could say to him.*

*There's so much alcohol and drugs around. Kids are turning to that because families are not what they used to be. Kids are turning to other kids because the family unit isn't there for them.*

*Tertiary education is a much more serious business now than previously. It's an investment for both parents and children. The stakes are higher, there's less room to explore and make mistakes.*

Parents also felt they were under some pressure themselves.

*Parenting isn't valued. If you're being a parent that isn't a real job, you're not contributing to society, which I think is a very dangerous attitude.*

*I guess as a single parent it's something I do reflect on. I do feel that as my children have reached teenage years it has become much more difficult financially for me, and I'm really conscious of how often I'm saying in response to them "that's not possible financially". I believe that I have seen more frustration from [son] over the last year because of it.*

The role of the media, especially messages they directed at children, was of concern to many parents. Some parents thought that the media present a negative image of young people that is not constructive either to them or to others. Others were concerned about the quality of programmes designed for young people, particularly the negative and cynical content of some.

*I worry about the influence of the media on the thinking and behaviour of kids. Much of our media is imported. It limits kids so much. Advertising is pernicious. Much TV – for example The Simpsons – is so cynical and negative. It sets up really undesirable role models. We need better quality TV for children.*

Generally, parents felt very optimistic about the possibilities that information technology was opening up for their children.

*This will have a big impact, it's quite exciting. Global travel is not as difficult as it was. That's where his extended family being geographically spread will be a positive – he'll have great travel opportunities. Computers will have a big impact on his life. He's already e-mailing his cousins overseas.*

### 4.3.5 Who should do what?

*Families*

All the parents interviewed thought that families should take their responsibilities for their children very seriously. This included being there for them and loving, caring and nurturing them. Taking the time to attend to the needs of individual children was seen as important.

It was clear from the rest of the parents' comments, though, that while families played a major role, they could not achieve good outcomes for children alone, nor could all

families be relied upon to give children what they need. This exchange between two parents interviewed reflects that belief.

> *(Mother) I think parents should take absolute responsibility for their kids.*

> *(Father) If that's the premise we accept though, it's a tough world for kids whose parents don't accept that responsibility.*

## Schools

Parents' comments about the role of schools suggested that many parents are looking to schools to provide more for their children than simply an academic education.

They wanted schools to give their children more individual attention, a sense of belonging, and some affirmation of who they are.

> *High schools need to look at the way they deal with students at that age. They should not just be a number, but that often happens in the high school environment.*

> *Quality teaching, encouragement, recognition and motivation of ability.*

Some parents would like schools to direct more attention towards preparing young people for employment.

> *Schools could become more reality based. Get young people ready for employment … Put effort into young people, prepare them for the next stage.*

Parents who considered their children to be non-academic also felt that schools do not do justice to those students who don't want to go on to tertiary education.

> *In the secondary schools the whole curriculum is set out in case a person goes to university, and if they don't want to there is nothing there for them. It's wrong to have a system set up to educate so many in a way that works for so few. There's such a pressure for university now with little emphasis on the different gifts these kids have.*

## Business and society

Parents felt strongly that businesses could be offering more to young people by creating opportunities for them by way of apprenticeships and other training options. Some recognised that businesses will need support to do that.

> *I'd like to see business backed financially by government so that with incentives businesses could offer more apprenticeships and more jobs. Nothing will ever replace a job.*

Some parents thought businesses could contribute to good outcomes for children by sponsoring events in which young people are involved. Several parents made comments about the contribution the media could make.

*The media could do quite a bit for everybody. Just the way they focus attention and select certain things to focus attention on. They could start to emphasise things like optimism and co-operation – things that support life, rather than things that are anti-life.*

## The Government

The parents interviewed for this report thought that the main way the Government can contribute to good outcomes for children is to fund education in such a way that cost is not a barrier to young people remaining in education.

*I would honestly want to see a return to the funded, subsidised education that I enjoyed. And that's broader than just the money for my son, it's about open door entry and actively creating and allowing for people with ability and with the passion, to have the opportunity.*

Some of these parents broadened their request to ask that the Government make both education and healthcare available to all without barriers of cost.

Many parents thought the Government could support good parenting by making parenting education readily available, having policies that show that parenting is valued, and initiating media campaigns showing support for parents and parenting.

Some parents expressed some dissatisfaction with what they saw as limited opportunities for some young people to achieve.

*Recreate a society where each kid has the chance to achieve and isn't condemned if their parents haven't achieved.*

One father wanted the Government to take a broader view and develop social policy from a philosophical base, having first decided where New Zealand is headed as a country.

*We need to develop policies from a philosophical base and framework. What do we want? What do we value? And then decide what our policies are in health and education. Our basic principles should be inclusive and accepting of difference, so we need to remove the barriers that prevent people accessing these things.*

Some parents, and not only those who are parenting alone, wanted to see extra support in place for sole parents. Several parents commented on the extra burden borne by sole parents and the lack of institutional support for these parents. What the nature of this support should be was not explored in interviews.

*There needs to be some attention given to one-parent families, where the one parent has to have a job and then look after the kids. They have no time, no energy to even talk at the end of the day.*

## 4.4 Interviews with young people

### 4.4.1 Good outcomes for young people at age 18

Young people were asked to talk about their hopes and aspirations for themselves at the age of 18.

*Education*

Almost all the young people interviewed intended staying at school until the seventh form. Half of them planned to move on to university. Of this group, about half had a career direction in mind and intended following a vocationally oriented course at university. The other half were not so clear about a future direction but felt that the more education they could get the greater their opportunities would be in the world. Of those who mentioned university only a couple indicated that polytechnic or other vocational courses were an option they would consider.

About half of those who did not plan to go to university had a vocational direction in mind that did not need a university qualification. These young people were open to the idea of a vocational training course. The remainder were much less clear about what the future might hold for them and had little idea of what they might be doing beyond college.

Most of the young people interviewed could not think of anything that would make them change their minds about staying at school. A few indicated that should other desirable options present themselves – such as an apprenticeship in one case, or a really good job for a couple of others – they might reconsider their decision to remain at school.

Virtually all of the young people interviewed could see that education could be ongoing through their lives, and that while leaving school marked the end of one phase of their education, other phases lay ahead.

Most young people thought that they either did have enough information about the options for them when they left school, or would be able to get it when they needed it. A few mentioned the amount of information, with comments like this:

> *No, not really … well, yes – like they give you heaps and heaps of brochures but it's all cluttered up and confusing. There's so many and you've got to try and get through it all (female, 16).*

*Views about school*

When asked to complete the sentence 'When I leave school I'll look back on my school years and think…' the responses given by most of these young people indicated that school was a reasonably positive experience.

> *… I didn't regret that, I used it to make myself what I am (male, 12).*

*... it was a great time, it was fun, I met heaps of new people and I had a good time (male, 14).*

*Have I made the most of that? I'd like to think I have (female, 13).*

Some indicated that school had been a mixed experience:

*... I think it was good – but there was probably too much of it (male, 15).*

*Those were the best years of my life ... [laughs] ... I'm glad it's over! (female, 15).*

There were some who could foresee regrets, finishing the sentence with these words:

*... I should have done more (female, 16).*

*... I wish I'd got better marks (male, 17).*

Only one young person interviewed thought she would have nothing good to say for her school years, and finished the sentence like this:

*... I didn't learn that much, everything after intermediate has been pretty much a waste of time for me (female, 15).*

## Employment

Over three-quarters of the young people interviewed anticipated that they would be in part-time work by the age of 18, using the money to contribute to the costs of their further education. About half of this group imagined they would be working in jobs such as service station attendants or supermarket workers or at fast food outlets. The other half specifically mentioned that they did not want jobs of this kind. They wanted more challenging or higher-paying jobs.

Of the other young people, three hoped they might be in full-time work, but did not feel very optimistic about their chances, and another thought he might not be in work yet at that age.

When asked about the ideal job for them at 18, about half were realistic in their aspirations, citing the sorts of jobs they were doing now. However, a few thought a good job would be having their own business.

## Living situation

About a third of the young people interviewed thought that they would still be living at home at age 18. Another third saw themselves moving to a larger centre to study, and living in either a hostel or a flat. One saw himself living overseas at age 18 and another was adamant she would be flatting even though she planned to remain in her home town. The other young people didn't comment on this issue.

*Financial support*

Some of the young people interviewed were clear that their parents would not be in a position to help them financially by the time they were age 18. These young people anticipated that they would be managing on a combination of whatever state support they were entitled to, part-time work and a student loan.

Another group saw their financial support coming from a combination of a student loan and some family support, possibly supplemented by part-time work.

Four young people indicated that they anticipated supporting themselves financially through their own work by age 18. Two siblings said that their family would not allow them to take out a student loan and they were concerned about what options would be open to them if they could not find jobs.

Two other young people believed that their families would largely financially support them at age 18.

*Interests and involvements*

Most of the young people interviewed imagined that their interests at 18 would be quite similar to their current interests, although a few could imagine themselves more involved with a party scene at age 18 than they were now.

When asked what would constitute a great weekend for them at age 18, over a third said that the weekend would involve sport, and a third mentioned going to parties. Other popular pursuits were relaxing, spending time with friends, and spending time outdoors at beaches, tramping or camping.

> *When I'm 18 the best weekend I can imagine is resting, having a good time, out there with my friends. We'd be having fun and laughing and things. My interests will be just the same, I'll just be older (female, 15).*

*Relationships*

Over two-thirds of the young people thought that they would still see quite a bit of their families when they were age 18. The reasons varied from:

> *Because I can never be without them. They help me feel safe and give me comfort – I feel safer with them (female, 13).*

to:

> *Not seeing them might be a bit dangerous ... it would mean that if I did ever need money they wouldn't really be willing to give it (male, 11).*

The rest were divided between those who thought they would see a bit of their family but not a lot, and those who expected to see their family seldom.

The majority thought that at age 18 they would have some of the friends they had now. A minority thought that the choices they made between now and then would bring them into contact with new friends.

There was a great deal of consistency in the qualities these young people look for in their friends. A very high proportion mentioned "someone you can trust", as what they were looking for in a friend, followed by "people who like to do what I like to do", and "someone you can have fun with".

Most of these young people were not interested in friendships with "people who are into drugs", or people who are dishonest or who would "stab you in the back".

Most anticipated having a boyfriend or girlfriend at age 18 but several mentioned that they wouldn't want a relationship to be too serious.

### Qualities and values

When asked about the qualities and values they would like to have at age 18, young people gave a wide range of responses. Most mentioned at least one quality that described the approach they would like to have to the world, such as "confident", "conscientious", "balanced", "mature", "adventurous", "positive", "energetic" and "courageous".

Many answers also included a quality describing their relationships with others. They used words like "friendly", "outgoing", "popular", "kind" and "trustworthy".

Others were attributes they wished for themselves. These included "fit", "healthy", "rich" and "successful".

### 4.4.2   Good outcomes for young people at age 25

Having talked about their aspirations for themselves at age 18, young people found it much more difficult to articulate their hopes for their lives at age 25. Most recognised that the shape of their lives at that age would depend a great deal on what they decided to do, and what they achieved, between now and then.

Most thought they would not be living in the same town or city that they lived in now. Those from smaller centres spoke of the likelihood that they would have moved to a larger centre, and about a quarter felt fairly confident that they would be living overseas.

These young people were not very clear about how they would be managing financially, although most hoped to be in work by age 25. Home ownership did not seem a particularly realistic or even appealing prospect to most of them. Many of them would like to have a close relationship with someone by the age of 25, although once again several mentioned that they didn't expect to have a serious commitment at that stage.

***Friendships would still be an important part of life for this group of young people at age 25.***

### 4.4.3 Supports for and barriers to good outcomes for children

The young people interviewed found these questions quite difficult and needed to be prompted for much of this information.

*Family*

Most of those interviewed recognised the support they get from their parents and wider families. Key forms of support young people mentioned were: their families believing in them; being given support to try things and to see them through; and families accepting them even if things don't work out.

> *It helps by them talking and believing in me. They take me to work in the dark in the morning. They push us to stick to something instead of flagging it half way. This is schoolwork and everything (male, 13).*

> *They're always pushing me in the right direction and encouraging me to give things a go – it's okay if I quit if I don't like something but I always do. They tell me what direction to go and it's always the right way (female, 13).*

> *I find a lot of strength in my mum. She never doubts me. She's never told me I can't do it. She's always told me I can. She's always said I can go all the way if I want to. She's said, "I'll be behind you whatever you do." My dad has always showed me that you never give up. I've learned that from him (male, 15).*

A few young people found it hard to see the ways in which their families supported them.

*School, sport and community groups*

The young people interviewed made few negative comments about school, but only about half included school among the things that were helping them to achieve good outcomes. The aspects of school that were mentioned as being supportive were careers advice, curriculum content and the support of teachers who really took an interest in them.

Other groups such as sports teams, church and youth groups were identified by about half the respondents as making a positive contribution to their lives.

> *I've got a good teacher at school. He's really unlike my other teachers. He thinks there's a range of intelligences. He pushes me, he's helping me (male, 15).*

> *There's a lot of sport going on in my life. It helps me to understand teamwork and working with other people (male, 12).*

> *Church is great and the youth group every Friday night is really good. We do games, scavenger hunts and sometimes go to [city]. A lot of people don't like it because it's Christian-based, but I think it's just great (female, 15).*

*School doesn't actually do much. Coaches teach you the right things, and team members support you (male, 11).*

## Peers

Many of these young people indicated that their relationships with their friends were an important support and would help them towards good outcomes. Friends were valued because they shared common interests and provided support. Two of the main types of support friends gave were help in sorting out future directions, and emotional support.

*Yes. My friends are interested in the same things as me – like cars and stuff, and we share information. They might have helpful information when we're looking for jobs in the future (male, 11).*

*Yeah they support me. We just talk about what we are doing ... I just talk to them to see how they are enjoying themselves, and this helps me to make up my own mind ... to see what I want to do (male, 17).*

*They support me at school. When I'm feeling down they cheer me up (male, 13).*

*They're always there. They are the sort of people that you can ring any time – they're always there when I need them (female, 13).*

## Income

Some of the young people had difficulty distinguishing the significance of income in helping them achieve good outcomes, from the significance that money has for them now and in the future.

About a third thought that money was central to their being able to achieve the future they want for themselves.

*Money is it all (female, 15).*

*Very, I want to be rich basically. I don't want to be poor (female, 16).*

*I think money is very important. If I don't have it I don't know what would happen to me (female, 11).*

No one thought that money was unimportant, but others indicated that it was only one of the things that would help them achieve positive outcomes.

*As long as I've got some, that's the main thing. It's not the most important thing (male, 15).*

*I want enough money to live and eat and have a house, but not to live like a king. It separates you from other people. It changes you into a different person (male, 12).*

## What young people can do to promote good outcomes for themselves

There were two ways that young people felt they contributed to good outcomes for themselves. The first and most frequently mentioned was the attitude they took to their lives, and their willingness to set goals and to work for them.

> *The thing that matters most is my determination, sticking at it, not giving up, not thinking that I'm hopeless (male, 12).*

> *I have to believe in myself. You can't go far if you don't set goals for yourself and know you can work towards them (female, 13).*

The second way some felt they contributed to good outcomes was in their choice of friends, and in choosing peers who would influence them in positive directions rather than negative ones.

> *I think I will always be influenced by the thoughts, ideas and dreams of my friends – this makes it doubly important for me to choose them well! (female, 15).*

When young people were asked to complete the sentence, 'The most important thing that is going to help me be the person I want to be is …' they gave a wide range of responses. Some referred to tangible supports such as money and a job; for others their most important resources were internal things like their personality and the choices they make.

> *… money probably – enough money to do what I want to do (male, 17).*

> *… succeeding at school (male, 11).*

> *… keeping the personality that I have at the moment (female, 13).*

> *… just doing what I want to do. Getting ahead myself (male, 15).*

> *… I don't know. I don't really know. Maybe being able to still do the things I like to do with cars and fishing (male, 11).*

> *… what I do to make me that person – the choices I make (male, 13).*

> *… knowing my options for what I can do when I'm older, and having support to do what I want to do – having my family and friends backing me up in what I want to do (male, 14).*

> *… the most important thing for me will always be a job (male, 13).*

## The importance of peers

Some young people recognised their own susceptibility to peer pressure. Most recognised the potential for peer pressure to work for positive or negative outcomes. Like their parents, most of these young people believed that they would be able to withstand any negative peer pressure, however a few were less sure.

> *Probably influencing what I do, like what I choose to do depending on what they're doing. And they'll sort of be the same, depending on what I'm doing.*

*We'll all sort of go as a group, to choose to go to a party or not to go or anything like that (male, 14).*

*They'll be really upbuilding and helpful to me to do what I want to do (male, 11).*

*I'd think about my friends and think, "Is it worth being friends with this person?" If it wasn't I wouldn't bother. I've got friends who've taught me something I'll never forget – that is to keep on fighting, never give up, always believe (male, 15).*

*My friends will probably always be a big influence, cause I always have friends around me for support, and where they're going I'm probably going to follow (female, 16).*

*I think they'll make me do things ... like dare to do things that I probably wouldn't do without them ... I'm not saying it's going to be bad (female, 15).*

### Other supports young people see they need

When asked about other things that would support them to achieve good outcomes, the young people interviewed found it hard to think of things that they didn't have now that might help. Some of their suggestions included: more support from teachers; a role model in a desired occupation; better communication with parents; having a job; being able to drive; and a computer.

### Possible pitfalls

It is sometimes said that young people consider themselves invincible. The young people interviewed for this research had trouble imagining what might stand in the way of positive outcomes, beyond being derailed by peer influences or lack of money, both of which had already been discussed. Three young people mentioned that not being able to get a job would be the thing most likely to prevent them having a positive future.

*I might not know enough to get a job (male, 11).*

*Temptations, the stuff that is out there. There's bad stuff but way, way more good. If I ever stopped believing in myself. I have a couple of times (male, 16).*

*The choices I make. Getting into trouble and getting a criminal record (male, 13).*

*If I had a change of lifestyle, or ... got in with the wrong crowd of people (female, 15).*

### 4.4.4 Who should do what?

### Families

Most of the young people interviewed thought that the biggest thing families can do for children is to support, encourage and believe in them.

Some had developed their ideas further as these comments show:

*Families should talk to kids and understand. Not be so old fashioned. Today is today, not last century. Parents need to be more open minded, because I've seen parents who are really open minded but still lay down rules, their kids are succeeding more but then still having a social life and stuff, like still actually really enjoying themselves. … the children trust them and they trust their kids as well a lot more (female, 16).*

*Families do give you things you need – not want. Want is if you're feeling generous, need is if you need and need doesn't have to be straight away. Can be a result of saving up for something. My mum is amazing, she's taught me more than anyone. My dad's taught me what it is to be a boy. He'll always be my dad, I'll never forget him. He taught me how to play rugby – the side of me mum can't just touch at all. It's a bit different when you're a bit older – you see a different side to adulthood and the future and that. I can talk to him about the future (male, 15).*

*I used to think all families were like mine. Now I know they're not and I wish some of the kids I know had parents who liked them (female, 11).*

## The Government

Many of the young people found it hard to think what the Government should do to help them achieve their goals.

The single clear idea that came through from their responses was that they wanted the Government to take action to make tertiary education more affordable, and reduce the debt burden for students.

A couple of respondents also mentioned that the Government could do more to create jobs for young people.

## Business and other groups

Several young people thought that businesses could be doing more to create job opportunities for young people, and to support them through sponsorship.

Other suggestions were that media campaigns could be run to help parents with their parenting; that mentoring and access to role models could be more readily available; and that action should be taken to address the community's negativity to young people. One young woman made this comment:

*I think the community has a thing about teenagers and is full of negativity about them. Sometimes even when you're a positive person, when you know what they think of teenagers you just feel like giving it to them, you feel so angry (female, 15).*

Some young people acknowledged the support they get from the church and sports groups but could not think of anything else that these groups could be doing.

## 4.5 Interviews with providers

### 4.5.1 Good outcomes for young people at age 18

Providers were asked what they considered to be good outcomes for young people at age 18.

*Education*

These providers were mostly in agreement about what a positive outcome from education is for young people.

Ideally, they want to see young people who: believe in themselves and see that they have a contribution to make; have achieved at something whether academic or not in their schooling; take responsibility for themselves and their actions; have a sense of direction for their future; and feel equipped to face whatever lies ahead of them.

These providers all saw the role schools play in the lives of young people as being far broader than to simply address the curriculum. This comment articulates what many of the providers interviewed would consider a positive outcome from education:

> *I'd hope they could work and function independently, have the ability to form relationships, have the ability to think innovatively and creatively, emotional maturity, be independent thinkers – so be capable, independent people with a stable emotional base with some knowledge in an area of interest and equipped to move on with that into further education or into whatever other area they want to achieve in.*

*Access to employment*

Again, providers were in considerable agreement about young people's needs in relation to employment. They wanted to see more opportunities for young people to get exposure to different working environments through apprenticeships, training schemes, work experience or through more attention paid by schools to transition-to-work programmes.

> *Access to work/training – variety is important. They need space to be able to decide. It's a transitional period of time, having to adjust to something.*

> *An opportunity to sample employment in a variety of settings would be nice – both paid and voluntary. Employers need to provide opportunities and formal agencies need to facilitate it. And volunteer centres need to promote opportunities for young people.*

> *Things like being able to go in and visit the different training programmes – which many schools do – having work experience, and having people coming in and talking about the different things that they're doing, and for the [employment related] networks to actually come into the schools.*

*Living situation*

Providers recognised that the living arrangements for the 18-year-olds they had contact with were often far from ideal. One provider noted that by age 18 almost all the young people that agency saw were no longer living at home.

Providers indicated that the desire of many 18-year-olds for independence was often out of step with their ability to manage practically, emotionally or financially. Providers thought that ideally young people would have a living arrangement that gave them some space to be themselves, but that also provided some support.

> *A good living arrangement is a supportive arrangement, which is often not the case – that they haven't ended up living in this position because other things haven't worked out.*

> *Whether they are at home or living independently, it's important to have their own space for themselves and to be their own person. A respectful and considerate environment.*

*Financial support*

Providers struggled with the fact that the financial circumstances of young people at age 18 were so dependent upon their families' financial position. They were also concerned about the stress put on young people who were trying to work and study at the same time, and the even greater stress on those from disadvantaged backgrounds who might also be trying to make a contribution to the family income.

> *A lot of them [manage] not particularly well, cause it's not easy trying to hold down a little job, trying to support training. Some of course don't. It's a learning process at that age. It depends very much on where they've come from I think, and how much support they've had on the way, and how much freedom they've had in that area of learning.*

> *That's one of the saddest things that we've done to teenagers these days – we've trapped them into dependency. Many juggle work and study and that makes it hard, but on the other hand they need to be independent financially. It's not healthy to have to come back to the parents all the time for financial support.*

> *Some parents can afford it, and some get nothing from parents with the same income. So there's a huge difference out there about which benefit from their parent's commitment and which don't. When I look at the kids who aren't achieving at school they are often working and working to help the family live.*

*Interests and involvements*

While several providers mentioned involvement in sport as particularly desirable for young people, most indicated that the specifics of the interest or involvement were not as crucial as the fact that young people have an interest, and preferably a range of interests.

*Involvement in a range of social and sporting activities, involvement in the arts, involvement in community work of some form, music, travel – a healthy exploration of everything – it's exciting.*

*Something that is out there interacting with like-minded people who are positive, wholesome, and going forward, rather than sitting down and watching smashim' crashim' bashim' video games.*

## Relationships

Providers believed that the quality of the relationships young people have at age 18 is crucial to good outcomes. Good relationships with both family and friends support good outcomes, while poor relationships threaten a positive future.

*It's absolutely critical – the ability to form good and healthy relationships and to work through the tough times is critical to the mental health of young people.*

*They're vital. I think that's the key. If you've got a family that is functioning well, then you're going to have a family that is going to have relationship, communication, interaction. You're going to have more of a positive outcome because you've got people who are interested in what other people are doing, rather than just sort of waiting to get them out of the house type thing.*

*Relationships are essential. A 19-year-old is not a child but not an adult. They need to be able to go and try something and have a safe place to come back to if they are wounded – or excited. Friendship is very important.*

*On the whole the kids often rely on each other very much but the kids who appear to cope better emotionally in adversity are those that trust and relate to another adult if it is not the parent.*

## Qualities and values

Once again there was a great deal of consistency in what providers said about the qualities and values that are important for 18-year-olds, and that society should be trying to foster. Most important, say the majority, is a sense of respect for self and respect for others.

*I think that giving them an understanding of respect – bringing them into a place where they can understand what respect truly is, is really important. And respecting self. If they can't respect themselves they're not going to respect anybody else.*

*A strong sense of self, and a sense of self-esteem, but also the awareness of others. Like, they count, but others count – that they are important, and others are important – they respect themselves and have respect for others. If that's the base, I think the other things kind of springboard off that as far as values and things go.*

Other desirable qualities and values from providers' perspectives included a spiritual awareness, trust, loyalty, caring and a sense of justice.

### 4.5.2  Good outcomes for young people at age 25

Having talked about what they considered good outcomes for young people at age 18, providers were asked to reflect on what they would consider good outcomes at age 25.

Generally providers saw the age of 25 as being one of more stability and more focus for young people than would be expected at age 18.

> *By 25 a person's sense of direction would be clearer so all the goals, friendships and decisions will be likely to be fitting together. By 25 people have more of a sense of where they fit in.*

They imagined that formal education for most young people would be over, although they viewed the availability of ongoing education positively.

While most said that by age 25 most young people could be expected to be in work, there was not much comment about how realistic this expectation was.

In terms of relationships these providers saw age 25 as a time of becoming more selective about friendships, and people being ready to move into more committed stable relationships.

> *By 25 they will choose who they flat or live with more and be in a more "sane" situation. They will be more likely to know what it takes to make it work. By 25 a person is seen to be emotionally mature enough for a relationship whereas at 18 they're still really learning to have one with themselves.*

> *By 25 you're either in a permanent relationship or you're starting to look for something long term. Much more selective – tend to have a few good friends rather than large numbers of acquaintances, and those good friends tend to become far more important than family.*

In terms of values and qualities that would be considered part of a good outcome at age 25, providers used words like "focus", "direction", and "confidence".

> *They would be less self-focused and more outward looking. They would have a sense of themselves, a sense of being part of a community and an awareness of being responsible for their actions.*

> *Their values and beliefs would have changed from an 18-year-old to probably be not so self-centred; to expand and to incorporate other people, to be more giving rather than taking, more stable, more focused on their direction.*

### 4.5.3  Support for and barriers to good outcomes for children

*Family*

Providers involved in this research considered that parental interest and involvement with young people was the most crucial factor determining good outcomes. The quality of the interaction between adults and their children was the critical factor, rather than the make-up of the family. These providers believed that extended family involvement can be hugely beneficial, and expressed regret that Pākehā families on the whole have less extended family interaction now than in the past.

> *Kids need parents and family that communicate so that the growing child has a sense of being valued. It doesn't seem to matter at all about the composition of the family, but what happens inside it. Safety to express their sorrows and joys is the best foundation we can give them.*

> *Families who trust their kids, who have rules, who have boundaries, who have respectful relationships within the family, they have good outcomes.*

> *I think that children are miniatures of their parents. So, if a parent or family environment isn't functioning well, then the child isn't going to function well, both as a youngster and as they get older. We see it day in and day out – so I think the parental factor is huge.*

> *Wider family support is vital, but is something that is being lost in our [especially European] society, which is moving more towards "look after number one".*

Providers were asked if, in their view, families were doing enough of the right things to support positive outcomes for their children. They were divided between those who thought that most families were supporting children to the best of their ability but were sometimes hampered by lack of knowledge and lack of time, and those who thought that parents often did not put enough effort and energy into supporting their children towards positive outcomes.

> *Everyone wants the best for their children – everyone provides to the best of their ability, but sometimes their ability is not high.*

> *We see some families doing nothing. Some families just saying "it's all the kid's fault, fix them, don't fix me".*

The majority of these providers also thought that in general parents often don't see that their actions have a great impact on their children's progress towards good outcomes or otherwise.

> *You start to see it as children get older – a lot don't [see their actions as important]. A huge number of parents look for someone else to fix it. A lot of parents really feel that it's someone else's fault that there's a problem.*

*Income*

Providers agreed that income does make the task of rearing a family less stressful, but that of itself money will not ensure good outcomes. One provider indicated that income becomes critical to good outcomes if a family cannot afford the basics of food and shelter.

> *It's significant below a certain level. Income should cover the basics whatever the source so that children have a safe, comfortable and warm environment, adequate food and clothing and a bit left over for activities.*

> *Money is a factor, but having money doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to get a good outcome. I think it's on how people look at it, and on what their drive and motivation is.*

> *It certainly helps. It certainly takes the pressure off parents, so that means that maybe they're not so stressed – so they have more energy to give out. It's not always the number one thing, but it certainly is a key factor.*

*Other resources*

Providers in rural areas recognised that access to transport has an important impact on outcomes for young people. Access to transport, public or private, allows young people to participate in activities that encourage their interests and support good outcomes. Both the availability of the transport itself and the distance young people and their families have to travel to enable them to participate were identified as potential stresses on families.

Other resources that support good outcomes included: low-cost access to community resources such as sport and recreation facilities; access to appropriate healthcare; role models and other adults to take an interest in them; and parent education.

*Peers*

Providers agreed that peers play a significant part in the lives and development of young people, and were in agreement with parents and young people that the influence of peers can be considerable, either for good or for bad.

> *If they've got good friends who support and encourage kids, the sky's the limit, but kids can also restrict them – make them fearful or feel different. It's sad where kids lack the self-confidence to be different to their peers.*

Providers acknowledged that they often see young people who are mixing in a bad peer group. Some made the link between this question and their comments about the need to create opportunities for young people to be engaged in interests and activities that may give them access to a positive peer group.

### 4.5.4  The impact of community and environmental factors

Providers were canvassed for their views on the impact of some of the social and economic changes that have occurred during the lifetimes of today's teenagers. These

are: changing family patterns; a tightened job market; an increasing gap between rich and poor; increased living costs; the pressures on young people; and the 'smaller world' effect of the internet and other information technology.

Most providers thought that all of these changes, with the exception of technology, had led to increased pressure on young people. Of greatest concern to them was the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

> *The gap between rich and poor is very, very obvious and those kids from privileged families often have negative attitudes towards those less privileged kids. Classism is becoming more and more obvious.*

> *Kids who can't afford to do activities or have the clothes they all like, don't see themselves in the "popular group". Because they have always seen themselves as "on the edge" they rarely develop the confidence to know that they can set up their own "popular group" and so remain sad, alone, sometimes angry and more often than not, under-achieving.*

The pressures on young people were of concern to providers. Some felt that the pressure to experiment with drugs and alcohol, and to become sexually active, was something that young people face earlier now, when they are less able to handle those pressures.

> *Young people are drinking alcohol and becoming sexually active at a younger age. I think our community values have lowered, and along with that we've brought down our value system within the community. So things that once upon a time we wouldn't have stood for, now we just go "What can we do to change it?"*

> *Those are huge issues out there, and they're hitting at a much younger and younger age, where kids developmentally are certainly nowhere near being able to handle that sort of situation [e.g. drugs; youth suicide] – so you're talking about a much younger group of kids being exposed and being involved in things where maybe six years ago, they'd be three or four years older. It has an enormous impact on every aspect of their lives, not just socially but of course it's their schooling, it's everything.*

Providers were divided about the impact of changing family patterns on young people. Some believed that it was not the increased range of family types that is a problem, but that society maintains a stereotype of a nuclear family that is now outdated. Other thought that the break-up and reformation of families, often more than once for some young people, was unsettling for them and eroded a much-needed source of support. These are two comments:

> *No problems with greater diversity of families but we hang on to the concept of families that isn't relevant.*

> *There's just no real solid foundation, there's no consistency. What is a family today? If you've got something that's continually changing, and no stability, you've got a person who's going to have possibly an unstable foundation for them to build their own life or their own direction upon.*

Another area of concern to some providers was the tightened job market and in particular the lack of opportunities available to young people who do not want, or are not equipped for, tertiary education.

> *I think we've made it incredibly difficult for ourselves. We've put a lot of weight on tertiary education when we will always need people to do menial jobs too. We've devalued this kind of work, and we discourage kids from doing it. We push kids towards tertiary education when some aren't capable of it. We need to look at encouraging kids to do what they're happy and competent at.*

Increased living costs were of concern to providers, not just because of the direct impact on young people, but because of the increased time and energy families have to put into meeting their commitments.

### 4.5.5  Who should do what?

#### Families

Providers indicated that families' main responsibility is to provide a safe place for their children, where they can be loved, accepted, respected, encouraged, supported and given boundaries.

#### Schools

Some of these providers thought that schools could be doing more for young people to develop their communication skills and to enhance the abilities they will need to cope in adulthood. This was one comment:

> *Schools could teach young people to communicate well, to actually be able to say what they think, what they believe, what they feel and what they want. Conflict resolution skills should also be taught in schools.*

Some providers voiced their concerns that schools do not cater well for children who do not achieve academically.

#### Business and community

There was strong support from some providers for businesses to offer more work to young people, especially work that involved a training component – such as apprenticeships. It was recognised that this was not the responsibility of business alone but would need to be supported by incentives from the Government.

Some providers believed however that too much was being asked of business, and that the responsibility for creating work for young people lies primarily with the Government. Providers believe that community agencies are providing as much support to young people as they can within resourcing constraints.

#### The Government

Providers had a range of ideas of how the Government could promote positive outcomes for young people. Most frequently mentioned was the need for the Government to show

leadership in putting a value on children and on parenting, and by doing more to support parents in that role.

> *Need to support parents in how to be good parents – applaud and celebrate the work they're doing. Keep parents informed, make sure they know where to go for information.*

> *The Government should do as much as they can to support the family, and encourage families to just be families, to be a unit, to respect one another, to communicate well. The Government could support families by trying to reduce some of the stresses around things like jobs and income.*

Adequately funding education, healthcare and social services was another way these providers thought that the Government could contribute to good outcomes for young people.

## 4.6 Comparisons

This chapter compares the views of: parents, children and providers; parents and children from families of higher socio-economic status and those less well financially resourced; families in rural or provincial locations and those living in cities; and finally children of different ages and genders. Because of the very small numbers, these comparisons need to be treated with caution.

### 4.6.1 Parents, children and providers

#### Education

There was a considerable degree of consistency between the aspirations parents had for their children's educational outcomes and those of the children themselves. In both groups the large majority saw the children staying at school until age 18 and then moving into some form of tertiary education, whether it is academically or vocationally focused.

Providers had a somewhat different perspective, and shared the concerns of a smaller group of parents about what would constitute a good educational outcome for young people who did not want, or were not equipped, for tertiary study. Providers were also more concerned for other outcomes from education such as self-confidence, and the emotional and practical skills to manage independent life.

Parents expressed regret that their children were being required to focus early on a vocational direction at the expense of being able to experiment, to take some risks or to follow an interest even if it doesn't lead to a job. Parents were saddened that their children may be burdened by debt at an early age.

#### Employment

Those most concerned about employment prospects at age 18 were those who did not see their children moving on to further study. The concern that work will be hard to find was shared by those young people who did not want to continue in education, and by

providers. Full-time work seemed quite some way off for those young people who were planning to move on to tertiary education. Both they and their parents envisaged the young people being in part-time work at age 18, generating income to support the costs of their study.

By age 25 all of those interviewed anticipated that young people would be in the work-force. For the young people age 25 seemed a long way off and, with so many decisions to be made between now and then, few were clear about their hopes for employment. Parents hoped that their children would have been successful enough in their tertiary education to get a good job. Several thought that their children would be working overseas at age 25, a view shared by a number of the young people.

Providers wanted to see young people have more opportunities for exposure to different working environments as a way of bridging the gap between education and employment.

## Location and living arrangements

Parents and children had rather different views as to where the young people were likely to be living at age 18. Almost all the parents saw their children as still living at home, if they remained in the same town or city, or living in a hostel if they had to move to another centre for their education. However, only about a third of the young people thought that they would still be at home at age 18, with the rest anticipating they would be living more independently.

Providers were more concerned with those young people who did not have the option of living at home at age 18, either because they were not welcome, or because of their desire for independence. Providers indicated that at age 18 many young people were not equipped financially or emotionally for completely independent living.

## Financial support

Financial support for tertiary study was a matter of great concern to parents and children alike. Some parents indicated that they would be providing as much financial assistance as possible in order to minimise any student loan their children required. Other parents were clear that they were not in a financial position to offer support to their children for tertiary education and saw a student loan as inevitable. While many young people spoke of their desire to keep a student loan to a minimum, only a few said that they would be able to manage without one, even with part-time work and, in some cases, parental support.

The main point providers made about the financial support of young people at age 18 was that it is, unfairly in their view, tied in to the financial circumstances of their families, and that advantages some young people over others.

All three groups hoped that at age 25 young people would be self-supporting through employment.

*Interests and involvements*

All three groups saw interests and involvements for young people at age 18 being an extension of what they were involved with earlier in their lives. Many parents and children mentioned the importance of sport in the lives of young people, and saw this involvement as being a lifelong interest.

Providers thought that the nature of the interest or involvement was not important, but that the opportunity for young people to be part of a group that had a focus and could bring them into contact with other healthy, purposeful adults and young people, was a very important one.

Both parents and children found it harder to imagine what the young people's interests might be by age 25. Some parents saw their children developing more of a sense of themselves as part of society by that age, and looking for ways in which they could contribute to that society.

*Relationships*

Parents and children both saw the future of their relationships with each other as being extensions of the sort of relationships they had now. Those who felt close to their children/parents now anticipated that continuing into the children's adulthood. Those who had some tension in their relationships were divided between those who thought this would pass, and those who imagined that they would see little of one another in the future.

Providers saw the quality of the relationship between young people and their parents as one of the crucial factors impacting on outcomes.

All three groups agreed that relationships with their friends was of vital importance to young people, and the nature of those relationships could have a positive or a negative impact on young people's outcomes. While acknowledging the reality of peer pressure, almost all the parents interviewed had faith that their children were not likely to be derailed by it.

*Qualities and values*

There was a great degree of consistency between the qualities and values that parents hoped for their children at age 18 and those that young people hoped for themselves. Both groups recognised the importance of qualities like confidence, being happy, being positive and comfortable with who you are. Both groups also valued interpersonal strengths like respect for others, kindness and trustworthiness.

Providers thought that the key value that would demonstrate a good outcome at age 18 was respect – respect for self and respect for others.

*Family*

Both parents and providers considered that parental interest and involvement with young people was the most crucial factor in determining good outcomes. As well as meeting basic needs, this support gives young people the sense that they are loved, valued and respected. Practical manifestations of this support were help with schoolwork, money for and transport to activities and encouragement in the things in which children are interested.

Most of the young people interviewed recognised the support they got from their families, with most citing examples like help with schoolwork and transport to activities.

*School and community*

Both parents and providers saw schools as having an important contribution to make to good outcomes for young people. They believed that schools should address more than simply academic achievement and should be helping to prepare young people for the world that lies ahead. This includes a greater focus on providing work experience and transition-to-work programmes, and more attention to communication and social skills.

Young people made few negative comments about school, but not many seemed to regard school as contributing to their achievement of good outcomes.

*Peers*

All three groups acknowledged the contribution of peers to outcomes. Young people and providers in particular noted the contribution that the right sort of peers could make to achieving good outcomes.

*Income*

The views of parents and providers about the importance of income in achieving good outcomes for young people were consistent. All were clear that income alone will not achieve a good outcome, that more important are the time, support and values that some young people get from their families. However, it was equally agreed that an adequate income is needed to reduce the financial pressure on families and to allow them the time to give children what they need.

*Other concerns*

Providers noted the importance of transport as a factor affecting outcomes for young people, especially those in rural areas.

Parents and providers were very concerned about the impact of the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the impact of this on young people's outcomes.

Parents and providers also worried about the pressures on young people today – both the pressures to use alcohol and drugs, and the pressures to focus early on a vocational direction.

### 4.6.2  Location and socio-economic status

This section compares the views of those in rural or provincial areas and those in cities together with the views of those of different socio-economic status. In many respects, the two groups overlapped. Of the 12 low or medium-low-income families interviewed for this research, nine lived in a rural or provincial area. Of the eight high- or medium-high-income families, only one lived in a rural or provincial area.

In the medium- and higher-income families, seven out of the eight families hoped that their children would go on to tertiary education. Four of these families indicated that they anticipated still playing a significant role in the financial support of their children as tertiary students, and two other families indicated they would be prepared to "pay for the education, but not the lifestyle".

Five of these families thought that their children would still be living at home. The family in a rural area believed their child would have had to leave home, as there were no opportunities for him there. One family believed their child would be doing vocational training in another country, and one family expected to be supporting their child in a hostel while he studied in another centre.

Amongst the low- and medium-low-income families, about half the families indicated they would offer some financial support to their tertiary student children . Of the others some were quite unclear about what their children would be doing at age 18 and could not think ahead to what their financial requirements might be. The others hoped that their children would be engaged in tertiary education but were certain they would not be in a position to offer financial support. Three of the parents in this group indicated they were not opposed to their children having a student loan. The others regarded it as probably necessary but undesirable. The three families based in the city thought that their children would still live at home. Those in other areas who had their sights set on further education for their children saw it as inevitable that the children would move away.

In terms of their hopes for their future relationship with their children, their hopes for their children's relationships with peers, and the sorts of qualities and values they would like to see in their children at age 18, there were no obvious differences between the higher-income city-dwelling families and the lower-income rural and provincial families.

### Supports and barriers

Higher-income urban families and lower-income provincial and rural families had a lot in common when it came to the supports they thought their children would need to achieve positive outcomes. Most frequently mentioned by both groups was support from the family, particularly in imparting values, setting boundaries, having time, and providing encouragement. Both groups considered support for education as important, along with support for a children's interests and activities.

When asked about the contribution of income to positive outcomes there were some differences between the two groups. While both thought it important, the higher-income group was inclined to say that it was not the most important thing, while families in the

lower-income group used words like "critical" and "pivotal" to describe the contribution of income. Both groups saw the key contributions of income as being to give the family some freedom to attend to the other tasks of parenting, and to provide access to forms of education, interests and other supports that promote positive outcomes.

There were no apparent differences in the way the two groups of families viewed the role of schools, of peers or of other resources in supporting positive outcomes.

### 4.6.3  Families of different structures

Included amongst the families interviewed were five single parents, three reconstituted families, nine two-parent families and three extended families where the grandparents play a very active role in the children's lives. As each of these groups contains only a few families, caution needs to be applied in generalising on the basis of the differences between them.

#### Positive outcomes for children

There were no discernible differences in the hopes and aspirations these families of different types had for their children.

Extended families mentioned the desirability of strong family relationships, and the support that extended families provide, more than people in other types of families did.

#### Support and barriers

Single parents talked more about the cost barriers to tertiary education than did parents from other family types. Some felt saddened that their children would have to go into debt to fund their education because of their inability to contribute. Others indicated they would make sacrifices to contribute to their children's tertiary education so those children did not end up with a large debt.

Income was rated as being a very important contributor to positive outcomes by single parents. There appeared to be little difference between family types in their intentions regarding whether or not they would contribute financial support during their children's tertiary education.

Single parents were among those who believed that having access to mentors and other adults who are interested in them would support good outcomes for their children. Single parents were also more likely to mention that early parenthood could be one barrier to their children achieving successful outcomes.

There were no obvious differences between the parents from different family types in the way they viewed the impact of the changing family structure on their children's futures.

### 4.6.4 Age and gender of children

*Age*

Ten of the children interviewed for this research were aged 13 or younger, and the other 10 were between 14 and 17 years old. Eleven of the young people were boys and nine were girls. Eleven of the young people lived in rural or provincial areas, and nine lived in cities. Age made little difference to young people's views.

*Gender*

Two out of the 11 boys interviewed had developed some ideas about a career direction towards which they wanted to study. Over half the girls had ideas about the sorts of career directions that they would like to pursue when they left school.

A higher proportion of the girls than the boys interviewed saw themselves living independently at age 18. There was no difference between the genders in how they saw themselves managing financially at age 18.

# 5. The Pacific Report

## 5.1 Introduction

This report investigates the views of Pacific families, children/young people and Pacific social service providers.

### 5.1.1 Pacific context

Pacific people comprise 6% of the total population in New Zealand with approximately two-thirds of Pacific people living in Auckland. The six main Pacific communities (from smallest to largest) are: Tokelauan, Fijian, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Islands and Samoan. The Samoan community makes up half the Pacific population. The Pacific population is youthful with more than half being under the age of 15 years. It is a population of mostly low socio-economic status with a high number of people living on benefits. Within the Pacific communities, education is regarded as a way out of poverty. Despite the rising cost of education, participation in tertiary education has increased with more young women than young men completing their studies.

In Pacific families in New Zealand, the concept of family refers to extended family: *aiga, anau, kaiga, kainga, magafoa* and *yavusa*. In theory, one becomes a family member by connection through birth, marriage or adoption but how this is practised differs from family to family. Extended families operate as collectives. The responsibility of the collective is to socialise its members to know their roles and responsibilities/obligations. While the collective is important, the wellbeing of its individual members is equally important, as the collective can only function effectively if its members are looked after.

The cultural value of respect in Pacific cultures is taught to children from an early age. Respect is the guiding principle in how people relate to each other. Children are taught to

respect people older than themselves, and brothers and sisters to respect one another. The values taught in Pacific families in New Zealand are similar to those in the Pacific. What may differ is the practice of those values.

### 5.1.2 Methodology

A sample of 18 families was identified by Fijian, Tokelauan, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Islands and Samoan interviewers through their personal networks. The criterion for selection was families with children between the ages of 11 and 17 years. Nineteen young people were interviewed; ten were female and nine were male. Eleven were aged 11 to 14 years and eight were aged 15 to 17 years.

The Pacific research team was made up of people from Auckland and Wellington. It was important to match Pacific interviewers with respondents so that the different communities could be accessed. The people from Wellington were: Alepano Savelio (Tokelauan), Suafole Gush (Samoan), Anne Allan-Moetaua (Cook Islands), and Susana Kilioni (Fijian). The people from Auckland were: Ieti Lima (Samoan), Yvette Guttenbeil (Tongan), Luisa Falanitule (Niuean), and Lanuola Asiasiga (Samoan).

Although Pacific people in New Zealand are made up of many different nations, all government departments except for Statistics New Zealand group them together as one. The methods used in this study drew respondents from six Pacific nations but it must be acknowledged that on such a tiny sample, the findings cannot be generalised to the wider Pacific communities. The findings can only be seen as representing the views of the respondents in this study. Three Niuean families cannot represent the Niuean population nor can two Cook Islands families represent the Cook Islands population.

Similarly, comparisons using other variables, such as being a single-parent or two-parent family or an extended family household, were not possible across all groups. Length of time in New Zealand, often an important variable amongst migrant groups, was not taken into account. New Zealand born/raised parents/caregivers were only sought amongst Niuean, Cook Islands and Samoan parents/caregivers, since those populations have been resident for a long time.

## 5.2    Interviews with parents/caregivers

To find out what could be considered to be 'good outcomes' for Pacific children, parents/caregivers were asked about their hopes and aspirations for their children at age 18 and at age 25.

### 5.2.1  What are 'good outcomes for Pacific children' at 18?

Pacific parents/caregivers associated good outcomes with a good education. They saw education as a pathway to better employment opportunities. Most wanted their children to stay at school until the seventh form and to continue on to university or polytechnic if possible or some other form of training.

*Although we are struggling financially, we want to encourage our son to continue with his education as far as he can go. We realise the importance of having a good education which will eventually lead to obtaining a better job (Tokelauan).*

*We want [son] to carry on to further study. It's very important. If he wants to succeed or do well in his future he will have to get further education. We encourage [son] to think of further education all the time (Tongan).*

*I was hoping that she will have a different life – do something else – keep up with college or uni, all those kinds of things – the others [children] didn't make it. I really hope for the best. I'm hoping she'll have a go with her life (Niuean).*

Therefore at the age of 18, most parents/caregivers saw their children still being at school or undertaking some form of study or training. A few parents/caregivers spoke of possible careers for their children such as nursing, or becoming a doctor or accountant or engineer, but most also recognised that in the end, their children would choose and that they as parents would support them in their choice.

*Whatever she prefers to do, but I hope she would like to work as a nurse or a doctor. I would encourage her to be interested in working for people in the community (Samoan).*

*At the end of the day it is his choice and we support what career he pursues (Tokelauan).*

Equally importantly, parents/caregivers spoke of wanting their children to grow up respecting others, maintaining a close relationship with their family and being involved with their church and community. Maintaining family ties and valuing the extended family relationship were seen as particularly important.

### 5.2.2  Employment and financial management at 18

As most parents/caregivers wanted their children to go on to further education/training, part-time employment was seen as an option that would fit in with study. Many parents/caregivers saw part-time employment as important because they thought that it would teach young people to manage their own money, pay for their personal needs, and encourage time management.

*I'd like [daughter] to find a part-time job so she can feel a bit of independence. You know, so she can buy her own clothes and things like that. It will be good for her to start working and budgeting her own money. Good practice (Tongan).*

*I would like him to have a part-time job because it would show/teach him that you cannot get through life depending on other people. I want him to be a bit more self-sufficient (Samoan).*

*I am keen to see her have a part-time job – nothing too strenuous – but it's good to teach them to manage money and manage their time (Samoan).*

Parents/caregivers whose children already had part-time work spoke of how valuable the experience was:

*At the moment he has an after-school job two to three times a week so he's learning the value of money. At first he would spend his money all the time then find out he needed it for something else but now he's learnt that it needs to be rationed over an amount of time until it builds up (Samoan).*

The only caution was that parents/caregivers did not want work to take children away from their studies.

*I think by the time he is 18 he'll need a job for his own personal needs. Things like shoes, going out and that kind of stuff. But I would only like him to work part-time and in a job that won't take too much time away from his studies (Tongan).*

Four parents spoke of wanting their children to study and work full-time but as the questions about study and work were asked separately, it was not possible to work out if they meant *either* study *or* work, or part-time study and full-time work. Possibly some of the confusion related to wanting their children to be able to study but also recognising the need to have a full-time job. A family that was struggling financially to support their son at school said that, while they knew education was important and they wanted him to be able to continue his studies, a full-time job would be beneficial:

*If he gets a job he could assist the family financially (Tokelauan).*

Their son was working part-time and had already spoken to them about leaving school to find a full-time job so he could help the family. Thus, for some families there was considerable tension between the dream and reality.

Financial management at 18 was closely associated with part-time employment and education/training.

*I don't think she'll be managing at all. We'll try to avoid her getting a student loan if we can afford it (Fijian).*

Although young people might find part-time work, most families still thought the family would be their main financial support. However, there were a few families whose children's part-time work already contributed to the family income rather than being for the sole use of the young person.

While many parents/caregivers were not keen on their children taking out a student loan, those who could not afford tertiary fees recognised that this would make tertiary study possible. They expressed concern about student loans, about young people being in debt so early in life.

### 5.2.3 *Living arrangements at 18*

When asked about where they thought their children would be living at 18, most parents/caregivers assumed that their children would still be living at home with them.

*Hopefully he will be living at home because we are so close – we would like to support him (Fijian).*

*[Our son] will be living at home with us. The only other place we would consider him living in is at his Nana and Papa's but that's a long shot. He'd love to live*

*there because he gets everything done for him – he gets really spoilt there, but I want him to be living at home when he is 18. He won't be able to afford living anywhere else (Tongan).*

*She doesn't have to move out of home. I can't see her doing that yet (Niuean).*

*I think she would be flatting by then but if she's at home, that's ok (Niuean).*

*I want them to stay at home (Cook Island).*

Some parents wanted their children at home because they thought they were not old enough to be away from home. For others, having their children at home meant being able to support and guide them and maintain family closeness.

### 5.2.4  Interests, hobbies, recreation and community involvement at 18

Parents/caregivers were asked about the sorts of interests, hobbies, recreation and community involvement they would like their children to have at age 18. While academic study at school was seen as most important, other interests were also seen to be valuable. Interests, hobbies, recreation and community involvement were seen as helping to develop a well rounded person who could mix with a variety of people and who had learned a range of skills.

*It's important to have extracurricular activities. He's involved in rugby league and youth group. It keeps him out of trouble, he's building friendships, and expanding social skills. He's always meeting new people so he isn't shy (Samoan).*

*She's very much her own person but does need to be reminded and given a variety of ideas about other interests out of school time which is difficult at her age because they think they are the only ones who know what's good for her. She's never had any interest in sports (Niuean).*

The most common/popular interests to be encouraged by parents/caregivers were sports, church youth activities, and music.

*[My son] has been learning the piano since he was eight. He is very musical and talented in that area. I want him to continue this interest and make good use of his talent (Tongan).*

*[Daughter] is currently really involved in our church youth group. I would hope that her interest in church youth group activities will continue ... (Tongan).*

Participation in sport was encouraged by parents/caregivers who transported children to matches and practices and watched games.

*... she's into cricket and we play family and village cricket ... (Niuean).*

Some parents/caregivers, especially fathers, wanted their sons to do well in rugby or rugby league as well as at academic study. Sons who played rugby or rugby league were particularly encouraged to continue playing as they grew older.

*It is very important that he keeps up his rugby and joins more youth activities and programmes. I would like him to be more involved in the church youth (Tongan).*

Some parents/caregivers thought there was an opportunity in sport for their children to achieve well.

*I would like him to be a professional sportsman but that's up to him (Cook Islands).*

Parents/caregivers often put a lot of time into transporting children to and from various activities.

Church is central to all Pacific communities. For many families, church and community were one. Where there were adults in the family involved in community/church work, children were likely to participate. Several parents/caregivers spoke of wanting their children to help other young people in their communities who were "less fortunate" than themselves, such as young people who were living on the streets. They saw this happening through their involvement with church youth activities and the church's outreach programmes to youth. One mother, who did a lot of home visits for the church, often took her daughter with her when delivering food to families. Her daughter had become aware of the "real needs in the community".

A father explained his family's involvement:

*At the moment my wife and I do a lot of community or voluntary work. We are very involved in our church and spend a lot of time and energy working with the music group. My wife sings and I play the bass in our church band. We are also assistant youth leaders so we play a big part in youth programmes and activities for church. [Our son] will be more involved next year (Tongan).*

Another father spoke of his son who was doing voluntary work to gain skills for his chosen career:

*He has volunteered to do work with the Fire Service. He is also involved with the youth activities, which is a good training ground for him towards his pending career as a policeman (Tokelauan).*

At the same time, some parents/caregivers were wary of pushing their children into community involvement.

*I think voluntary work is important but I wouldn't want to force her to do that kind of work. It really has to come from the heart and something that you really want to do rather than something you've been forced to do … you lose the point otherwise (Tongan).*

*If by 18 she's studying and has a part-time job – I don't know whether she'll have the time to do voluntary work. I'd like her to spend spare time with the family. I'm already having that problem with my oldest daughter who has a part-time job and is studying and has no time to spend with us (Tongan).*

### 5.2.5  Relationships at 18

Parents/caregivers were asked about what they saw their children's relationships with family and friends being like when they were 18 and whether those relationships were likely to change in any way. Most parents/caregivers did not anticipate their children's relationship with them changing greatly. Part of wanting children to live at home was so that the relationship with family could remain intact.

> *The relationship we have as a family is quite binding (Fijian).*

> *She's had a hard life so far and her extended family have been the ones that have supported her and the rest of her immediate family ... I guess changes will come from things like not seeing family members regularly, people living out their own lives in their own circle and things like that. The effects of migration on Tongan families are huge but I think she will stay close to her family (Tongan).*

> *It will depend on where she is. The only changes with family would be if her brothers moved away, or if she moved away because distance has an effect on relationships and we are a close family (Samoan).*

Some with younger children acknowledged that there might be slight changes as their children became older.

> *I think the dynamics at home will change because he will be reaching that adult stage. He will be old enough to make adult decisions but expecting mum to cook and wash. He will have more to say about what he thinks is right for his life and dad and I are going to have to respect that (Samoan).*

Having "good" friends was also seen as very important. Parents/caregivers acknowledged that friends influenced their children, so it was important to cultivate friends who would be a "good" influence.

> *She has good friends. At that age friends are very important ... you know almost more important or more appreciated than family. She has good friends. I believe she will develop these friendships. Well, I hope she will, because you know the people you hang out with are a reflection of you (Tongan).*

> *He has more friends than the older kids. You know every night they're in the garage playing music, laughing, talking. We don't mind, we like that he has lots of friends. But we tell him to choose good people, friends that won't make trouble (Tongan).*

> *He has mixed up well with friends at present and we only hope that he does not mix up with the wrong people who could mislead him ... At this age he should know who of his friends he could trust (Tokelauan).*

The idea of dating and developing girlfriend/boyfriend relationships at 18 years of age was not always accepted by parents/caregivers.

> *We'd rather he concentrated on his studies and worked on a career. He has some really good friends but I don't think a girlfriend at 18 will be any good for him. We'd rather he started the dating thing later (Tongan).*

*I don't want her to have a boyfriend until she finishes her studies. I know it sounds old fashioned but I think she/all my daughters need to find their own way in life before they get involved in relationships (Tongan).*

### 5.2.6  Values at 18

Parents/caregivers were asked about the values that they would like their children to have at 18. They talked about the values they had tried to teach their children and by age 18 they hoped these were some of the values their children would be practising in their lives; caring, respect for others, being responsible and honesty were the most commonly mentioned. A few also mentioned obedience and some wanted leadership.

*To have strong determination to succeed in whatever she's doing and Christian values (Fijian).*

*I'd like [daughter] to be a good girl, obedient, loving and caring. I hope that she will become helpful to people around her and that she will be a good person – one that I can trust and one that will help me and her sisters and other people (Tongan).*

*We would like him to be a responsible person, a leader in youth and church groups and take an active role in community activities. At this age we would like him to maintain the good qualities he has, like caring and helping those who need help and above all maintain his cultural and family values (Tokelauan).*

A few thought it was important to be clear about goals and to be quite focused on where they wanted to go and what they wanted to be.

*I want her to be clear and focused in her life and to know what she wants out of her life – not to waste it. I also want her to see the different parts of the world and what this can offer her personally, to have many wonderful experiences. I want her to have a truly fulfilled life. I know she'll do great things. She's just that sort of person and I want her to have strong values around family and to know who she is and to believe in herself. That's so important (Niuean).*

Many parents/caregivers spoke of the importance of maintaining Christian values and keeping faith with God. A lot of the parents/caregivers were practising Christians and had brought their children up in the church. Their hope was that their children would continue to practise Christian beliefs and practices as adults.

*I want my son to still have Christian values because I think that's very important (Fijian).*

*She is already a very loving person so that will just develop as she gets older. But one thing I would like her to work on developing is her faith in God. She needs to keep this alive in her daily life so life is always filled with hope and her heart is filled with peace (Tongan).*

*As a Christian I think she will seek out Christian friends. I'm hoping that as she grows older she will be involved in leadership in the church. As a mother it is*

*good to see a child fulfilled. I hope she will utilise her gifts to help others, pursue excellence and not be afraid to fail, to do the best she can (Samoan).*

A few parents/caregivers were concerned about their children being able to maintain their specific cultural values. With their children growing up in New Zealand, the parents/caregivers' fear was that their children would move away from their own cultural values and traditions. A Tongan parent spoke of a son marrying a non-Tongan and losing contact with the family. Tokelauan parents spoke of their children's misunderstanding of cultural values/practices and how their family had family meetings to sort out differences that had arisen because of cultural ignorance. They were keen for their son to learn more of their culture.

> *I would like my son to learn more about our culture. He belongs to a cultural group, he plays in a band. They play Island music, which they enjoy, and sometimes he has asked me to explain the meaning of some of the words of the songs. I want him to get involved in the cultural activities of our Tokelau community. It is important for him to learn about his culture. I want him to live his life based on our cultural values, which are special to me. It is also equally important for him to understand the Palagi culture. In understanding the two cultures he would be able to live a better life (Tokelauan).*

In summary at age 18, parents/caregivers saw their children still living with them while slowly increasing their responsibilities for themselves and their families. Parents/caregivers understood the key role of education in the lives of their young people.

### 5.2.7  Outcomes at 25

By the age of 25, parents/caregivers hoped their children would be settled in their careers, mostly financially independent of their families and some possibly contributing to the family obligations. Some thought their children may have started their own families by then but most just acknowledged the possibility of a partner.

> *She should be independent by now and have her own money … she should have her own home and have a family of her own (Niuean).*

> *He will be financially stable with a good job he enjoys. I would like him to be a professional sportsman but that's up to him. He'll have his own house, a nice wife if he's married at the time and if he has children he'll treat them the same way he was brought up (Cook Islands).*

> *When he is 25 I hope that he is able to have his own car and help his brothers financially. Income is important because if there is no money there is no future (Fijian).*

Most hoped that their children would have completed or be close to completing their education/training by 25 and anticipated that they would be employed in full-time work. A few parents/caregivers realised that even at 25 their children may be working part-time especially if they had been studying part-time.

> *[Our son] wants to be a pilot … If he goes to university he should be finished his undergraduate degree and maybe working on flying hours for his pilot licence –*

*hopefully ... I don't know whether he'll be working full-time by then. He can definitely be working part-time. A full-time job may affect his studies but then again it might not ... But at 25 he'll definitely have to be working because we'll be concentrating on paying for the younger kids' education at that time (Tongan).*

Most parents/caregivers saw their children living away from home but some expressed the desire to have their children still at home. Some parents saw it as their responsibility to have their children living with them until they were married.

*Our son will be living with us at our own home. If he gets a job he could assist the family financially. As parents we want him to stay with us. In our cultural way of life, we still look after him or any of our children, until six feet down (Tokelauan).*

*I wish that she can still be living at home, until she's financially stable ... (Fijian).*

*I would like him at home but think he will be out flatting (Samoan).*

*Even though we try and give them some independence I would like [son] to be living with us at home until he is married. If he makes a lot of money he can buy a house and rent it out but we want all our kids living together until marriage. It was like that for both of us and we think it makes for stronger family ties (Tongan).*

*We would like him to be living at home. We don't want any of our kids moving out until they are married (Tongan).*

By 25, it was expected that young people would be mostly working full-time and earning enough money to support themselves.

*I hope she will be in a good job and she is being paid good money (Niuean).*

*He'll have his own job and can support himself, but we'll still help him out when he is short. Our other son who is 25 now is working but we still help him out when he is short (Tongan).*

A few parents/caregivers thought their children might be making some contribution to their (parents') support at this age. This could be in the form of an obligatory payment towards a special family occasion (such as *fa'alavelave*) or a contribution to the household income.

*Life is different to that in Samoa. In the fa'asamoa, the children's obligations towards the upkeep of the parents does not end until the parents die. This does not have to be the case in the New Zealand environment, although children should still feel a sense of responsibility towards the parents when they're older (Samoan).*

Parents/caregivers anticipated their children would still continue with the interests and involvements that they had when they were 18, such as playing music, belonging to sports and youth groups and being involved with church.

*Yes, I'd like her to continue with her interests and her hobbies. She likes music and dancing and movies so she'll probably still like those things at 25 (Tongan).*

*We hope he'll keep up his love of music and playing the piano. He might be in the church band by then or playing in a band himself. He's very musical and very talented in that area so we think he'll develop that more … We hope he'll continue to be involved in church and youth. He needs to be around people who have the same beliefs and values (Tongan).*

*I'm sure she'll be involved in some sort of sports (Niuean).*

Parents/caregivers thought that young people who valued family relationships were more likely to maintain links with their family as they became older. Parents/caregivers were more accepting of their children having partners at this age.

*We won't have much of a say by the time he hits 25. He'll probably have a girlfriend and at that age probably thinking of marriage or being serious with his girlfriend (Tongan).*

*She'll have a boyfriend by 25. She may even be engaged, but I don't think she'll be married or in a de facto relationship. It's not part of her Tongan upbringing (Tongan).*

*She'll probably have a boyfriend, but not married at this age. I don't want them to marry young, a good age in my mind is 27 or 28. I think by that age my girls will be ready or independent so that they don't have to rely on their husbands or that their lives will depend on their husbands. I've learnt my lesson from my own marriage (Tongan).*

*She'll have a partner by then and a family of her own (Niuean).*

The qualities and values that parents/caregivers wanted their children to have at 25 were similar to those at age 18.

*We hope that he maintains the good values and qualities he learnt from his parents. This would include cultural, church and family values and it would make him a good person (Tokelauan).*

*To be a good person and independent but also helpful to her family (Niuean).*

*To be a kind and supportive person (Niuean).*

*A love for God. Respect for people. Loving and caring towards his family, friends and other people. Happy in his life. Generous, not only with money and material things, but with his time and energy – like the voluntary work we were talking about (Tongan).*

*Still going to church, obedient, still playing sport and no criminal record and not in prison (Tongan).*

### 5.2.8 Supports and barriers to achieving good outcomes for children

*Factors promoting good outcomes for children*

Parents/caregivers were asked about what they did to promote good outcomes for their children and what other support would assist their children to achieve good outcomes.

They spoke of the type of support they gave their children to help them achieve good outcomes. This included:

- taking an active interest in their children's schooling

- participating in family/extended family activities

- support and interest at a personal level

- for many, also promoting Christian values and involvement in the church.

Parents/caregivers were keen to know their children's progress at school. They read school reports, talked with teachers, attended parent/teacher interviews, and paid for school fees, trips and extracurricular activities. Some parents sat on the school Board of Trustees. Being involved with their children's studies also meant providing a place at home where they could study and helping with homework.

> *We help with school things like homework … I work now so we can cope with the money things at school not like when my other kids were at school (Niuean).*

> *I just try to be here for them so that they feel like they can do anything (Tongan).*

Maintaining family/kin ties, participating in activities of the extended family and drawing on the support of extended family were very important. This helped children know who they were, their roots, and encouraged them to take an interest in learning more about their own culture.

Parents/caregivers keen to promote Christian values encouraged their children to take part in church activities and to join their church youth group.

They also felt the need to keep in touch with children's personal lives, to make sure they were coping and to just listen.

> *I am always double-checking with her about what she is doing and how she is doing. She also has a lot more freedom living with us than she would living with her mother. We let her go out with friends and cousins. She goes clubbing now and then, movies and other things she wants to go to. I don't think she would have that freedom if they were living with their mother. I let them know that I trust them to make decisions and that they are responsible for their actions (Tongan).*

> *The most important thing for our children is for them to know that we love them and to give them emotional and physical support (Samoan).*

Some families held regular family meetings where issues were discussed and parents and children talked about what they were doing.

*Every month we have a family meeting and talk to all our kids and check with them how they are doing. We encourage [our son] towards his rugby and go out and watch his games. He has free time every night to do his homework and bedtime is at 9pm. No more TV. He is also starting to go out more now and that's ok (Tongan).*

*We find these family meetings useful as it enables us to solve misunderstanding within our family at times. In some cases these differences are based on cultural ignorance. These problems are solved when we have these family meetings. We firmly believe that the development of children starts from within the family before they move to the outside world. We come together and discuss/solve our differences (Tokelauan).*

### Other support

Parents/caregivers spoke of other support being mostly through education. In particular they spoke of how good teachers could make a difference and the need for children and parents/caregivers to have access to good information about career options. Also mentioned was the need for good relationships between schools and parents/caregivers.

### The importance of income in achieving goals

Income was regarded as very important although some parents/caregivers added that money was not everything.

*You have to pay for everything nowadays. Nothing is free … Money is very important. Without it you can only get an education with debt (Tongan).*

*I think it is very important. Unfortunately we cannot afford to fund her education but she can get a student loan, which we're against, but at this stage there really is no other option for her. However, money doesn't have much say in personal development. That will depend on her family and people/friends she hangs around with (Tongan).*

*Income is important but it's not the biggest thing because I have seen people achieve big things on little income (Samoan).*

Income was mostly discussed in terms of lack of income. A number of parents/caregivers spoke of the struggle to support their family financially. Because families were often on low-incomes, lack of money to provide for the families' needs was an ongoing issue.

*Parents who are financially stable won't hurry the kids to go to work at an early age, to hurry the kids for income to supplement (Fijian).*

As children became older they (the children) often became concerned about the effect of lack of income on the family.

*Our son is aware that we have pressure in our family, mainly finance. He was talking about getting a job to help our family, but we encouraged him to continue his study (Tokelauan).*

*I think sometimes she is worried about the cost of things and I always try and make it seem like it's not a big deal or that it's ok, even when I can't really afford it. I still try and make sure that she doesn't go without or that she doesn't miss out on things that are happening at school (Tongan).*

Despite the struggle, most people were still keen for their children to continue study and to remain living at home. Most thought this situation could be helped/relieved by their children having part-time work at 18. A part-time job provided money for personal needs and in some cases contributed to the family income. Some parents/caregivers were concerned that part-time work should not interfere with studies:

*Yeah, I would like her to have a part-time job at a shop or McDonald's or something easy like that. Something that won't take too much time or pay too much money otherwise she will like the money and forget about school or her study (Tongan).*

Families who were struggling to provide the basic necessities were less likely to be able to put aside savings for tertiary studies. Some accepted that a student loan was a possibility while others were totally against student loans. A lot of the fear associated with the student loan was about the inability to pay it and the accumulated interest back.

Families with more income were able to financially assist their children:

*We have an education fund that we put money aside in. It's a family trust set up by me and my sisters and brother. We don't want our children getting into the student loan scene. We've all been there and done that and we don't want our kids to go through it (Tongan).*

### Factors preventing good outcomes for children

Parents/caregivers complained of often not having enough information to be able to give advice to their children and of not knowing where to go to get the necessary information. They particularly wanted information about career options, courses to take, student loans/allowances, scholarships.

Other factors mentioned were lack of family support, friends, lack of finance, lack of support from the school, marriage at an early age or if a child lost interest in education.

*If she falls in love and elopes, I don't think that will be the end but it will slow her down (Tongan).*

*If she didn't get her family's support and lack of finance (Niuean).*

*Giving up easily and having a passive attitude. Mixing with the wrong crowd who might mislead him. Depending and relying on other people instead of doing it himself and the absence of family support (Tokelauan).*

*Well just the boys they could be a bad influence. If she's strong by 18 she'll be fine. I hope she doesn't smoke but there are five people who smoke in the family so this will be hard but I really hope she doesn't (Niuean).*

*There are problems I can see in the school system here. The school system does not really cater for the needs of my son in terms of his cultural perspective and needs. The school system should accommodate students' cultural and family values. It would be good to see the school system and its policy accommodate both the Palagi and the Tokelau culture in terms of their needs and perspective. At present the school system is biased towards Palagi culture. Communication between parents and teachers should be improved. Teachers should have cultural awareness and understanding of issues relating to Pacific Islands' children (Tokelauan).*

## Impact of community and environment on good outcomes for children

Parents/caregivers were asked about how they saw the impact of societal change on their children's future. Several mentioned the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

*I would like to advise my children to have a small family instead of a big one if they get married and decide to raise a family. The reason why I say that is that I can see that life is getting tougher now and is expected to get worse in years to come, in terms of the economic environment and employment. The wise and responsible thing to do is to have a small family so that they can be supported within your means (Tokelauan).*

While parents/caregivers believed education could make a difference for Pacific young people they were concerned about the increased costs of education and the increased costs of living. These factors could force more Pacific students to leave their studies for paid employment. Having a student loan meant young people were starting off their working life with a debt, before they started owning their own homes.

Several parents/caregivers spoke of computer literacy being very important. For children, having access to the internet was becoming a basic requirement of their education.

*Some parents/caregivers spoke of the need to hold on to family values and Christian values.   There is a change in morality. Anything goes. She will come up against this with her Christian values. She could be accused of being quite old-fashioned. Our values and what we believe in are being challenged. We have brought the children up to believe their values are just as important as anybody else's – to stand firm on what they believe (Samoan).*

## Impact of peers on good outcomes for children

Friends were recognised by parents/caregivers as having considerable influence over their children. There was concern amongst parents/caregivers about their children picking the right friends, that is, friends who were supportive and would be a good influence. Mostly parents/caregivers were pleased with the friends their children had chosen.

*My daughter knows what she wants out of life and no one will push her into doing something that she doesn't agree with (Niuean).*

*Friends do have an influence. She listens to people's views and then she comes home and regurgitates what she's heard to someone at home and it's almost like the values at home are the plumb line. She rehashes what she's heard and she works out from her own base how it stands up against what she believes (Samoan).*

However, there was also a fear of picking the wrong friends – friends who would lead their children into trouble.

*Our son is a good boy and we pray that he does not get involved with drugs etc. Our wish is that he does not mix up with the wrong friends who might be a bad influence ... (Tokelauan).*

*She has a mind of her own but it depends what sort of people her friends are at this stage (Niuean).*

### 5.2.9  Who should do what?

Parents/caregivers were asked about the main things that families, the Government and other groups could do to support children to achieve good outcomes.

*Families*

Parents/caregivers summed up by saying that families needed to love their children and give them support and encouragement. Spending time with them, paying attention to their needs, and listening to them, showed children that they were appreciated. If families believed in their children's potential they would be able to encourage them to achieve their goals.

*Always be there for their children so they never feel they are isolated or struggling alone. At the same time give them space to grow and make mistakes knowing that you love them (Tongan).*

Children needed to be guided through life and not pressured to perform miracles because of parental and community expectations.

Families should also promote family and cultural values so that young people were aware of these. For parents/caregivers with strong Christian beliefs, Christian values and teachings provided a foundation for life.

*Government*

Parents and caregivers made a number of suggestions for government action, including:

- providing more community development/awareness programmes to get information about issues that affect Pacific people out to the people:

  *We think more community development programmes are needed so the everyday person can understand half the things they go about in Parliament*

- providing adult education programmes such as parenting skills, budgeting, planning for the future

- acknowledging that youth is the most important time in a person's development:

  *It is at this time that young people make choices and decisions about the type of adult that they are going to be in this society. It is a time that needs urgent attention*

- making student loans interest free. As previously mentioned, there was a lot of concern about the rising cost of education

- having cheaper housing. The cost of housing has continued to be an issue in Pacific communities

- providing housing assistance for single-parent families. The increase in the number of single-parent families in Pacific communities is a growing concern because they tend to be very low-income families especially if the parent is on the benefit. If they are living with their relatives they will get support but they are often on their own and quite isolated. For people who are Pacific born/raised and used to a lot of family support, that isolation/loneliness can be quite depressing.

## Other groups

### Churches

As churches are essential to Pacific communities the following suggestions were made so that they could increase their role in assisting Pacific young people:

- churches should buy computers so that children have access through communities other than school

- churches should wake up and do much more social work and education in their congregations. They need to start teaching practical living skills like budgeting and planning because people need help with daily things.

### Schools

- Schools need to teach budgeting and daily living skills.

- Schools should teach values and not give too much freedom.

- Promote the concept of the Academy for Education and Sports. This is a sports institute which trains students in different sports while at the same time teaching academic skills. The concept of the Academy was considered good for young people, particularly those who did not achieve good qualifications at school. For example, Aranui High School in Christchurch reports a successful Sports Academy programme that motivates Māori/Pacific students to stay and succeed at school. These were often students who would otherwise drop out. John Fiso runs a similar Academy in Wellington.

### Businesses

- Businesses should be encouraged to create schemes for employment and training opportunities for young people.

## 5.3   Interviews with young people

### 5.3.1   What are 'good outcomes for Pacific children' at 18?

The young people interviewed were asked how far they wanted to go at school and if they saw themselves doing further education or training when they left school.

Most young people wanted to stay at school until the seventh form because they thought education would increase their chances of gaining a good job or allow them to continue on to further education/training.

> *I would like to go as far as I could with my schooling so that I get a better education. I would like to learn more about the environment around us. I enjoy school and I intend to complete my [year 13] level. I intend to play rugby when I finish school (male, 13).*

> *I want to go to university (female, 15).*

> *I'd like to stay 'til  seventh form [year 13] because it's hard to get jobs without qualifications and leadership skills. I will stay 'til [year 13] then go to university (female, 15).*

The young people interviewed recognised that leaving school without a qualification lessened their chances of finding a 'good' job. While most wanted to stay at school until the seventh form, a quarter of those did not want to continue any further. Those who did not want to continue saw themselves working. They were not sure of the type of job they would be in or whether they would be in full-time or part-time employment.

> *Yes, I do think I'd have a job. I wouldn't know what kind of job it will be. I reckon it would be any job as long as I'm not at home doing nothing (female, 14).*

> *I'm not likely to have an office job because of lack of qualifications. I might still be cleaning part-time. It certainly looks that way (female, 16).*

Some were concerned about the financial difficulties they could see their families facing and wanted to start work so they could help out.

Among those who said they would go on to university or polytechnic, about half were unsure as to what course they would take. Some were very sure of their goals. One young man who intends becoming an accountant said:

> *I'll get my bursary this year and hopefully another four years at university to complete a degree (male, 17).*

Another young woman who was in the fifth form this year wanted to join the police force to "help my people, Pacific Islands people". She had researched the skills required and possible papers to take at university.

A few thought they would work until they had saved enough money to study. This would mean they would not have to take out a student loan. At 18 though, most saw themselves working part-time.

### 5.3.2  Living and financial arrangements at 18

All but three young people said they would be living at home with family. Most said living at home would give them the support they needed and they wanted to be close to family.

> *I'll be living with them. I never think of leaving home (female, 15).*

> *I'd like to stay at home with mum (female, 14).*

> *I have no choice. I'll be living with my mum and dad 'til I get married. Because of my culture (female, 15).*

> *I plan to stay in Wellington with my parents while at school. I get money from [part-time] work and support from my parents for petrol etc (male, 17).*

The other three young people wanted to go flatting.

When asked how they thought they might be managing for money, most thought they would need financial support from their families, including those who might have a full-time job.

> *By working and maybe support from my family, but not much (female, 14).*

> *Yeah, I'll need some help from my family (male, 16).*

### 5.3.3  Other interests and community involvement at 18

When asked about their interests at 18, most thought they would be doing similar types of activities to those they were currently involved with, which seemed to be sports, music and church and being with family and friends.

> *Right now I'm a typical teenager, hang around with friends, having a good time, go to parties but I don't think I will be into it as much [at 18]. I will concentrate more on my studies (female, 15).*

> *Yes, I'll be in a music band or in a rugby team. I'd only want to do one though (male, 13).*

> *Playing in a band is one of my hobbies and I would like to continue playing in a band in the future (male, 16).*

> *Yeah, I'll still be hanging out with my friends and listening to music and dancing with them and going to movies (female, 11).*

### 5.3.4  Relationships at 18

Relationships with family and friends were very important and often referred to in the interviews. Most young people thought that contact with their family would not change and that they would keep up contact with close friends and probably also make new friends. When asked about the best weekend they could imagine, most spoke of being with either family or friends.

Most assumed that they would still have close contact with their families because "I see them all the time and they're my family".

Those young people who thought they would still have some of the same friends at 18 said that this was because they were really close friends.

> *Yeah, I think I'll still have those friends and some more friends (male, 13).*

> *Yes, I would still have my friends around because we are really close. Their support and help are there when I needed it. We are just like brothers (male, 16).*

> *I will still have the same friends because I will want to keep in contact with them. They're in the same school and we know each other really well (female, 15).*

The sorts of qualities most frequently mentioned that young people looked for in friends were trust, loyalty, honesty, respect and helpfulness.

> *Good friends are those people you can trust (female, 14).*

> *I will be looking for the support and trust from my friends. They are there when I need help (male, 13).*

People to be avoided were those who gossiped and put people down, negative people, people who pressured others to do things that they did not want to do, and people who were often in trouble through fighting, stealing or being involved with drugs.

About half the young people interviewed thought that they may have a girl/boyfriend at 18 and half thought they would not.

### 5.3.5  Qualities/values at 18

Many of the words that young people used to describe the sort of person they would like to be at 18, fitted into the *caring* category where they used words like *supportive, thoughtful, considerate, kind* and *helpful*. A number were health conscious and described themselves as *sports-minded, health orientated, muscular* and *good at sports*. Others used terms like *cool, good looking, pretty, intelligent, mature, adventurous, confident* and *punctual.*

### 5.3.6  Outcomes at 25

At age 25 they thought they would have a partner; some thought they may have children, be financially independent of their families and be living in their own homes. They

mostly saw themselves as having completed study/training and being in full-time employment.

> *I'll be married with two kids (male, 16).*

> *I'll probably own my own home at that age, located close to my parents' place. I would be uncomfortable if I lived further away from my parents because we have been living together in the past and we are very close (male, 16).*

> *I'll be committed to my job and to paying bills and finding time to be with the family (male, 13).*

> *I'll have completed varsity and have a job. I don't think I'll be at home. I feel very doubtful about the future. I can't see myself getting married at 25 and having a family (female, 15).*

> *Life would be easier if I have a good job, rather than getting money from other people (female, 11).*

### 5.3.7 Supports and barriers

#### Factors promoting good outcomes

Support and encouragement from family were emphasised as being what young people relied on to achieve good outcomes. Young people thought parents/caregivers promoted good outcomes by giving love and support, encouragement, discipline, and financial support if they could afford it. "Being there" and "believing in me" were phrases often used.

Having a good education was important for the future so that meant keeping up with homework and school studies to be able to pass exams. It also meant being focused and motivated.

Young people studying needed financial support, which their families could not always provide, so part-time employment or scholarships were a way of providing financial assistance.

The support of the church and guidance from God were seen by a number of young people as being crucial in their lives.

> *My relationship with God is good because He's my number one priority in my life and this is because with my goals and desires and aspirations I can't do it on my own and anything is possible with God (female, 15).*

> *Church would help me enrich my spiritual life and church values. They give me guidance and advice of how to get through life (male, 13).*

Good friends were seen as being important because of their companionship and the encouragement they offered.

Self-confidence and believing in oneself were also important.

Many said they did not have enough information to think through the options available to them at 18. This was borne out in their lack of knowledge about what subjects or courses they needed to take in order to be able to follow a career. Only one young woman had looked into what skills she would need to enter her chosen career.

### What young people regarded as the most important support

Young people were asked to complete a sentence which began: 'the most important thing that is going to help me be the person I want to be is …' The most typical answers focused on support from the family and God:

> *My family (male, 16).*

> *Jesus (male, 13).*

> *Hard work and faith in God (female, 15).*

> *Support from my immediate family and guidance from God (female, 12).*

> *Help and support from my parents (male, 14).*

> *Family and church (female, 14).*

> *Support from my family (female, 14).*

> *If I believe in myself that I can do it and have faith in God because I know all things are possible (female, 15).*

Five of the answers focused on young people's self-belief and responsibility:

> *Keeping up with my homework, school studies and exams (female, 11).*

> *Confidence in myself (female, 13).*

> *To give my best to the things I am involved with (female, 13).*

> *My heart and my mind. My mind will help me be focused and my heart will be strong (female, 16).*

> *Getting a good education while I have the chance and doing the right thing (female, 11).*

### Barriers to achieving good outcomes

Young people were asked to think of anything that might stop them becoming the person they wanted to become or prevent them achieving their goals. They gave a wide variety of answers. The most frequently mentioned barriers were:

- getting married or having a partner

- poor academic performance

- lack of financial support

- lack of information about the options available concerning courses and career possibilities

- lack of family or friends' support for what they were doing

- giving up or losing interest in what they were doing.

Having a child, stress and the death of a parent/caregiver were also mentioned.

### Income as a factor affecting good outcomes

When young people interviewed were asked how important they thought money was in helping them to do what they wanted to do, most saw money as being very important.

> *Everything these days costs, therefore money is very important (male, 17).*

Although continuing education was recognised as being crucial towards getting a qualification that would ensure a well paid job, a few young people knew their families were struggling and they wanted to be able to help. One young woman, who was in the fifth form, wanted to leave school because she was not able to keep up with her studies. She was working part-time to support the family and the hours spent at work were longer than her hours of schoolwork and she was not coping.

> *I want to finish as soon as possible. It's just my attendance that's making me want that but if I was attending more often then I'd want to carry on 'til seventh form. It's because I've missed heaps and I don't know that I can catch up … I still want a job but if I didn't have a job then I'd have all that extra time to be normal. I'd stay longer at school (female, 16).*

Another young man was concerned about his family's situation:

> *Mum and dad need some help financially so I might quit school early … I would not like to see my parents working extra hours in order to support my schooling (male, 16).*

Most young people were aware that they would need to work part-time at 18 to support their further education. Most were against the idea of taking up student loans although some spoke of being willing to take out a student loan if they needed to.

> *I don't want a student loan. It takes ages to pay it back (female, 15).*

> *I will not take a student loan. That's why I'll be working for a year after college (female, 15).*

### Impact of peers

Friends were considered very important because they offered encouragement, support and friendship.

*They'll back me a hundred percent (female, 14).*

*They are supportive and give me good company (male, 16).*

Close friends often included family especially cousins with whom there were close bonds.

*Most of my friends are my cousins (female, 16).*

When asked about the sort of influence their friends might have on them, some young people commented that their friends would not have a lot of influence over them because they made their own decisions. Also it was felt that as people became older, they gained more independence. So people of 25 were seen as being more in charge of their lives and more able to make decisions independent of other people.

Young people said that they would avoid "negative" people and those who tried to pressure them into doing something they did not want to do.

*Some may try to make me smoke. Some friends will be good and others will be bad but it's up to me (female, 15).*

There was a range of views about the qualities to look for in a friend but, as already mentioned above, the most frequently referred to qualities were trust, loyalty, honesty, respect and helpfulness.

### 5.3.8  Who should do what?

*Families*

Families should encourage, support and believe in their children and be there for them.

*Government*

Young people wanted the Government to assist young people into employment, and possibly through apprenticeship schemes. They also wanted the cost of education reduced especially tertiary fees and the cost of the student loan (interest). One young person suggested that an alternative school should be set up for students who "don't care about their lives" and who need encouragement about their future.

*Other groups*

It was thought that businesses/other groups could assist by providing more job opportunities for young people. Another suggestion was to have on-the-job training and to have part-time work for students. Sponsorship of local sports teams, scholarships and homework centres would also assist young people.

Some young people suggested that churches should support and pray for young people and help fundraise for students.

## 5.4   Interviews with providers

### 5.4.1   What are 'good outcomes for Pacific children' at 18?

Providers were asked to identify key outcomes that an 18-year-old should have gained from their education. The following four themes emerged:

- young people needed to have achieved academically which meant they had passed their exams and that they had good study skills should they want to do further education
- they needed to be clear about their future goals and to know what they wanted to do when they left school
- they needed to have social skills and life skills and the skills to get a job. These included self-confidence, how to relate to people, anger management, budgeting and being able to care for themselves and others
- they needed management skills – financial management, time management and goal-setting skills.

### 5.4.2   Access to/involvement in work

When providers were asked about access to/involvement in work that would support good outcomes for 18-year-olds, most providers focused on training or education such as parenting workshops for parents or self-esteem workshops for young people rather than discussing the topic.

One provider spoke of the need for easier access to work so that young people actually got a chance to work. Another provider thought that employers needed to provide safe environments for learning and the opportunity for job training.

Providers made further comments about study support and homework centres. One provider thought community/voluntary experience such as reading in rest homes would give young people self-confidence.[13]

Most of the comments suggest that the providers did not think the young people that accessed their services were work/job ready.

> *There's not enough employment for these young people. They have no skills and there's no jobs.*

One provider made the comment:

> *This is the lazy age. They like to be on a benefit.*

### 5.4.3   Living arrangements for people of 18

Providers considered home was the ideal place for 18-year-olds to be living but it depended on the family circumstances. Young people needed privacy and their own space to be able to study.

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[13] Past studies have shown that voluntary work can lead to paid employment.

*If they have a good relationship then they should stay at home.*

*Home is the best place but sometimes if the kids are really bad they may affect the other kids.*

There was some comment about the need for families to work out their commitment to church and family. The implication was that church often took priority over family, which impacted on the children.

*There needs to be a balance between church commitments and family commitments. Support needs to be in the family home.*

### 5.4.4 Financial management

Providers were mostly divided between those who thought parents should provide financial support and those who thought young people should have part-time work so they could be more independent. Those who supported parents providing financial support thought that 18-year-olds needed to concentrate on their studies whilst those who suggested part-time work thought that 18-year-olds needed to learn to rely on themselves rather than their parents. Two providers thought that "they can't really manage on their own" so that even if young people were working part-time they would still require support from their family.

Providers suggested that budgeting advice should come from the parents or the provider services so that young people did not over-commit themselves and so that they could learn how to manage their finances.

### 5.4.5 Interests/involvements

Community activities that focused on youth, for example music and sports or activities that built self-esteem, were seen as important by providers. Also, any activities that involved/encouraged families being together.

### 5.4.6 Relationships

Providers were asked how relationships with family and friends contributed to good outcomes for young people. Relationships with family and friends were what sustained young people by providing social and emotional support and building self-esteem and self-worth.

*Family and friends provide social, emotional support, encouragement, affirmation and belief in the young person. Also allows the young person to explore options and allows for experimentation and room for development.*

Families promoted good outcomes by ensuring there was good communication between parents and children and by investing quality time in their children.

*Families need to spend more time together doing things together as a family.*

It was felt that others easily influenced young people and that family members could provide good role models.

### 5.4.7 Qualities/values

Providers were asked to identify some of the qualities and values that they thought were important for 18-year-olds to have. Respect, self-esteem, identity, having strong family links and connections, and being able to communicate well were the most frequently mentioned qualities.

The following quotes summarise the qualities/values that providers thought were important:

> *Know who they are, their identity, and good relationships with their family and their community. Maintain their culture.*

> *Respect. Self-respect, respect for other's faith in God and faith in themselves and the people they love and always hope. People need hope and dreams. If they don't they have nothing.*

### 5.4.8 Outcomes at 25

Providers were asked to talk about any changes they might see between age 18 and age 25. Generally providers saw young people at 18 still being involved with studies. By the time they were 25, providers thought young people needed to have enough education or work skills to know how to be responsible and to have a job to support their family, especially since some would have started their own families by then.

Providers thought it was unlikely for people at 25 to own a home since they needed help to look after their families and pay the rent.

One provider spoke of the importance of being able to communicate well. This provider had a number of clients coming through at age 25 with little English and had found that employers would not give them jobs.

Ideally at 25, young people should be independent, have strong family ties and be making a positive contribution to their families and communities. They should have initiative and be self-directed.

### 5.4.9 Factors promoting good outcomes for children

The main factors identified by providers were:

- good family support with a strong relationship between parents/caregivers and children

- good communication within families

- adequate income

- good education.

Providers felt that parents who communicated well with their children and spent quality time with them were able to advise and guide them. Children should feel comfortable about asking questions of their parents.

*They need to feel they can achieve and that they are worthy human beings. That people value their ideas and feelings.*

In their view, families needed to spend more time together, doing things as a family. They saw parents as role models for their children. As part of being good role models, some providers thought children needed to see their parent/s working. There needed to be good communication between family members.

Providers were concerned about the need for adequate income to be coming into the family but some providers thought it was more about reprioritising how money is spent.

*Parents need to have less financial commitment to church and more commitment to their children's needs.*

Getting a good education led to qualifications and better job opportunities with adequate income.

### 5.4.10 Income as a factor affecting good outcomes

Providers agreed that adequate income was very important in supporting young people to achieve good outcomes. As mentioned above some providers associated adequate income with parents' financial management and prioritising spending. They thought that income needed to be budgeted well so that parents could meet the needs of their children. Items like a computer were useful for study and being able to do extracurricular activities like piano lessons was important but needed to be budgeted for.

*Income or money is very important because the kids need things to develop themselves. It is very important so the parents can support their children in what they want to do.*

### 5.4.11 Other resources needed to achieve good outcomes

- parenting programmes
- programmes that targeted the interests of young people such as sports and music
- programmes that targeted young people and their families
- financial assistance
- more Pacific teachers in schools.

### 5.4.12 Role of parents and community

Providers thought that parents and community had to work together to support young people.

Parents/caregivers needed to be good role models. As well, they provided financial support for education and social and emotional support throughout children's lives.

Providers agreed that any effort from parents to support their children made a difference:

*Any effort they put into their children will show in the development of their children. Parents who put in a big effort will produce children with good development.*

A provider pointed out that some parents saw education as being the responsibility of the school not the parents. Such parents did not see that they had any responsibility for their children's ongoing learning.

While some providers thought parents were not doing enough to support their children, some providers said support had to come from the community as well:

*It's not enough. Community should also support by giving good advice, by running programmes for youth specifically.*

Providers saw the community as having a social responsibility to support young people by reinforcing the importance of family and setting up prevention and awareness programmes for families – for example, prevention programmes such as those aimed at stopping family violence or awareness programmes about alcohol and other drugs.

When talking about the widening gap between rich and poor and increased living costs, providers said:

*Children must get a qualification now and make sure they get training for a career or future job. If this does not happen the gaps will continue to increase.*

### 5.4.13 Impact of peers

Providers spoke of the importance of having the "right" friends. Young people spent a lot of time with friends so were likely to be greatly influenced by their views and values.

*It depends – if they are good friends then there will be good outcomes, if they are bad friends then there will be bad outcomes. The kids hang around people they like or they want to be like. So parents can see what their kids are like from the friends they hang around with.*

### 5.4.14 Who should do what?

#### Families

Providers saw families as providing care, love and support. They thought families needed to be more involved in their children's lives and that there needed to be better communication between parents and children.

#### Government

Providers wanted the Government to assist low-income families by providing financial assistance and affordable homes for big families with little income.

They thought education also needed to be appropriate to everyday life and wanted to see more life skills taught at secondary level.

*Other groups*

They wanted the community workforce to be developed through training community workers to work effectively.

Churches could promote more youth-focused programmes. Evangelical churches pitched their programmes to youth but many mainstream churches lacked programmes that attracted youth.

Businesses needed to assist young people into employment by offering schemes such as apprenticeships or on-the-job training.

## 5.5    Summary and comparisons

The following section is a brief summary of the findings and compares the views of parents/caregivers, young people and providers.

### 5.5.1  What are good outcomes?

*Education/employment*

All three groups agreed that education was a priority. Having a good educational qualification led to a good job that ensured an adequate income. Working part-time at 18 was a way of starting work and becoming more financially independent while also paying for personal needs and continuing to study/train for further qualifications.

*Living and financial arrangements*

Most parents/caregivers wanted their children to remain living with them at age 18. There was a range of views on when children should leave home. More parents/caregivers were willing to accept that their children might not be living with them at age 25 but some still wanted their children at home. Some said their children would stay until they married which may imply that adulthood starts with marriage. The young people thought they would be living in their own places by age 25. In the home islands of the Pacific, where most of the parents/caregivers were raised, children did not leave home to live somewhere else unless they migrated or married. If they felt the need to leave home there was always family to stay with.

Providers thought home was the best place to be at age 18 but that depended on the family circumstances. Providers thought that young people should live at home if their relationships with their families were good.

Generally families were seen as the main financial support for those studying, with the need for young people to also hold part-time jobs to support themselves and, in some cases, to contribute to the family income.

*Other interests/involvements*

Interests and community involvement were an important part of providing balance in young people's lives. All agreed that sports, church and music were the most common interests. Church youth groups were popular and churches promoted sport and music as well. As pointed out by providers, adult role models were important. Parents who were involved with sport, music or church activities invariably drew their children into participating also.

*Relationships, qualities and values*

Having a good relationship with family and friends was seen as a good outcome. The quality of the family relationship was most important. Parents/caregivers and young people agreed that support and encouragement from family promoted good outcomes. Providers also highlighted the need for good communication between parents/caregivers and their children.

Providers emphasised the importance of identity more than parents/caregivers or young people, although some parents/caregivers spoke with concern about loss of understanding of cultural tradition and practice. Parents/caregivers were concerned about maintaining family ties, which were part of cultural practice, and young people were aware of the importance of family.

The value of respect was mentioned many times by parents/caregivers and providers but rarely by young people.

*Factors affecting good outcomes*

The following factors were seen as most likely to affect good outcomes:

- <u>families</u> who encouraged children in a loving, supportive environment, were actively involved in their children's schooling, communicated well with each other and spent quality time together helped children achieve good outcomes. Young people reported relying on support and encouragement from their family. As well, parents/caregivers saw participation in family/extended family activities as important along with the promotion of Christian values and involvement in the church. Providers emphasised the need for a strong relationship between parents/caregivers and children and stressed that parents/caregivers needed to be good role models. Some providers saw being a good role model as meaning having a job. They thought that for children to be able to develop a concept of 'working' and work ethics, they needed to see parents/caregivers going to work. Some providers also implied that some families would have adequate income if spending were reprioritised to be spent on children's needs rather than their own. This included putting their children's needs before church commitments

- <u>good education</u> that resulted in an academic qualification was seen as increasing the likelihood of a good job and income. Parental involvement in their children's education was seen by parents/caregivers as promoting successful outcomes for children. Access to a good education was not always possible because of lack of income. Even the possibility of staying at school until the seventh form was only a

dream for some students because their families needed to have them bringing in some form of financial contribution to the household. The high cost of tertiary fees and the need to take out a student loan distressed those contemplating further studies. Parents/caregivers in particular were concerned at how they would support their children financially through tertiary study

- <u>adequate income</u> was seen as the factor that had the potential to prevent good outcomes. In families where there was inadequate income, there was a risk of young people leaving school to support their family before they had gained any educational qualifications. Living on a low-income also meant not being able to put aside savings for further education/training. As mentioned above, providers thought that, for some families, having adequate income was more about reprioritising spending

- <u>church and Christian</u> values were also a factor for many of the parents/caregivers and their children. In the interviews, those parents/caregivers and young people who referred to the church spoke of it as being a supportive part of their lives. Spiritual wellbeing was seen as being important. Providers saw a need to balance church and family commitments so that children did not miss out on receiving the parental and financial support they needed

- it was generally agreed that <u>friends</u> were very important because of the time spent in one another's company. Friends who were a positive influence were encouraged because they offered support and advice and companionship. The three groups agreed that friends had the potential to be a negative influence if the 'wrong' friends were chosen. Wrong friends were defined as those people who gossiped, "put others down", were negative, pressured others into doing things that they did not want to do, and were often in trouble through fighting, stealing or being involved with drugs.

## 6. Discussion

This report is based on what families, young people and providers *believe* to be good outcomes for young people and what they think influences the extent to which these outcomes are achieved. Whether or not these are *actually* the factors affecting outcomes is a different question to be answered by a different type of research.

The research had a positive focus. It asked people about *good* outcomes for children, not about bad ones. One section of the interviews did explore factors that might inhibit the achievement of good outcomes, but overall the focus was not on the negative aspects of young adulthood that typically feature in research, news reports and statistics. The barriers to achieving good outcomes mentioned by participants have been carefully reported and given the appropriate weight in the discussion. The fact that some topics received little or no mention suggests that, while events such as youth suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, unplanned pregnancy and criminal involvement undoubtedly have a dramatic effect on the families affected by them, they are far less *prevalent* than the publicity they receive suggests. Cultural factors may also have inhibited discussion of some topics and some families and young people may have discounted the risks

associated with particular kinds of behaviour. Nevertheless, it is useful to remember (a) that the *majority* of young people do reach young adulthood intact, and (b) that *many* families perceive other barriers as more pressing.

The emphasis given to the role of families in producing good outcomes is heartening but is possibly partly a function of the questions asked. Parents/caregivers talked about a specific child in their family rather than about all their children or about children in general. Young people talked about themselves. This helped participants to give a context to and focus on the topics under discussion but it possibly inhibited them from taking a wider view.

All participants saw the family as being the key source of support for young people to achieve good outcomes. Families gave that support in a variety of ways including: supporting children in their education through being active in school management; attending parent/teacher interviews; being involved in sports days and school trips; providing help with homework; and encouraging children to value education. They also: provided encouragement, transport and financial support for children's interests; spent time with children; helped young people sort out problems; provided a clean, safe and secure home environment and a range of experiences and opportunities; talked about and modelled desirable values and behaviour; and set boundaries and provided guidance.

All groups, but particularly Pacific and Māori respondents, stressed the importance of maintaining family/kin ties, participating in activities of the extended family and drawing on their support.

Parents/caregivers and young people placed great store on the family as the primary influence on outcomes for young people. Most of those interviewed hoped and believed that their positive input would be strong enough to outweigh negative influences, particularly from young people's peers. However, they also recognised that some parents are too busy, too tired or too stressed to spend enough time with their children. Some lack parenting skills, others have too many problems of their own to deal with. In these situations, the positive impact of families can be severely reduced or non-existent. In all three studies, parents and providers identified a need for more support for families in order to strengthen their abilities to promote good outcomes for their children. Some talked about support for improving parenting skills, others mentioned the need to value parenting, which can be achieved in a number of ways, including by having more family-friendly government and workplace policies.

Providers were asked to focus on young people in general and their views were correspondingly more abstract than those of family members. They tended to talk about processes, attributes, qualities and skills rather than about specific outcomes for young people. They were also more likely than family members to identify a wider range of negative factors as barriers to good outcomes, possibly because, as one commented, they had a disproportionate amount of contact with young people and families under stress. The differences are a useful reminder that the outcomes of research are strongly influenced by its design.

This section looks first at the research findings in relation to the Ministry of Social Development's own definitions of good outcomes for children, and then at the findings in the context of the Ministry's model of family effectiveness/family dynamics. It considers participants' views of the relative responsibilities of the family, the community and the state in promoting good outcomes for young people and reviews the differences between the three cultural groups.

## 6.1 Ministry of Social Development definitions of good outcomes

The tender brief for the research describes good outcomes as those that produce a young adult who is:

> "capable, confident, enterprising, has a good basic education and the capacity for lifelong learning, has not entered into unsupported parenthood, has a broad cultural understanding, has immediate goals, has constructive relationships with other people, is law-abiding, healthy (physically and mentally), part of constructive kinship and friendship networks, and participating in community life" (Request for Proposals: p.11).

The findings of the research were generally in accord with the Ministry's definitions, although the emphases were somewhat different. These differences may be attributed in part to the topics covered in interviews and the way in which questions were asked, and in part to genuine differences in perception.

### 6.1.1 Capable, confident and enterprising

Participants in all three studies agreed that having confidence in themselves and a positive approach to the world is both a good outcome in itself for young people, and of great benefit in achieving other positive outcomes. While very few used the terms 'capable' or 'enterprising', participants did agree that young people need to have the skills to live independently, and to be responsible, motivated, hard working, determined and focused.

### 6.1.2 Education

The Ministry's definition refers to a "good basic education and the capacity for lifelong learning" as a good outcome for young people. Participants in the research had higher aspirations in that almost all talked about the need for young people to have some kind of tertiary or post-compulsory education, ranging from university, polytechnic and vocational training to apprenticeships and training through work. Parents/caregivers and young people from all three groups saw education as a way of increasing choices and employment opportunities and, especially in the Māori and Pacific studies, as a key to improving social status and financial circumstances. Publicity about the need for training and qualifications, both in the media and by various government agencies, has clearly made its mark and education emerged as a key issue in this research.

Nevertheless, while participants' aspirations were high, they were also aware of the obstacles young people face in seeking to achieve their educational goals. For example, many parents/caregivers felt unable to help their young people as much as they would like because they lacked information about career options, education and training opportunities and the subjects or training young people need to take to keep their options open. This response was particularly prevalent among parents who had no experience of tertiary education themselves. The education level of parents may therefore be an important variable in any future studies of factors affecting good outcomes. Young people themselves also wanted more information and more access to role models and work opportunities.

While few participants talked about lifelong learning, providers and parents, particularly in the Pākehā sample, expressed concern that young people are being required to focus too early on a vocational direction. They regretted young people's limited opportunities to experiment, take some risks or develop a career through following an interest or talent. The financial costs of such exploration are high and both parents and young people can be deterred by a perceived lack of job opportunities. Even with a conventional qualification, there is no guarantee of employment on completion. The opportunities in less conventional fields are correspondingly fewer, yet providers, in particular, were quick to recognise the creative talents of young people in a wide range of areas and were keen to find ways to foster these.

The availability and cost of training were causes for concern for all participants. Although parents did not want their children to begin their adult lives in debt, many acknowledged that a student loan would be the only way their young people could acquire a qualification. The cost put further education quite beyond the reach of some families who saw the burden of debt outweighing the advantages of higher education. Providers were among those who considered it unfair that young people's opportunities are tied to the financial circumstances of their families, which advantages some young people over others.

### 6.1.3 Unsupported parenthood

As it is used in the Ministry's definition of good outcomes, the term 'unsupported parenthood' is too limited. There is little debate that young people who become parents without the support of a partner or family are at risk of poor outcomes for both themselves and their child. But other aspects of unplanned pregnancy can also contribute to poor outcomes. These include young women's need to decide whether or not to continue with the pregnancy. Even those young women who have the support of their partner and/or family in making this decision face a difficult and traumatic choice. Should they decide to continue with a pregnancy with the support of their families and/or partner, their own outcomes are still likely to be compromised.

The issue of unplanned pregnancy was mentioned by some families in the Pākehā study, was not mentioned at all in the Pacific study but was widely acknowledged as a barrier to good outcomes in the Māori report. The fact that Pacific respondents did not raise this issue, even with interviewers from their own culture, some of whom were known in the

community as sexual health educators, may indicate their reluctance to discuss such private or difficult matters in an interview that was essentially hopeful. It may equally suggest that the Pacific community does not identify unplanned pregnancy as a serious barrier to good outcomes or it may simply mean that participants saw other barriers as more important. Those who are active in the area of sex education are well aware of the complexities of providing information about sex, sexuality and contraception in a culturally appropriate form. They need to be supported in their endeavours.

### 6.1.4 Cultural understanding

Māori and Pacific participants articulated more clearly than did Pākehā respondents the importance of young people having a strong sense of their cultural identity. For Māori this included absorbing cultural values such as manaaki tangata and whānaungatanga, that is, respect for others and a concern for the wider family. In both reports adults and young people alike spoke of the importance of young people maintaining the cultural knowledge and traditions relating to their ethnicity. Adult Māori participants were emphatic in their hope that young people would be strong in taha Māori as this would give them pride in their identity and the confidence to achieve in both the Māori and Pākehā worlds. Many Māori young people concurred with this view.

The lack of explicit mention by Pākehā respondents of the need for young people to have a broad cultural understanding almost certainly reflects the implicit and dominant nature of Pākehā culture in New Zealand. Popular understanding of 'culture' in New Zealand tends to be articulated in terms of its difference from Pākehā culture.

### 6.1.5 Immediate goals

Although few participants in the research specifically discussed the importance of young people having immediate goals, they did recognise the need for them to be focused, motivated and determined. Several commented that goals and directions should be clearer at the age of 25 than at age 18. Others regretted the reduced opportunities for young people to explore different directions or work options.

### 6.1.6 Constructive relationships with other people

The research supported this concept wholeheartedly. Participants stressed the importance of young people being able to relate well to a wide range of people. The importance of having respect for others was a recurring theme in all three studies.

### 6.1.7 Law-abiding

The research did not specifically address young people's relationships with the law but participants' support for the concept of young people being law-abiding was evident in their comments. Adults and young people in all three studies cited honesty and trustworthiness as valued attributes and many expressed anxiety about the risks young people face if they fall into the 'wrong company' and subsequently engage in criminal activity.

### 6.1.8  Physical and mental health

The interviews for the research did not cover health as a separate topic and relatively few respondents mentioned health issues, other than indirectly through their support for young people's continued involvement in sport. Many indicated that the social and emotional benefits of sport were as important as the physical benefits. The lack of emphasis on physical health is hardly surprising, given that, in most cases, the teenage and young adult years are a time of good physical health, and in a long interview, participants obviously believed that other factors were more important.

References to mental health were also indirect rather than direct. A number of participants were concerned that peer pressure might lead young people to perform below their ability in school, while a poor choice of friends might lead them to take drugs, over-indulge in alcohol, or be exposed to suicide as an option for dealing with problems. Adults recognised the need to counteract such pressures by providing positive support, while young people hoped to develop the strength to resist unhealthy peer pressure.

### 6.1.9  Constructive kinship and friendship networks

The importance of constructive kinship and friendship networks was central to all three studies. Without such relationships, all participants could see a poor future for young people. Family/whānau were perceived as the most important source of ongoing support for young people but the part played by friends should not be underestimated. Young people themselves acknowledged the need to maintain good relationships with their family and to choose their friends carefully.

### 6.1.10 Participating in community life

Pākehā respondents were less vocal about the importance of young people participating in community life than Māori or Pacific respondents. Māori participants believed that continued involvement in kapa haka, cultural groups and marae activities would help young people learn skills such as organising hui, looking after guests, budgeting, public speaking and childcare responsibilities. Such involvement would also anchor them in their community. Pacific respondents mentioned similar benefits from participation in church, voluntary and family activities.

## 6.2  Other outcomes discussed in the research

### 6.2.1  Employment

Participants in this research put a high value on stable employment as a positive outcome for young people. They also identified a number of obstacles that young people face in trying to gain a foothold in the workforce, such as finding out what different jobs entail, finding a suitable job and convincing employers to take young people on so that they can gain work experience. One of the major reasons why so many people identified 'work experience' as something young people need is that it is a means of finding out about different careers.[14]  Young people themselves were keen to meet adults who could

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[14] As noted in the Māori report.

explain their career and career paths and give them practical advice about job options. 'Role models' could attend schools or career days, but they could also be individual mentors. A number of participants could see value in linking young people with an adult or adults beyond the family who could help guide them onto an appropriate path.

Participants, particularly in the Māori and Pacific studies, recognised that an ability to use computers is essential if young people want to increase their employment opportunities. All respondents agreed that all young people should be familiar with computer technology, including the internet. However, many participants noted that not all young people have access to computers. Families with limited resources cannot afford to buy them, and their children may attend schools with fewer resources than those in more affluent districts. Suggestions for increasing access among the Pacific community included having churches purchase computers. Inequities in access to modern technology may also be an important variable in considering good outcomes for young people.

Families and providers mentioned the lack of opportunities for young people who are not academic. They noted that the focus on training has become increasingly 'academic' rather than practical, further alienating those who are not suited to this form of learning. While the move to reinstate apprenticeships met with approval, most wanted far more opportunities at the practical end of the training spectrum, as this would give young people the opportunity to learn by doing. At the same time, they would acquire a work ethic and a sense of self-worth, rewarded by a modest income.

A number of parents and young people, particularly in the Pākehā study, were already looking outside New Zealand for work opportunities for young people. About a quarter of the young people thought that they would be living and working overseas by the time they were 25, suggesting that they have accepted the view that opportunities within New Zealand are limited. As well as finding the prospect of their children living permanently overseas, parents believe it will be a significant loss for the country.

It would be useful to investigate further how widespread this perception is and the basis on which it is held.

### 6.2.2  Financial independence

The Ministry of Social Development's definition of good outcomes does not specify financial independence, but when interviewers raised the topic of financial support for young people, participants were quick to respond, often referring to the adverse impact of the student loan scheme and the cost of post-compulsory education on young people's futures.

Although most adults and young people agreed that a good financial outcome would be for young people to be able to undertake tertiary study without incurring debt, few families could anticipate such an outcome. Those parents/caregivers who did not consider that they would be in a position to contribute to their children's tertiary education felt anxious about the implications for their children's debt burden. All contributors,

including providers, recognised the stress many young people and their families face as a result of money pressures.

## 6.3 Ministry of Social Development's family dynamics model

The family dynamics/family effectiveness model developed by the Ministry of Social Development identifies three interrelated influences on outcomes for young people. These are:

- the family itself, through its form, functioning, financial and other material resources, labour market achievement, attitudes, values and beliefs

- the social, institutional, economic and community environment

- a young person's personal endowments and cumulative capacities.

The interrelationship between these three sets of factors was supported in this research. It was abundantly apparent that outcomes for young people cannot be attributed to any one of these elements alone. Each of the components of the model is discussed below in relation to the research findings.

### 6.3.1 Family form and family functioning

This research has found that adults, young people and providers of social services alike perceive the family as a key player in determining good outcomes for children. While there was some concern about the extra pressures that single parents face, participants did not identify family form as a significant contributor to or detractor from good outcomes. Participants were more interested in the community supporting single parents than judging them.

The research did not specifically explore family functioning. Families' willingness to take part in the research suggests at least some level of cohesion. A more extensive survey would be needed to establish the part family functioning plays in outcomes for young people. That research in itself would depend on the development of a sound definition of family functioning.

### Financial resources

Participants identified the availability of financial and other resources as an important contributor to good outcomes. Virtually everyone interviewed for this research agreed that children in families with inadequate or limited resources are at a disadvantage. They do not have the same opportunity to participate fully in society or to reach their potential, thus increasing the likelihood that the cycle of disadvantage will continue.

All participants recognised that a certain level of income is essential for survival. Families on low-incomes pay first for food, shelter and clothing, then for health needs and transport. It is only when income rises above this level that they are able to pay for sports, cultural and school activities for their young people. Computers are definitely an 'optional extra' as, in some families, is tertiary education. The discussion in all three reports centred on the difference between being poor and having to struggle to survive and being comfortably off, not about being rich. Some families were concerned that the

Government does not really understand or appreciate the situations many families are in. It seemed self-evident to most people that families who are struggling to feed and house themselves will not be able to afford to give their young people a tertiary education. However, even middle-income people were concerned about the cost of tertiary education for themselves as well as for people who are less well off.

Lack of income has other effects. Families on low-incomes often have to devote a great deal more of their time to income generation, making it harder for them to put the time and energy into child-rearing that were seen by all participants in this research as such an important contributor to good outcomes.

In the Māori and Pacific studies in particular, participants noted that lack of money could either lead to a sense of hopelessness and defeat or put pressure on young people to work to support the family instead of undertaking study and imposing more financial burdens on the family.

All participants were asked specifically about the importance of income in achieving good outcomes. All agreed that while income alone is not the only factor in assuring good outcomes for young people, it is a key one for many people. Without adequate income, families find it hard to feed, clothe and house their children. They cannot fund children's activities or support them in tertiary education.

Some participants in the study were on state support because they were either invalids, were caring for children or were out of work. They had the same aspirations for their children and identified similar constraints on achieving them as other low-income families. Lack of income appeared to be more important than labour market attachment per se. While engagement in the labour force does in theory increase people's opportunities to find out about work options or career choices, the reality may be more limited. People in work were as likely as those not in work to identify lack of information about career options as a barrier to achieving good education or employment outcomes.

## Attitudes, values and beliefs

Families' attitudes, values and beliefs universally supported positive social outcomes for young people. All were concerned about the possible negative influences of peers, particularly in relation to drugs and alcohol and antisocial behaviour or poor attitudes to education and work. They believed in the need to inculcate positive values in their children to counteract such pressures and many sought support in this task, through parenting skills programmes and other strategies.

Māori and Pacific families particularly stressed the value of a strong cultural identity, which supports close family ties, a sense of belonging and a sense of mutual obligation. In Pacific families, there was some tension between parents' aspirations for their children to achieve academically and their desire for their children to start work so that they could contribute to the family income. Given that most Pacific families and young people had little idea about careers or career paths, there is a risk that the pressure for young people

to have a job and a regular income will lead to young people taking jobs below their potential, requiring only short-term training instead of further education or training.

## Ways in which families support young people

Despite all the obstacles, whānau/families endeavoured to support their young people in a variety of ways. These included:

- supporting children in their education through being active in school management, attending parent/teacher interviews, being involved in sports days and school trips, providing help with homework and encouraging children to value education

- providing encouragement, transport and financial support for children's interests

- spending time with children

- helping young people sort out problems

- providing a clean, safe and secure home environment

- providing a range of experiences and opportunities

- talking about and modelling desirable values and behaviour

- setting boundaries and providing guidance.

All groups, but particularly Pacific and Māori respondents, stressed the importance of maintaining family/kin ties, participating in activities of the extended family and drawing on their support. This helped children know who they were and encouraged them to take an interest in learning more about their own cultures.

Parents/caregivers and young people placed great store on the family as the primary influence on outcomes for young people. Most of those interviewed hoped and believed that their positive input would be strong enough to outweigh negative influences, particularly from young people's peers. However, they also recognised that some parents are too busy, too tired or too stressed to spend enough time with their children. Some lack parenting skills, and others have too many problems of their own to deal with. In these situations, the positive impact of families can be severely reduced or non-existent. In all three studies, parents and providers identified a need for more support for families in order to strengthen families' abilities to promote good outcomes for their children. Some talked about support for improving parenting skills, while others mentioned the need to value parenting, which can be achieved in a number of ways, including by having more family-friendly government and workplace policies.

### 6.3.2 Institutional and economic factors

If families are an important influence on outcomes for young people, institutions such as schools and tertiary education providers are also important.

## Schools and tertiary education providers

While schools do much to contribute to good outcomes for young people, many respondents from all groups thought that schools could do more, including careers advice, life skills training and work experience opportunities.

The research identified the cost of tertiary education as the single most important constraint on young people achieving desired outcomes. Costs were a concern to all but a handful of families and they too deplored the impact of cost on other families. Not only does cost inhibit access to education, it limits choice, restricting young people's ability to experiment and take risks and forcing them into what may be premature career decisions. Some saw this as ironic in a rapidly changing technological environment, which depends as much on versatility, innovation and adaptability as it does on subject knowledge.

Service providers and parents of non-academic young people were also concerned at the focus on academic as opposed to practical skills. They believed that such young people have much to offer society but fewer avenues for doing so. In addition to their belief that schools could do more to affirm non-academic young people and prepare them for their place in society, they would support policies that recognised and promoted alternative, innovative training and work opportunities for young people with various talents.

### Employment opportunities

Anxiety about employment opportunities also pervaded the research. Many parents and young people did not know what options were available, what different careers involved, what courses young people should take to keep their options open or how to get work experience to test their preferences. They came up with a range of suggestions to improve the situation including mentoring schemes, better careers information and more work experience arrangements.

The availability of work was of special concern to families in rural and provincial areas. With the decline in regional employment, they could see few alternatives to sending their young people out of the area to find work, with all the costs and anxieties that involved. Others thought globally rather than locally. Even in their teens a number of young people anticipated living and working overseas, because they perceived that there are limited employment opportunities in New Zealand. Probably realistically, few conveyed a sense of having a career plan or employment strategy.

While many saw the Government as having the responsibility for creating a positive economic climate in the wider sense, they also believed that business should play a more active role in job creation and in mentoring, training, providing scholarships and supporting young people into work.

The economic environment also affects young people's living arrangements and family expectations. Few could see home ownership as a realistic option for young people at 25 and few anticipated them having children of their own at this age.

### 6.3.3  Community, social and environmental factors

The importance of involvement in sports, music and other interests in helping young people achieve good outcomes was a key finding of the research. Involvement in such activities can promote physical health and fitness, provide focus and constructive use of

leisure time, encourage relationships with like-minded peers and give access to other adults who may share their interests and be able to fulfil a mentoring role.

However, respondents also thought that young people's access to activities can be limited by lack of transport, especially in rural areas, and by the cost of access to community resources such as sport and recreation facilities. A number of providers working with young people were vocal in their call for more support for young people's community activities.

The influence of the media on good outcomes for young people was of concern to several families. Their view was that the media do not promote positive images of teenagers to the community at large, nor do the programmes targeted at young people help them see themselves as positive contributors to society. The media were seen to have untapped potential in influencing community attitudes towards young people and towards parents, as well as in educating parents in the parenting task.

Parents and young people recognised the importance of young people's friends and valued the support that young people draw from their friendships with one another. Most agreed that strong family ties and clear values can reduce the likelihood of peers being an adverse influence on young people.

### 6.3.4  Personal attributes

The study did not specifically explore young people's own attributes. However, many participants, including young people themselves, identified that their own attitudes and choices were important in contributing to good outcomes. They recognised the importance of setting goals, believing in themselves, resisting temptation and developing their skills.

## 6.4  The relative responsibilities of the family, community and state

Support for positive outcomes for young people can come through a number of channels. The family is clearly central but the Government, business, schools and community groups also have a role to play. Participants generally agreed that different sectors of society need to support young people, but they often found it hard to describe specifically how that might happen.

### 6.4.1  Family responsibilities

It is not surprising that participants felt most confident in discussing the contribution the family can make to good outcomes for young people. The vast majority of families have more contact with their young people than do schools, government agencies or community organisations. Preoccupied as they are with the stresses of daily living, families cannot be expected to have a well developed structural analysis of the social context in which they operate. Many make considerable sacrifices to raise their children and it would be disturbing if they did not put a high priority on the importance of this role.

All participants in the research agreed that the main things family and whānau can do for young people are to:

- be there for them, particularly when things go wrong

- love, care and nurture them

- provide financial and practical support

- encourage and believe in them

- provide appropriate guidance and discipline

- pay attention to their individual needs

- show children they are appreciated

- promote strong family and cultural values.

### 6.4.2 Government support

Government support can be both direct and indirect. Again, participants were most likely to comment on strategies or policies that would have a direct effect on young people's wellbeing.

### Direct government support

Adults and young people agreed that the single most important contribution the Government can make is to provide free education. Most referred specifically to tertiary education but Māori participants also mentioned kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa.

They believed that the Government should also support the creation of more jobs for young people, particularly in rural areas, and promote more work and training schemes, including apprenticeships.

Providers and parents favoured more assistance for parenting skills/education programmes to help parents cope and more support for the parenting role. Some mentioned the need for adequate funding for healthcare and social services.

A number of adults, including those in two-parent families, favoured extra government support for sole parents who often face the difficult task of supporting and raising their children alone.

Some Pacific respondents commented that cheaper housing could help promote good outcomes for young people by providing better living conditions and freeing up income for uses other than rent.

### Indirect government support

Suggestions for indirect government support included supporting public transport, initiating media campaigns showing support for parents and parenting, funding agencies

that support families, providing more training for community workers and ensuring that policies reflect the reality of families' lives.

### 6.4.3  Contribution of business

All agreed that business could provide more support for young people through providing more apprenticeships, work experience and other training options, and mentoring. Some recognised that some businesses may need support to do that. Businesses could also support good outcomes for young people by sponsoring events and supporting homework centres and educational scholarships. Truly family-friendly workplaces were seen as a very practical way by which businesses could support families in raising children.

### 6.4.4  Contribution of schools

Both adults and young people thought that schools could strengthen young people's chances of achieving good outcomes by focusing more on non-academic skills and knowledge. They specifically mentioned the need for:

- careers advice
- life skills training, including communication, relationship and budgeting skills
- values education
- drug education
- safe sex classes
- work experience opportunities
- wider access to computer technology
- more options for young people who are not academic
- teaching and teachers appropriate to Māori and Pacific students.

### 6.4.5  Other contributions

#### Church

Churches are an integral part of Pacific communities, and participants thought they could be more active in supporting Pacific young people through social work, education and programmes for young people, as well as through practical measures such as buying computers for young people to use.

#### Media

A number of adults and young people suggested that the media run campaigns to counteract negative views of teenagers. They also favoured programmes promoting positive parenting and targeting the interests of young people through sports and music.

## 6.5 Differences among cultures

It is important to reiterate that the similarities between the cultures were greater than the differences between them. All focused on the need for a good education for young people, all wanted their young people to obtain good jobs, to have a sense of self-worth and to have respectful and supportive relationships with others. Ability and confidence in being able to achieve those were more likely to be related to income (through being able to afford the necessary things to achieve outcomes) and to the educational background of parents (through having the knowledge and information about what to do) than to ethnicity.

Nevertheless, there were some differences. As noted above, Māori and Pacific participants articulated more clearly than Pākehā respondents the importance of young people having a strong sense of their cultural identity. For Māori this included absorbing cultural values such as manaaki tangata and whānaungatanga, that is, respect for others and a concern for the wider family. In both reports adults and young people alike spoke of the importance of young people maintaining cultural knowledge and traditions.

Pākehā respondents were less vocal than the other groups about the importance of young people participating in community. Māori participants believed that continued involvement in kapa haka, cultural groups and marae activities would help young people learn skills such as organising hui, looking after guests, budgeting, public speaking and childcare responsibilities. Such involvement would also anchor them in their community. Pacific respondents mentioned similar benefits from participation in church, voluntary and family activities.

Māori and Pacific participants were also more likely than Pākehā respondents to expect young people to have an active involvement with the extended family throughout their young adulthood. This included living with family/whānau, living nearby or having space for family members to stay and, particularly for Pacific families, taking on a greater share of family obligations, including financial obligations, as they grew older. Many of the young Māori and Pacific people interviewed perceived their family ties and responsibilities in the same way as the adults and already had a sense of reciprocity and mutual obligation. Pacific families had a strong desire to see their young people, especially young women, living at home, often until marriage.

While there are many positive aspects associated with family responsibility, there may also be some drawbacks if young people see it as more important to have a job and a regular income as soon as possible than to delay earning while completing their training. In some cases, financial pressures are so great that they have little choice. Both adults and young people in the Māori and Pacific studies saw work as a way for young people to contribute directly to the family or to ease the family's financial burden through self-support. For Pacific young people, in particular, this could mean taking whatever job they could get, rather than delaying employment while they studied. Pākehā young people, on the other hand, were more likely to see their future overseas.

Māori and Pacific respondents were more likely than Pākehā to describe education as a key to improving social status and financial circumstances. Māori and Pacific families and young people in particular indicated that more information would be helpful to them in making decisions about the future. Pacific providers noted the importance of study support and homework centres. Among Pacific respondents, a good outcome was sometimes linked to sporting achievement rather than academic achievement.

The church plays a central role in all Pacific communities, and the sample interviewed for this study was no exception. Both adults and young people saw church activity as a source of spiritual strength, an avenue for community service and an opportunity to develop leadership skills. Some Pacific providers, however, were critical of the dominance of the church in some families' lives, implying that obligations to the church sometimes took priority over family needs, to the detriment of the children. They called for a better balance between church and family commitments. Many participants thought that the church should play a more active social role in the community, providing more practical and financial support for families and young people.

The sample was too small to make any reliable comparisons between the different Pacific groups. However, interviewers for the Pacific study agreed that significant differences do exist, which affect the way in which the cultures perceive and support positive family outcomes. Factors affecting behaviour include attitudes to education, work and the church, and to the individual's role within the immediate and wider family. Length of residence in New Zealand is also important but again the sample was too small to explore this in any depth. Other studies[15] have identified changes in behaviour and attitudes depending on length of residence and family circumstances. It would be useful to extend this work to look specifically at effects on outcomes for young people.

## 6.6    Differences between male and female respondents

Owing to the small numbers, no analysis of the differences between males and females was undertaken in the Māori and Pacific studies – only seven males were interviewed in the Pacific study and only eight in the Māori study. In the Pākehā study, in which 11 males and nine females were interviewed, the differences between the two groups were slight and may have been attributable to the ages of those interviewed rather than to their gender.

# 7.    Recommendations for further research

The three studies that made up this research were small-scale and exploratory. Because each one canvassed only 20 families/whānau and 8 to 12 service providers, care needs to be taken in drawing any conclusions or in generalising too far from the findings. While each study endeavoured to have a reasonably representative sample in terms of family type, location, income level and life cycle stage, the numbers are so small that it would be unwise to draw too many conclusions from comparisons between subgroups in the sample.

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[15] Elliott, S. and Gray, A. (2000).

At the same time, the research did produce a large degree of consistency in the responses of those interviewed. This consistency, and the richness of the findings, supports further use of this type of research with a wider range of groups. For example, it could be useful to explore the views of:

- members of the Asian community

- new immigrants from different ethnic groups

- refugee families

- families where a child has an illness or disability

- families living in rural areas

- young people living away from home, including those in care or in the justice system

- a larger sample of New Zealand-born and Pacific-born families to explore the effects of length of residence in New Zealand

- a larger sample to enable comparisons to be made between different Pacific groups

- families that are not 'essentially functioning and intact'.

This research explored factors that families *think* are associated with positive outcomes for young people. Research elsewhere suggests that people's beliefs do not necessarily match their behaviour.[16] Determining the factors that are *actually* associated with good outcomes i.e. what enables families to be resilient, is a complex task. Such research could involve:

- the use of existing databases, although the interrelationships between family attributes, personal attributes and social and economic factors would have to be taken into consideration in any research design

- case studies of selected families or groups of families and studies designed to validate the findings of overseas experience in this area. These would be a valuable complement to exploratory studies such as the present one

- establishment of longitudinal studies in North Island settings to complement the two longitudinal child development studies that have been running in New Zealand for some time. The new studies could include a more representative sample of Māori and Pacific communities, and include participants from other minority groups.

This research was undertaken from a strengths-based approach rather than from a deficit model. In other words, the focus was on positive rather than negative factors. It would be useful to build on this approach, which received a warm response from participants, many of whom welcomed the emphasis on factors that support success as opposed to those that put young people at risk of failure. Positive research could take two forms:

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[16] See for example, Gray, A. (2001).

- firstly, a stock-take of existing non-government initiatives in the areas of education, work experience, careers and training advice, life skills, health and support for parents of young people. Many such initiatives are community based; others are run by schools, businesses, churches, charitable trusts and local authorities. Documenting and publicising successful programmes, establishing networks and sharing information would be efficient and cost-effective ways of meeting the needs of parents and young people locally. The most successful programmes could be used as models for further initiatives

- secondly, a review of research and reports relevant to various outcomes for young people on this topic. Many departments and agencies have undertaken work in this area, as have agencies such as the New Zealand Family Planning Association, adolescent health groups and education organisations. It is important to build on existing knowledge before embarking on new research.

The cost of tertiary education was of concern to all participants. While some research has almost certainly been undertaken in relation to student loans, it would be useful to:

- explore how students fund tertiary education of all kinds and how this affects other life choices

- identify who does not proceed to tertiary study because of financial constraints

- use the profile of student loan uptake, value and repayment to identify which students are moving overseas.

# 8. Conclusion

This report draws together the findings of three exploratory studies into the views of Māori, Pacific and Pākehā families, young people and service providers on what they consider to be positive outcomes for young people. The three individual reports revealed a high level of agreement on positive outcomes as well as on barriers to achieving them and key sources of support.

The interviews indicate that socio-economic and cultural differences are likely to be important in affecting outcomes for young people and warrant further study. However, the overriding area of concern was the cost of tertiary education and the adverse effect this has on all families, regardless of their circumstances. A perceived lack of employment opportunities and a lack of information about possible career options or avenues for finding work added to anxieties about educational costs.

The families in this study valued their children and wanted the best for them. While the young people themselves were generally positive, they shared some of their families' anxieties. While families/whānau recognised the need to provide a strong, secure base for their young people, there is a clear need for other sectors of the community to play their part if young people are to reach their potential.

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# Appendix 1: Composition of samples

## Matrices of characteristics of whānau and young people for Māori study

**The characteristics of whānau interviewed were as follows (n=22):**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Family type* | |
| • Sole parent | 11 |
| • Two parent | 7 |
| • Step/reconstituted | 4 |
| • Whāngai | 0 |
| *Location* | |
| • Large urban | 14 |
| • Small urban | 4 |
| • Rural | 4 |
| *Income of whānau/parents* | |
| • Beneficiary | 9 |
| • Low to medium | 10 |
| • Medium to high | 3 |
| *Life cycle stage (youngest child)* | |
| • Pre-school | 7 |
| • Primary | 8 |
| • Secondary | 7 |

**The characteristics of the young people interviewed were as follows (n=19):**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Family type** | |
| • Sole parent | 4 |
| • Two parent | 8 |
| • Step/reconstituted | 5 |
| • Whāngai | 2 |
| **Location** | |
| • Large urban | 16 |
| • Small urban | 0 |
| • Rural | 3 |
| **Income of whānau/parents** | |
| • Beneficiary | 5 |
| • Low to medium | 9 |
| • Medium to high | 5 |
| **Gender** | |
| • Male | 8 |
| • Female | 11 |
| **Age** | |
| • 12 | 2 |
| • 13 | 3 |
| • 14 | 4 |
| • 15 | 4 |
| • 16 | 5 |
| • 17 | 0 |
| • 18 | 1 |

## Matrix of family characteristics for Pākehā sample

| Number | Location | Gender (of young person interviewed) | Age (of young person interviewed) | Family type/ household | Socio Economic Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| [1] | Rural | M | 13 | 2 parent | Medium |
| 1 | | F | 15 | | |
| 2 | Rural | F | 15 | Single parent | Low – state support |
| 3 | Rural | F | 15 | 2 parent | Low – state support |
| 4 | Rural | F | 13 | Step family | Low |
| 5 | Rural | F | 11 | 2 parent + grandparents | Low |
| 6 | Rural | M | 17 | 2 parent | Low |
| 7 | Small urban | F | 15 | 2 parent | Low – medium |
| 8 | Small urban | M | 11 | Single parent | Low – state support |
| 9 | Small urban | F | 16 | Step family | Low |
| 10 | Small urban | M | 14 | Single parent | Low – state support |
| 11 | Large urban | M | 11 | 2 parent + grandparents | Low |
| 12 | Large urban | M | 13 | Step family | Medium |
| 13 | Large urban | F | 13 | 2 parent | Medium |
| 14 | Large urban | - | - | Single parent | Low – state support |
| 15 | Large urban | F | 13 | 2 parent | Med – high |
| 16 | Large urban | M | 15 | Single parent | Low – state support |
| 17 | Large urban | M | 15 | 2 parent | Med – high |
| 18 | Large urban | M | 7 | 2 parent + grandparents | High |
| 19 | Large urban | M | 12 | 2 parent | High |
| 20 | Large urban | M | 14 | 2 parent | High |

Note: Two young people came from one family. In another family, no children were interviewed because they were too young.

**Matrix of family characteristics for Pacific study**

| Interview number* | Gender (of young person interviewed) | Age (of young person interviewed) | Family type/household and number of children | Socio Economic Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N1 | F | 14 | 2 parent, 4 children | Low |
| N2 | F | 11 | Single parent/extended, 2 children | Low |
| N3 | F | 13 | Single parent, 2 children | Low – medium |
| C1 | F | 11 | Single parent | Low – medium |
| C2 | F | 16 | 2 parent, 5 children | Low |
| Tk1 | M | 16 | 2 parent, 4 children | Low |
| Tk2 | M | 13 | 2 parent, 4 children | Low – medium |
| F1 | M, M | 17, 15 | 2 parent/extended, 4 children | Low |
| F2 | F | 15 | 2 parent, 2 children | Medium |
| T1 | M | 13 | 2 parent/extended, 4 children, plus 3 cousins | Low |
| T2 | F | 15 | Extended, 2 children | Low |
| T3 | M | 16 | 2 parent, five children | Low |
| T4 | F | 11 | Single parent, 3 children | Low |
| S1 | M | 14 | 2 parent/step, 4 children | Low |
| S2 | F | 14 | 2 parent – mixed marriage, 6 children | Low |
| S3 | M | 13 | 2 parent – mixed marriage, 3 children | Beneficiary |
| S4 | F | 15 | 2 parent, 3 children | Medium |
| S5 |  | 12 | 2 parent, 4 children | Low |

* N = Niuean; C = Cook Island; Tk = Tokelauan; F = Fijian; T = Tongan; S= Samoan

# Appendix 2: Providers and provider organisations interviewed

## 1. List of providers interviewed for the Māori study

Māori organisations
- Manukau Urban Māori Authority (Auckland)
- Ora Toa (Porirua)
- Te Hauora (Murupara)
- Te Korowai Aroha (Porirua)
- Te Whānau Kotahi Ora (Lower Hutt)
- Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi (Manukau)
- Tipu Ora (Rotorua)
- Wellington Tenths Trust (Wellington)
- Queen Victoria School (Auckland)
- Non-Māori organisations
- Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (Wellington)
- Challenge Trust (Papatoetoe)
- Independent health educator (Porirua)

## 2. List of providers interviewed for the Pākehā study

- Sedgley Family Centre, Masterton
- Guidance Counsellor, secondary school, Masterton
- Presbyterian Support Child and Family Services, Hastings
- Directions 2000, Hastings
- PILLARS, Christchurch
- Home and Family Society, Christchurch
- Open Home Foundation, Christchurch
- Barnardos, Wellington
- Youth Development Co-ordinator, Wellington City Council
- Family Planning Association, Wellington

## 3. List of providers interviewed for the Pacific study

- St Mary's Tongan Lataki Youth Group, Avondale, Auckland
- The Tapu Trust, Auckland
- Fanau Pasifiki Support Services, Auckland
- Family Life Education Pasefika, Auckland
- To'utupu Tonga Trust, Auckland
- The Niu Trust, Wellington
- Naku Enei Tamariki (Pacific), Wellington

# Appendix 3: Summary chart

This chart summarises information from the Māori, Pākehā and Pacific findings in three columns. Each column is further subdivided to set out the family's, young people's, and service provider's perceptions of good outcomes at 18 and 25 years, supports and barriers to achieving good outcomes and 'who should do what' to help ensure good outcomes.
Note: the views represented in the interviews were largely those of family adults towards the young people for whom they were responsible. The views expressed by the young people were largely in relation to their own lives. The views expressed by the service providers, however, were generic.

## Views of whānau/family adults on good outcomes for young people at age 18 years

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| Still in education – secondary or tertiary. | Still in education – secondary or tertiary to increase future choices and competitiveness in labour market. A year 'out' of formal education possible. | Still in education – the pathway to better employment opportunities – at school for year 13 (Seventh form), and then university or polytechnic. |
| Living at home. | Living at home (but rural 18s may need to move to town). | Support for children's choice of education/careers. |
| Financial support from whānau/family – no student loan if possible. | Some in part-time employment. | Living at home, but gradually taking more responsibility for self. |
| Participating in sport. | Financial support from parents for almost all – student loan unacceptable for most, but low-income families accept it might be needed – financing tertiary education a 'huge concern' for all. | Part-time employment desirable to earn money, but also money management skills – as long as education comes first. Not keen on student loans, but recognise necessity for low-income families. |
| Participating in community activities – marae, kapa haka, Māori organisations. | Interests, activities likely to follow on from those when younger e.g. sport, drama, music. | Participating in sports (where there are opportunities to do well), church youth activities and music – provide help with transport etc. and involving 18s in the parents' church activities. |
| Stronger relationship with whānau than with partners. | Expectation of community involvement only for some – maybe coaching or church. | Strong family relationships intact. Important to have friends who will be a 'good' influence. |
| Demonstrate manaaki tangata, whānaungatanga and happy, confident, responsible, respectful, trustworthy. | Relationship with family likely to be close if it has been in the past, otherwise less close/breaking away by 18. Likely to be 'experimenting' with personal relationships. | Maintain specific cultural values of the Pacific nation of origin. |
| | Negative peer pressure likely to wane after 18 – most parents have faith in their children's judgement. | Desirable values include honesty, responsibility, caring, and respect for others. Some include obedience, and for some, strong focus and leadership important. |
| | Reflect 'family values' (including Christian values, for some), and social values re importance of belonging to the community and happy, independent, positive, kind, tolerant, honest, sensitive to others, a 'good friend'. | Maintain Christian values, and continue practising Christian beliefs and practices. |

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## Views of whānau/family adults on good outcomes for young people at age 25 years

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| Tertiary education finished and career established. | Qualifications complete – if not, maybe studying overseas. | Qualifications complete/close to complete, or part-time work/study, or settled in career. |
| Financially self-sufficient – not dependent on whānau or dole. | In full-time employment if not study. | Mostly financially independent of families, and already beginning to contribute to family financial obligations. |
| Not usually living with whānau, but living nearby with room to accommodate visiting whānau. | Completely financially self-sufficient through employment, especially if there's a student loan. | Living away from home, but some would want children to remain at home until married. |
| Building up assets towards goal of home ownership. | Living independently from parents – either overseas experience or working/studying overseas, or flatting with other young people if in New Zealand. | Relationships with partners more acceptable at 25 than at 18. |
| Strong bonds with whānau but diversifying relationships – now making own choices. | Mature relationship with parents, but not yet with life partner or with children. | Those who value family relationships more likely to maintain them as they get older. |
| Participation in Māori organisations and marae, and helping other Māori. | Don't know what interests, activities – might develop new ones during tertiary education. | Continued participation in music, sports, youth groups, church activities. |
|  | More confident, aware of values, able to express opinions and values to others. |  |

## Views of whānau/family adults on the supports for and barriers to good outcomes for young people

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| **Supports**<br><br>• Whānau in main role. Whānau participation in school responsibilities and activities. Help and encouragement with homework and learning.<br>• Material support – provision of stable, good quality physical home environment.<br>• Provision of love and attention to help build confidence and self-esteem to resist negative peer pressure. Give guidance on development of positive relationships.<br>• Role of school to promote work ethic and develop career aspirations, and to teach te reo Māori.<br>• Free education and healthcare needed.<br><br>**Barriers**<br><br>• Lack of confidence and self-esteem.<br>• Break-up of parents' marriage.<br>• Negative peer pressure.<br>• Drugs.<br>• Teenage pregnancy.<br>• Need for computer literacy. | **Supports**<br><br>• Support from family crucial, via support with education, help with homework, providing a place to study, talking through problems.<br>• Practical assistance with interests via money for fees and transport, and provision of a wide range of experiences.<br>• Families/parents important re modelling desirable behaviour and talking about responsibilities, relationships, values and behaviour. Also boundary setting and appropriate discipline.<br>• Schools make a contribution. Mentors and interest in the young person from within the wider family, or from outside the family very important.<br><br>**Barriers**<br><br>• Parents too busy to spend time with their children.<br>• Negative peer pressure is a potential problem, especially around drinking and driving and drugs, but most parents believe their children can withstand it.<br>• Schools could give more information about career options – not enough information for non-academic children.<br>• Absence of the apprenticeship system for vocational training is a problem – the old system provided security and prospects.<br>• The cost of tertiary education is a serious issue – parents' financial circumstances can determine whether the child can get the opportunity.<br>• Other issues can be barriers such as death of a parent, loss of child's motivation, lack of job opportunities, unforeseen accident or illness, early pregnancy.<br>• General pressure of life now. Negative image of young people in the media. Lack of value put on parenting. | **Supports**<br><br>• Parents take active interest in children's schooling; talk with teachers, read reports, pay for school fees, trips and extracurricular activities, Board of Trustees.<br>• Help with homework.<br>• Provide place of study.<br>• Participation in family/extended family activities, maintaining family/kin ties, support and interest at a personal level, promote Christian values and church participation.<br><br>**Barriers**<br><br>• Lack of income a problem – parents concerned about the effect on the family of lack of money to pay for things that will advantage the children.<br>• The wrong friends can be a problem, but good friends can be a good influence.<br>• Children might become too interested in love and relationships and not interested enough in study.<br>• Parents find it hard to get enough information to be able to advise their children about choices in education and work opportunities.<br>• Low incomes make it very difficult to save for tertiary education – the cost of tertiary education is a major problem. |

## Views of whānau/family adults on 'who should do what' to support good outcomes for young people

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| **Family/Whānau**<br><br>• Provide loving and supportive base to build confidence, self-esteem, and the desire to succeed.<br>• 'Be there' and say 'I love you' more often. Communicate openly and honestly about drugs, abuse and suicide.<br>• Share their knowledge and expertise, especially their tikanga and te reo.<br><br>**Schools**<br><br>• Offer a broader range of education including advice on drugs and safe sex, life skills, and work experience.<br><br>**Government**<br><br>• Provide free education and healthcare.<br>• Create better economic conditions to support employment.<br>• Support parents to improve their parenting skills.<br>• Respond more adequately to the needs of low-income families.<br><br>**Business**<br><br>• Support young people by providing mentoring and work experience schemes. | **Family**<br><br>• Take seriously their responsibilities to love, nurture and care for their children, but acknowledge that family alone cannot achieve good outcomes – other sources of influence matter also.<br><br>**Schools**<br><br>• Give children more individual attention, more affirmation and sense of belonging.<br>• More preparation for employment, especially for non-academic students.<br><br>**Government**<br><br>• Fund education in such a way that cost is not a barrier to young people remaining in education.<br>• Provide more support to sole parents.<br><br>**Business**<br><br>• Reinstate the apprenticeship scheme and do more sponsoring of young people's events and achievements. | **Family**<br><br>• Love, support, encourage, spend time with their children, listen to them, believe in their potential and show they are appreciated – all this will encourage them to achieve their goals. Don't expect them to perform miracles, but be there as a guide through life.<br>• Promote family and cultural values, and strong Christian values.<br><br>**Schools**<br><br>• Teach budgeting, not give too much freedom, teach values.<br>• Promote the concept of an Academy for Sports since sport is an area in which Pacific 18s can do well.<br><br>**Government**<br><br>• Provide more community development programmes so Pacific people can understand New Zealand institutions and processes (e.g. Parliament) better.<br>• Provide more adult education programmes to teach budgeting, parenting skills etc.<br>• Make student loans interest free.<br>• Provide cheaper housing. Provide housing assistance to single parent families.<br><br>**Business**<br><br>• Create schemes for employment and training for young people.<br><br>**Churches**<br><br>• Buy computers to provide non-school community access to them.<br>• Do more social work and social support and teach practical living skills like budgeting. |

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# Views of young people on good outcomes for young people at age 18 years

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| Stay at school as long as possible – those who have left often regret it. | Stay at school for year 13 – for most, school has been reasonably positive. At least half intending university, another quarter heading for a non-university vocational qualification. Others intending to maximise education now to generate future opportunities. | Stay at school for year 13 – the education will increase chance of getting a good job, or intro to further education. |
| Get education and qualifications to achieve goals and ambitions, and to get a good job. | | Leaving school with no qualifications will lessen chances of getting a good job, but a quarter don't want further education after year 13 – prefer to get a job then. |
| For some, getting a good job means becoming able to help whānau. | Education is long term – leaving school is the end of an education phase, but others lie ahead. | Almost all expect to be living at home with family at 18, with financial support from family. |
| About half want to go to university and the others to polytechnic, trades, or the armed forces (for further training, opportunities, and employment 'to fall back on'). | One third said living at home, another third living away from home for study – hostels etc. | At 18 most think they will be working part-time to earn money for study but for some, to help with family commitments. |
| About half living at home with parental support (it is cheaper) and the other half flatting with friends – more privacy, also employment may necessitate a move. | Financial support – mostly a combination of parents, employment, student loans, other state support they might qualify for. Some know their parents can't support them at all after 18, while some believe they can and will. | Good friends are trustworthy, loyal, honest, respectful and helpful. People to avoid are those who gossip, put others down, are negative, pressure others to do things they do not want to, and get in trouble for fighting, stealing and drugs. |
| Employment – part-time job for many, partly to support independent living, but all need income for study fees, to avoid a student loan, and to contribute to whānau needs. | Part-time work by 18 – half in gas stations or fast food, and half in 'better' jobs – money to contribute to the costs of their tertiary education. | Family and friends by far the most important relationships at 18 – about half thought they might have a girlfriend/boyfriend at 18. |
| Those with no plans for further study less clear about intentions. | 18s are looking for friends that can be trusted, have similar interests and to have fun with. Not interested in friends who do drugs or 'stab you in the back'. | **Desirable attributes** |
| Relationships with friends very important but need to avoid friends with 'negative attitude'. | Boyfriend/girlfriend relationships at 18 but not too serious. | • Being caring – e.g. supportive, thoughtful, kind, helpful. Being sporty e.g. sports minded, health-orientated, muscular, good at sports. |
| Having a life partner at 18 would 'interfere' with future plans – and most important to avoid pregnancy. | Two-thirds expect to be seeing 'quite a bit' of their families at 18, but some less and a few not much at all. | • Other attributes: e.g. good-looking, intelligent, confident, adventurous, punctual. |
| Whānau relationship still expected to be very strong. | **Interests** | |
| **Interests** | • sport, relaxing with friends, parties, outdoors beaches/tramping etc. | |
| • Mainly sport but also kapa haka and marae activities. | **Desirable attributes** | |
| **Values** | • confident, conscientious, balanced, adventurous, mature, positive, energetic etc, and friendly, outgoing, popular, kind, trustworthy. Also: fit, healthy, rich, successful. | |
| • Honesty, trustworthiness, kindness, care, love, respect, sensible, studious, hard working, responsible. | | |
| **Desirable attributes** | | |
| • Happy, positive, good friend, whānau-oriented, motivated and adventurous. | | |

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# Views of young people on good outcomes for young people at age 25 years and on the supports for and barriers to good outcomes for young people

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| **Good outcomes at 25**<br>• Tertiary education finished, getting established in chosen career. Financially independent, either owning own home (with room for whānau to stay) or travelling overseas (about one-third want travel).<br>• Key outcome is financial independence and expectation of earning good money, but few anticipate marriage and children at 25.<br><br>**Supports**<br>• Main factors are whānau support and money (few mentioned educational achievement). Whānau love, support, encouragement, direction and guidance, help with homework, participating in child's interests, as well as money for fees etc.<br>• Good friends can be supportive.<br><br>**Barriers**<br>• Lack of money to enjoy life and pay for necessities as well as for tertiary education.<br>• Negative peer pressure – being 'led astray' in relation to drugs.<br>• Pregnancy.<br>• Withdrawal of whānau support (although not seen as that likely). | **Good outcomes at 25**<br>• Shape of things at 25 depends on what they decide to do and what happens between now and then, but most thought they would not be living in their home town – either will go to a larger centre or will be overseas.<br>• Home ownership at 25 neither realistic nor appealing.<br>• A close personal relationship likely but friends still very important.<br><br>**Supports**<br>• Family believing in their children, giving them support to try things and see them through, with acceptance if they don't work out.<br>• Schools can support with good careers advice, good curriculum and teachers who do care about the students.<br>• Sports teams, church and youth groups can be supportive.<br>• Relationships with friends a very important source of emotional support and help in sorting out future directions.<br>• Money very important – both the financial support they get now and money they can earn in the future.<br>• Important to choose peers who will have a positive and not a negative influence.<br>• Better communication with parents, having a job and a computer and being able to drive.<br><br>**Barriers**<br>• Lack of money.<br>• Negative peer pressure.<br>• Not being able to get a job. | **Good outcomes at 25**<br>• Completed study/training, and in full-time employment. Living independently of families, with partner, some with children, financially independent of families now.<br><br>**Supports**<br>• Love, support and encouragement from family, and discipline. Financial support from family if affordable. 'Being there' and 'believing in' the young person also important.<br>• Having a good education, and getting a scholarship or being able to get a part-time job important to help meet the costs of higher education.<br>• For some, support of the church and guidance from God are crucial.<br>• Good friends important, as they offer encouragement, support and friendship.<br>• Self-belief, and a sense of responsibility.<br><br>**Barriers**<br>• Lack of money – many know they will need to earn to contribute not only to their education but also to family finances.<br>• Having 'negative' friends. Getting married or having a partner, poor academic performance, lack of financial support.<br>• Lack of information about the options available concerning courses and career possibilities.<br>• Lack of support from family or friends for what one is doing.<br>• Giving up, losing interest.<br>• Having a child, stress, death of a parent. |

## Views of young people on 'who should do what' to support good outcomes for young people

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| **Family/Whānau**<br>• 'Be there' for us – positive support for study, direction, and development of career options.<br>Pass on tikanga Māori and te reo.<br><br>**Schools**<br>• Provide information about further education and employment – can't always get it from whānau/friends.<br>• Opportunities to build skills in computer technology; work experience and the right subjects for university.<br><br>**Government**<br>• Provide free education – cost of tertiary education is a major problem.<br>• Make schools more exciting.<br>• Provide more work schemes, more police, not legalise marijuana.<br><br>**Business**<br>• Bring back apprenticeships, more work schemes, give references after work schemes and give people a go. | **Family**<br>• Support, encourage and believe in their children.<br><br>**Community**<br>• Reduce the negativity about young people. Do things to help parents with parenting and provide better role models for parents and for young people.<br>• Sports clubs and church groups should continue with the support and good influence that they provide now.<br><br>**Government**<br>• Make tertiary education more affordable, and reduce debt burden for students. Create jobs for young people.<br><br>**Business**<br>• Create more job opportunities for young people and provide support through sponsorship. | **Family**<br>• Encourage, support and believe in their children.<br><br>**Church**<br>• Support and pray for young people and help fundraise for students.<br><br>**Government**<br>• Assist young people into employment, possibly through apprenticeship schemes.<br>• Reduce cost of tertiary education (fees) and also the interest costs for student loans.<br><br>**Business**<br>• Provide more job opportunities for young people.<br>• Job training and part-time work for students.<br>• Sponsorship of local sports teams, scholarships and homework centres. |

# Views of service providers on good outcomes for young people at 18 years of age

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| By the end of schooling, young people should value education and knowledge, and be ready to move on. | Positive outcome from education will include achievement – whether academic or not. Self-belief and a sense of the contribution they can make. Taking responsibility for self and one's own actions. | Academic achievement and good study skills for future education. |
| Having options, particularly in employment, is particularly desirable (e.g. being aware of options and how to get there), as well as having clear goals and a sense of direction. | Having a sense of direction, and being equipped to face what's ahead. | Clarity re future goals, especially after leaving school. |
| Important to have good interpersonal and social skills, self-confidence and identity grounded in tikanga Māori, te reo and their whakapapa. | More opportunities needed for young people in employment re exposure to different working environments through apprenticeships, training schemes, work experience schemes, or through school via transition-to-work programmes. | Social and life skills, and skills to get a job including self-confidence, how to relate to people, anger management, budgeting and care for self and others. |
| Living environment needs to be stable and safe, wherever it is – this will depend on what the 18-year-old is doing as well as on personality – living with whānau not necessarily always the best option. It is a time of transition to adulthood. | Living situation – most 18s providers see are not living at home – but their desire for independence is often out of step with their ability to manage practically, emotionally or financially. Living arrangements should give 18s space to be themselves, but also offer support. | Good training opportunities will include parenting skills, self-esteem workshops etc., opportunities for voluntary work. |
| Whanau would support financially those living at home or at university, but some kind of work is beneficial to independence and to learning money management. | The quality of relationships young people have at 18 is crucial to outcomes. Good relationships with family and friends support good outcomes, while poor relationships are a threat. | Living at home is ideal for 18s but family circumstances may not make it possible 18s need privacy and a place to study and family needs to balance their commitments to church and to family. |
| No uniform view re where 18s should live or who should support them financially. | Interests/activities: the specifics of what are less important than the benefits of having interests and being involved in things. | Either family should provide financial support, or part-time work to self-support as much as possible with budgeting advice from parents to learn financial management skills. |
| Very critical of student loan debt burden on young people. | **Qualities and values** | Good relationships with family and friends sustain 18s by providing social and emotional support etc. Family needs to ensure good communication and to invest quality time. |
| Providers advocated a much wider range of interests and activities than just sport – positive benefits from participation. | • Most important value is a sense of respect for self and for others. Other values include trust, loyalty, caring, a sense of justice and a spiritual awareness. | Activities to encourage are those with family, plus youth-focused community activities, music, sports, and activities that build self-esteem. |
| **Qualities and values** | | **Qualities and values** |
| • Confidence and self-esteem. Sense of direction and vision and outward-looking perspective, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. Inter-personal skills. Sense of belonging. | | • 18s should be respectful, have self-esteem and identity, with strong family links, and be able to communicate well. |

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# Views of service providers on good outcomes for young people at 25 years of age and on the supports for and barriers to good outcomes for young people

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| **Good outcomes at 25**<br><br>• By 25, should be more settled, more financially stable, and in full-time employment.<br>• Tertiary education completed, living away from family – flatting while preparing to buy a house, although home ownership unlikely at 25. Relationships with friends more important as 25s move away from family.<br>• Values and qualities similar as at 18, but more focus, greater degree of responsibility, and maturity.<br><br>**Supports**<br><br>• Positive whānau environment and upbringing, with parents who are supportive and loving, encourage open communication and actively interested in child's life. Good parenting very important: love, support, encouragement, time.<br>• Strong sense of cultural identity.<br>• Influence of peers can be positive or negative. Important to resist negative peer pressure. Strong whānau values will help to achieve it.<br>• Access to free education so that education is not dependent on parents' ability to pay. Information and education about safe sex, drug abuse, relationships, personal development and self-esteem, computer literacy, and practical work experience.<br>• Income – having enough for basic survival without stress and worry is vital for achieving good outcomes.<br>• Not just the cost of tertiary education that is a problem, but the cost of feeding, clothing and housing families.<br>• Insufficient money limits all sorts of choices and leads to hopelessness.<br><br>**Barriers**<br><br>• The reverse of the above. | **Good outcomes at 25**<br><br>• More stability and focus than can be expected at 18. Formal education over, or ongoing. Expected to be in work – this may be unrealistic.<br>• More selectiveness in relationships than at 18, with people becoming ready to move into committed relationships.<br>• More focus, direction and confidence than at 18.<br><br>**Supports**<br><br>• Parental interest and involvement are the most crucial factors – the quality of the interactions, rather than the make-up of the family. Extended family involvement can be hugely beneficial – regret this is less now than in the past. Most families doing their best but can be hampered by lack of knowledge or time. Some families don't put enough effort into it, considering outcomes as the responsibility of the young person, or of others. Income makes it less stressful but cannot ensure good outcomes.<br>• In rural areas, access to transport and the distances to be travelled can be major factors – they are the link to participation in young people's activities. Another important resource is access to low-cost community facilities. Peers are a significant influence – can be either good or bad.<br><br>**Barriers**<br><br>• Increasing pressure on young people from changing family patterns, tightening job market, problems facing young people who don't want or couldn't manage tertiary education. Increasing gap between rich and poor, increased living costs – and technological changes (this can be a positive pressure while the others are generally negative). Growing gap between rich and poor the most serious. Also, young people are now facing pressures to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at younger ages. | **Good outcomes at 25**<br><br>• 25s need to have enough education or work skills to know how to be responsible and to have a job to support family (their own, or origin family).<br>• Need to be able to communicate well in English.<br>• 25s should be independent, have strong family ties and be making a positive contribution to family and community, have initiative and be self-directed.<br><br>**Supports**<br><br>• Good family support with strong relationships and time to spend together, but also opportunities for children to see their parents in employment as good role models. Good family communications.<br>• Adequate income to pay for educational opportunities, and good education to lead to good job opportunities.<br>• Parenting programmes, sports and music programmes to target the interests of young people, as well as their families, financial assistance, more Pacific teachers in schools.<br>• Parents and community working together to support young people.<br>• Important to have the 'right' friends, as influences are strong.<br><br>**Barriers**<br><br>• Reverse of above: poor communications between families and children and not enough support and encouragement.<br>• Not strong enough linkage between young people, their families and communities. Influence of bad friends.<br>• Poor education - no qualifications on leaving school etc.<br>• Not enough income to fund educational opportunities. |

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## Views of service providers on 'who should do what' to support good outcomes for young people

| Māori | Pākehā | Pacific |
|---|---|---|
| **Whānau**<br>• Promote good values and provide a sound basis for young people to go out into the world.<br><br>**Schools**<br>• Provide education in a way that suits Māori. Increase children's understanding that education is valuable, and that they can believe in themselves as valuable people with a sense of direction.<br><br>**Government**<br>• Support whānau to support their young people.<br>• Create job opportunities in rural areas. Provide free education, and support community efforts to help families.<br><br>**Business**<br>• Offer work experience to learn about work ethics. Sponsor projects to foster development of leadership qualities among young people. | **Family**<br>• Provide a safe place for their children where they can be loved, accepted, respected, encouraged, supported and given boundaries.<br><br>**Schools**<br>• Do more to develop young people's communication skills, and do better for academic non-achievers.<br><br>**Community**<br>• Agencies are doing as much as they can within current funding constraints.<br><br>**Government**<br>• Show leadership in putting more value on children, and on parenting and support for parents.<br>• More adequate funding for health, education and social services.<br><br>**Business**<br>• Offer more work to young people especially with training component such as apprenticeships. But it is the Government's responsibility as well to improve employment prospects for young people. | **Family**<br>• Provide care, love and support. Be more involved in children's lives and achieve better communication between parents and children.<br><br>**Community**<br>• Provide training to make the community workforce more effective.<br><br>**Churches**<br>• Promote more youth-based activities – particularly the mainstream churches, which currently don't do as much for youth as the evangelical churches.<br><br>**Government**<br>• Assist low-income families with financial assistance, and also make housing more affordable for large families.<br><br>**Business**<br>• Assist young people into employment by offering schemes such as apprenticeships and on-the-job training. |

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