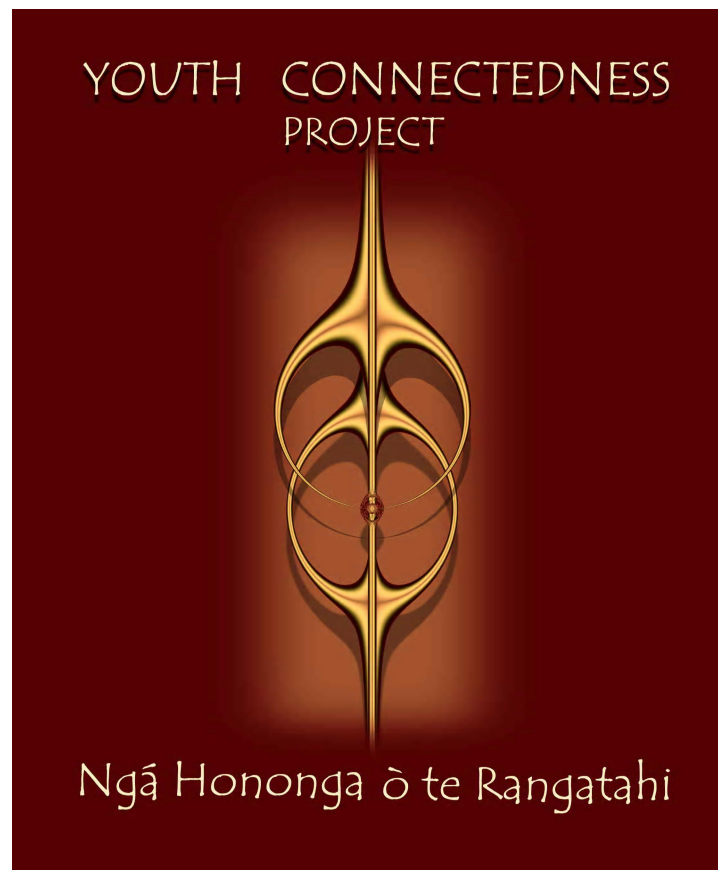


VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



Community data –Porirua (2006 Survey)



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Youth Connectedness Project: Background Information

The Youth Connectedness Project is a unique New Zealand longitudinal study, following young people/rangatahi beginning in school years 6, 8 and 10, over three years (2006, 2007 and 2008).

The main objectives of the study are to examine how connectedness supports youth in negotiating the challenges of adolescence, and to identify modifiable factors that foster and enhance connectedness. We are focusing on young peoples’ connectedness to: communities and wider society; families and whanau; and schools/kura.

“Youth Connectedness” in Porirua:

Who Are the Participants?

The Youth Connectedness Project conducted surveys with 2174 young people from New Zealand’s North Island. Of this total, 87 (or 4%) came from the Porirua area. Males constituted 47.1% and females 52.9% of the total Porirua sample. In regards to age, 60.9% were aged 10 to 11, 24.1% were aged 12 to 13, and the remaining 14.9% were aged 14 to 15 years. The ethnic composition of the Porirua sample is as follows: 31.4% identified solely as NZ European, 54.7% identified solely or in part as Māori and 14% as Other¹.

The schools involved in the survey were: Titahi Bay, Porirua School, Mana College, Titahi Bay North and Titahi Bay Intermediate,

Community Efforts and Youth Voice

We asked participants a) if the community tries hard to give young people what they want and b) if young people have a say in what happens in their community.

Table 1 presents the responses of Porirua City participants compared to the response rates of the overall sample in the Youth Connectedness Project. Overall, compared to the total sample, Porirua participants showed a higher percentage of positive perceptions in regards to both community efforts and youth voice. Also the percentage of “Don’t know” answers was lower in Porirua participants, when compared to the overall sample.

Table 1
Perceptions of community efforts and youth voice for Porirua and the overall sample.

	Porirua	Overall
Effort %		
Yes	41.9	32.5
No	11.6	14.1
Don’t know	46.5	51.1
Voice %		
Yes	37.9	24.1
No	25.3	27.5
Don’t know	36.8	46.3

¹ The “Other” category covers a wide range of ethnic groups.

Potential Services in Case of Need

We were interested in knowing which services young people would go to if they had a problem. As found for the overall sample, a high number of Porirua participants would not go to any of the services from the provided list. The highest rated service was family doctor, followed by school services, internet and Youth Line (see Figure 1). Since some youth services are available both on the internet and via telephone, there might be an overlap between these categories.

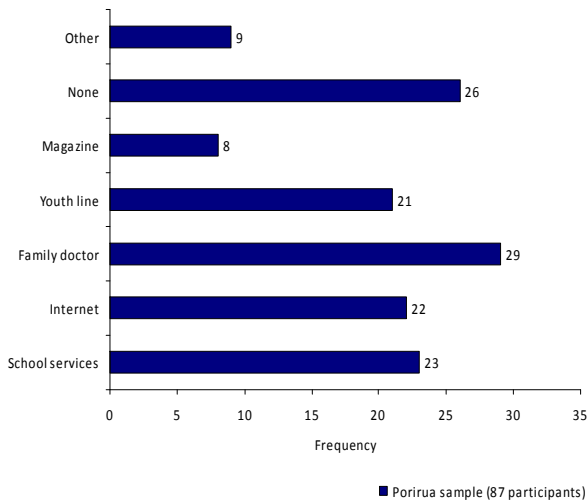


Figure 1. Services participants would use in case of need (Porirua).

Safety

In regards to safety, we asked Youth Connectedness participants about which places, from a varied set, they considered unsafe. As indicated in Figure 2, Porirua participants' ratings were close to the overall sample's. Nevertheless, Porirua participants had slightly higher overall ratings of unsafe places. "Other" referred to "alleyways"(2 answers), "gang places" (1 answer) and "strangers' houses" (1 answer).

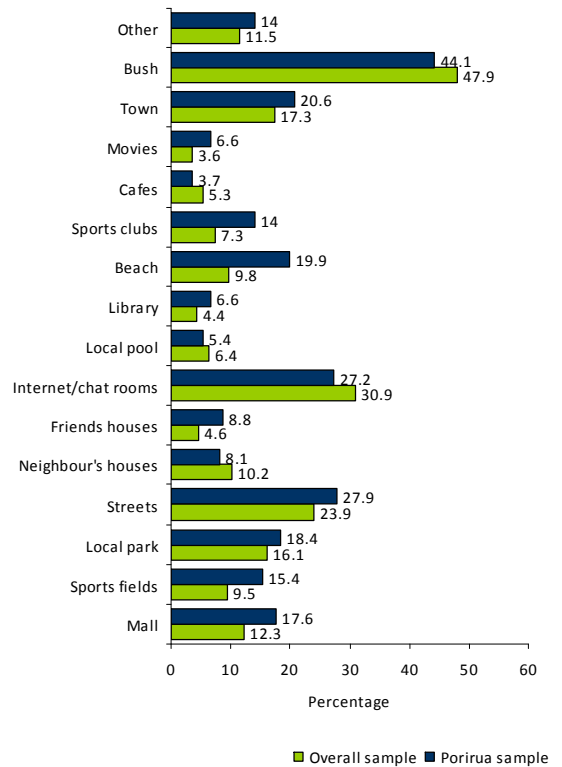


Figure 2. Unsafe places to hang out (Porirua and overall sample).

Sense of Neighbourhood

Sense of neighbourhood measures the extent to which young people feel they are growing up in a safe and supportive environment, with neighbours that they and their families know and can count on. Our results show Porirua was in the lowest 1/4 of the 12 North Island districts surveyed.

Perceived Adults’ Negative Attitudes

This refers to the extent that young people perceive that adults do not want them around and treat them unfairly because of their age. A comparative analysis showed that Porirua’s results were in the middle 1/4 of the 12 North Island districts surveyed.

Community Groups

The majority of Porirua participants (58.5%) belong to at least one community group. As seen in Figure 3, the most common group belonged to is a sports group. Church youth groups come in second place with half of the participants displayed for sports groups. This pattern of results is similar to the pattern found for the overall sample. The “Other” category included, along with specific sports, art classes.

The majority of participants who belonged to these groups agreed that it improved their confidence, that it was a good way to make friends and also that being part of a group made them feel they were giving something good to the community.

Analysis of our wider dataset tells us that belonging to groups outside schools is associated with several positive outcomes, including higher well-being, life satisfaction, stronger ethnic identity (for both NZ European and Māori participants), and more positive body image.

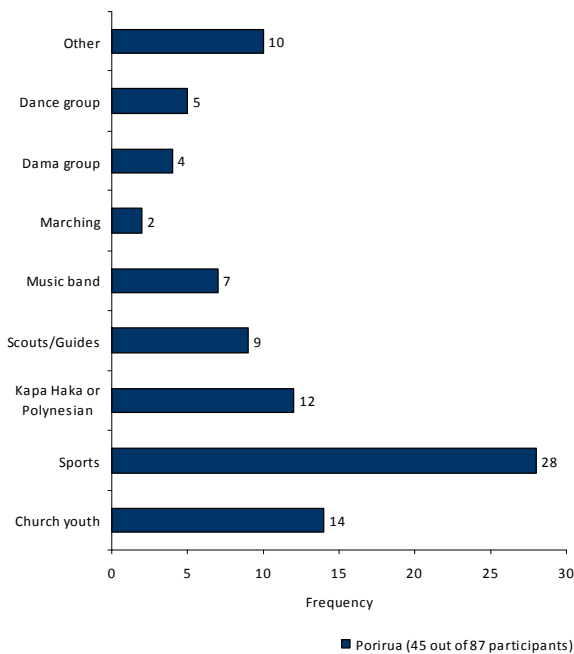


Figure 3. Community group belonging in Porirua (frequencies).

What Youth Want More Of

We generated a list of things young people might want more of (see Figure 4) and asked our participants to indicate what they would desire (they could tick as many as applied). Of central note is that a higher percentage of Porirua participants, compared to the overall sample, stated they would want more attention and time with caregivers, more money, more schools activities and more community places to hang out.

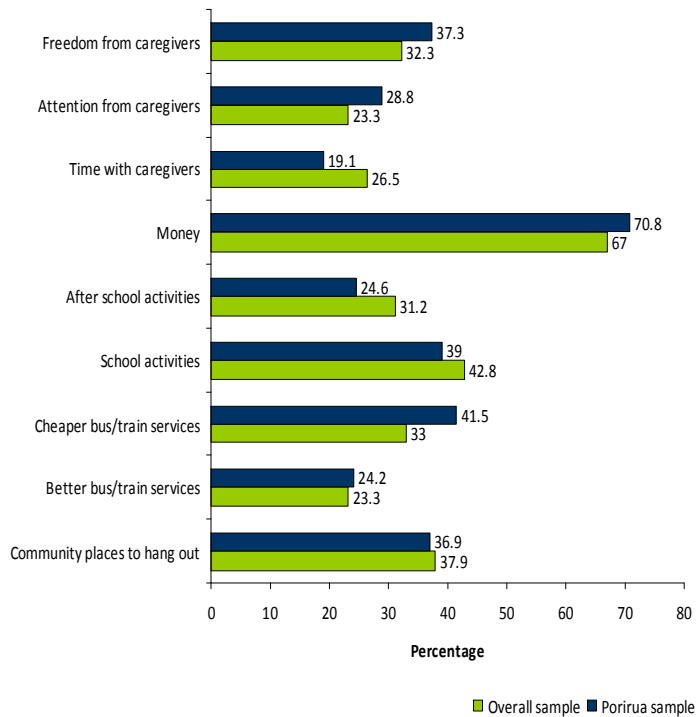


Figure 4. What participants would "like more of" in Porirua and overall sample.

Technology Use

As seen in Table 2, a slightly lower percentage of participants in Porirua used cell phone compared to the overall sample; the results for the internet use are very similar.

Table 2
Internet and cell phone use for Wellington and the overall sample.

	Internet	Cell
Overall Sample %	71.6	74.4
Porirua %	71.8	70.1

Table 3 shows the percentages of internet and cell phone use by age group and gender. As they grow older, young people tend to increase their internet and cell phone use. In regards to gender, a higher percentage of girls stated using cell phones while a higher percentage of boys stated using the internet.

Table 3
Percentages of internet and cell phone use by age group and gender in Porirua

	Internet %	Cell %
Age Group		
10 to 11	66	56.6
12 to 13	76.2	85.7
14 to 15	76.9	100
Gender		
Girls	63	73.9
Boys	78	65.9

Summary of Key Findings

☐ Young people in Porirua, as in the overall sample, tend to show some lack of awareness about community attempts to address their needs and engage them. However, Porirua participants seem to have a more formed opinion (less percentage of “don’t know” answers) and also more positive perceptions about community’s efforts to address young people’s needs and youth voice in the community.

☐ As found for the overall sample, a great number of young people stated they would not look for any of the community services we listed. Peer-support based services, as suggested by some of our participants, could be a possible avenue to (or continue to) explore. Family doctors, school services and Youth Line are the most highly utilised services and are likely to hold rich knowledge about common concerns held by young people.

☐ In comparison with other surveyed areas in the North Island, ratings of sense of neighbourhood by Porirua youth were considered low; in terms of perceptions of negative attitudes from adults, Porirua was in an average position.

☐ While the majority of Porirua youth are already engaged in community groups, there is still a sizeable percentage that is not. Given the positive benefits for wellbeing of community group engagement, it could be worthwhile to address non-engaged young people and their families and identify the major reasons underlying this fact.

☐ Community places to hang out and school activities are two of the things Porirua youth would like more of. Also, joint family, children/parents activities could be a way to address Porirua young people’s desire for more time and attention with and from caregivers.

☐ Porirua participants, as participants from the overall sample, are connected to the internet and cell phone use. Internet and cell phone use are strongly embedded in young people’s lives and this increases as they get older.