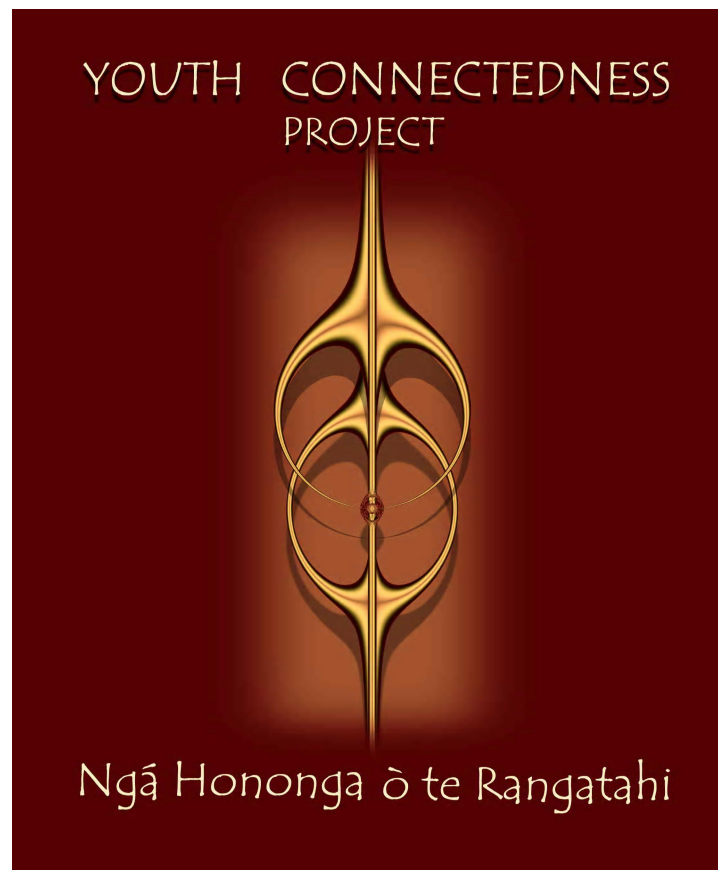


VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



Community data- Upper Hutt (2006 Survey)



Index

Youth Connectedness in Upper Hutt: Who are the participants?	2
Community Efforts and Youth Voice	2
Potential Services in Case of Need	3
Safety	3
Sense of Neighbourhood	3
Perceived Adults' Negative Attitudes	4
Community Groups	4
What Youth Want More of	4
Technology Use	5
Summary of Key Findings	6

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 Upper Hutt:

Who Are the Participants?

The Youth Connectedness Project conducted surveys with 2174 young people from New Zealand’s North Island. Of this total, 128 (or 5.9%) came from the Upper Hutt area. Males constituted 48.4% and females 51.6% of the total Upper Hutt sample. In regards to age, 15.6% were aged 10 to 11, 56.3% were aged 12 to 13, and the remaining 28.1% were aged 14 to 15 years. The ethnic composition of the Upper Hutt sample is as follows: 63.3% identified solely as NZ European, 20.3% identified solely or in part as Māori and 16.4% as Other¹.

The schools involved in the survey were: Maidstone Intermediate, Heretaunga College and Totara Park.

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 Upper Hutt participants compared to the response rates of the overall sample in the Youth Connectedness Project. The results are very similar for both groups, particularly in terms of the community’s efforts to give young people what they want. In terms of giving young people a say, participants in Upper Hutt seem to have a more formed opinion (lower percentage of “don’t know answers”); however, the proportion of yes and no answers is very similar for the Upper Hutt and the overall sample.

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

	Upper Hutt	Overall
Effort %		
Yes	32	32.5
No	14.8	14.1
Don’t know	50.8	51.1
Voice %		
Yes	30.5.	24.1
No	33.6.	27.5
Don’t know	34.4	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 Upper Hutt participants would not go to any of the services from the provided list. The highest rated services were family doctor and school services (see Figure 1).

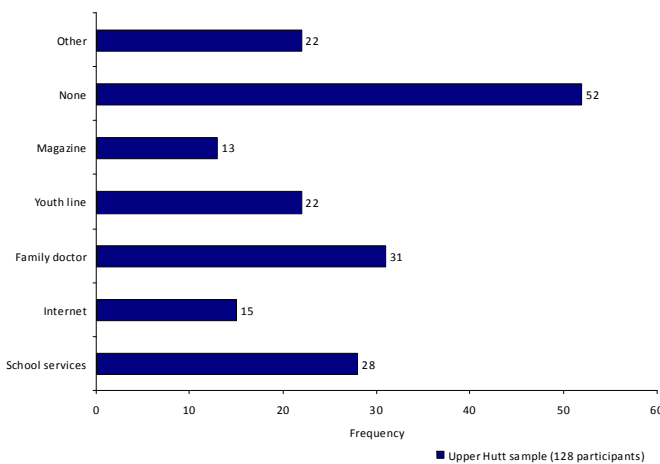


Figure 1. Services participants would use in case of need (Upper Hutt).

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, Upper Hutt participants' ratings were very similar to the overall sample's. Nevertheless, Upper Hutt participants showed slightly higher percentages of feeling unsafe for bush, Internet (forums/chat rooms) and streets in their neighbourhood (differences over 5%). "Other" referred to "alleyways", "bad parts of town" and "streets at night" (8 answers), "none" (3 answers) and "unfamiliar places" (2 answers).

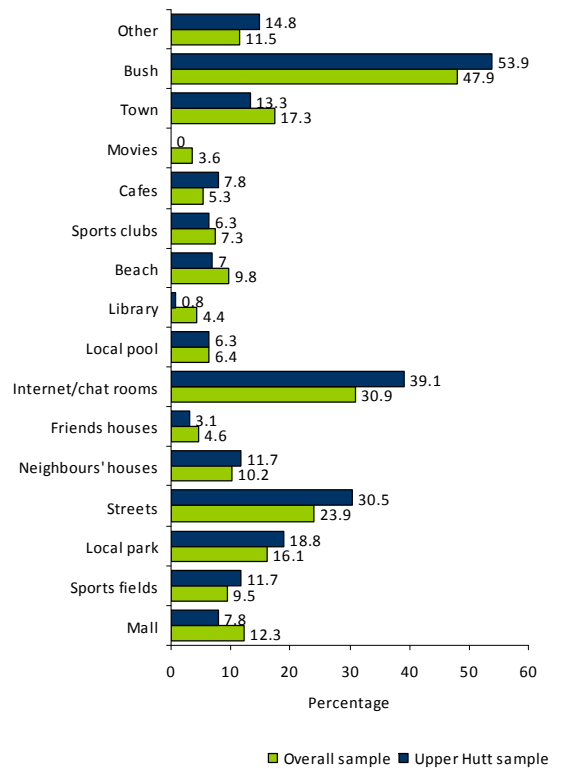


Figure 2. Unsafe places to hang out (Upper Hutt and overall sample).

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 that Upper Hutt was in the highest 1/3 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. Upper Hutt’s results were in the highest 1/3 of the 12 North Island districts surveyed.

Community Groups

The majority of Upper Hutt participants (64.8 %) 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 less than one third of the number of participants displayed for sports groups. This pattern of results is similar to the pattern found for the overall sample. The “Other” category included mainly specific references to sports and church groups.

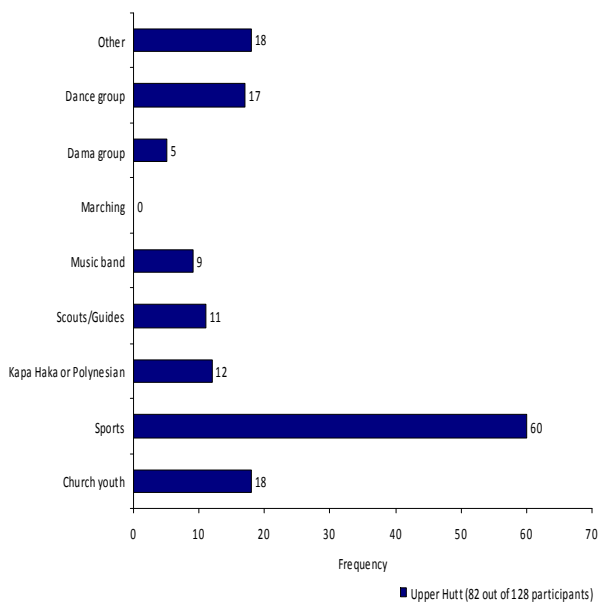


Figure 3. Community group belonging in Upper Hutt (frequencies).

The majority of participants who belonged to these groups agreed that it improved their confidence, that it was a good way to make friends, that group members would look out for each other and 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.

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 Upper Hutt participants, compared to the overall sample, stated they would want more money, better and cheaper transports and more community places to hang out. Also, Upper Hutt participants showed a higher percentage of desire for freedom from caregivers.

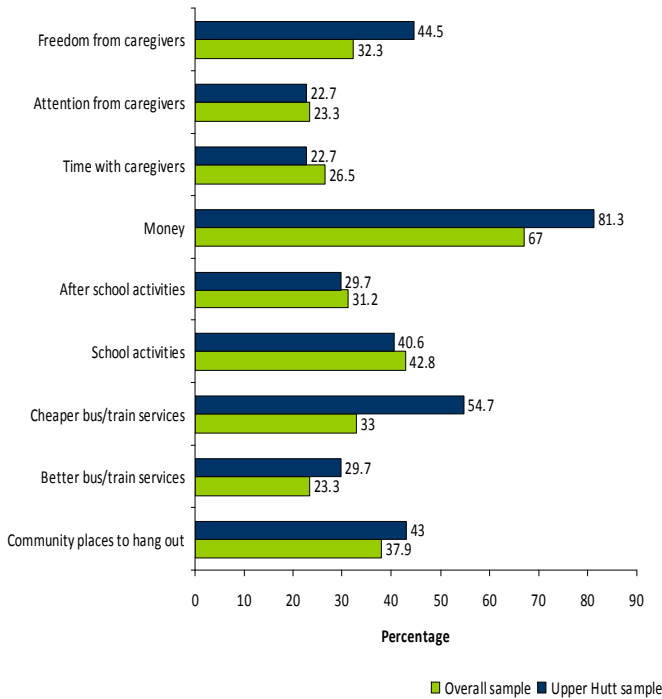


Figure 4. What participants would "like more of" in Upper Hutt and overall sample.

Technology Use

As seen in Table 2, a slightly higher percentage of participants in Upper Hutt use the cell phone in their leisure time compared to the overall sample; the results for the internet use are very similar.

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

	Internet	Cell phone
Overall Sample %	71.6	74.4
Upper Hutt %	74.2	85.2

Table 3 shows the percentages of internet and cell phone use by age by age group and gender. As they grow older, young people tend to increase their internet and cell phone use. Girls showed a higher percentage of cell phone use, while boys showed a slightly higher percentage of internet use.

Table 3
Percentages of internet and cell phone use by age group and gender in Upper Hutt.

	Internet %	Cell phone %
Age Group		
10 to 11	45	50.0
12 to 13	79.2	94.4
14 to 15	80.6	86.1
Gender		
Girls	72.7	89.4
Boys	75.8	80.6

Summary of Key Findings

☐ Young people in Upper Hutt, as in the overall sample, tend to show some lack of awareness about community attempts to address their needs and engage them.

☐ The majority 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 youth focus groups participants, could be a possible avenue to (or continue to) explore. School services and family doctors are the two most highly utilised services and are likely to hold rich knowledge about common concerns held by young people.

☐ Upper Hutt is doing comparatively well in terms of sense of neighbourhood. However, the same does not happen with perceptions of adult negative attitudes towards young people; actions/measures addressing this area could be of significant impact.

☐ The great majority of Upper Hutt participants are already engaged in community groups. Given the positive benefits for youth wellbeing of community group engagement, it seems worthwhile to continue to promote these kinds of groups and to facilitate youth participation in them.

☐ Cost and quality of transport services seems to be a key area of concern for Upper Hutt youth. Also, the desire for more community places to hang out is particularly significant.

☐ Upper Hutt participants, compared to the overall sample, showed higher percentages of cell phone use. Internet and cell phone use are strongly embedded in young people's lives and this increases as they get older.