



Youth Wellbeing in Uncertain Times:

The Voices of Rangatahi from Flood-Effectuated Tairāwhiti Gisborne

Co-funded by: Te Pūnaha Matatini and the University of Waikato

Timeframe: April-December 2024

PROJECT TEAM

Local Team

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This project is also supported by:

Mihi Nemani (Ngatiwai-Samoan, Senior Lecturer University of Waikato) and;

Dr Dan Hikuroa (Associate Professor, The University of Auckland)

ETHICS

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Health) of the University of Waikato.

Please note, this document is the project overview and not the ethics information that will be supplied to all interested partners and participants.

RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the research is to understand how youth (16-24 years) living in Tairāwhiti have experienced recent extreme weather events (flooding). While Tairāwhiti has attracted much research interest since Cyclone Gabrielle, the voices and stories of youth have yet to be documented. Using the qualitative method of focus groups, and creative methods (moving methods and photographic co-creation) this project will examine how local youth are making meaning of recent extreme weather events, the impact on their families and community, and their hopes and concerns for the future.

Working with various community groups and organizations, the study will identify how climate change-related events in isolated communities are impacting young people's thinking and decision-making about their current and future education, employment, and what is important in their lives. This research will provide tangible insights so that education, health, and community providers can better support young people as they make meaning of their climate-change effected communities and uncertain futures.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This project sets out to explore the following research questions

- How are climate-change related events impacting young (16-24 years) people's experiences and understandings of wellbeing (physical, social, emotional, spiritual, financial) and connections to place?
- How are recent climate-change related events (flooding in Tairāwhiti) impacting youths' feelings about 'home' (as a place of safety or fear, anxiety, stress), and their hopes, concerns, and actions towards their own and others' futures (i.e., education, employment, choices as to where and how to live, what to prioritise in their lives)?
- What can education, health and community providers do to better support young people as they make meaning of their climate-change effected communities and uncertain futures?

DIVERSITY OF VOICES

We will be working to ensure the overall sample is representative of the Tairāwhiti region and the various communities impacted differently by recent events (East Coast, City and Western Rural), with roughly even numbers of young men and women (with non-binary and gender diverse participants warmly welcomed)

YOUTH RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Three local youth will be trained as research assistants to support the focus groups and photo co-creation, and lead some of the moving methods, and be involved in the analysis and dissemination processes (that they feel best meet the needs of their communities).

KOHA

Participants will be offered a \$50 voucher for each different method they participate in.

CONTACTS

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RESEARCH METHODS

This is a qualitative project utilising three methods suited to understanding the complex lived experiences of local rangatahi. All participants will remain anonymous (unless otherwise requested) in any research coming from the project:

1) **Focus groups (12)** with local youth (16-24) with 5-10 participants in each focus group. Participants in Part 1 will be invited to consider their participation in either both/or one of the following two creative methods:

2a) **Moving methods** (walking interviews) (10-20 participants)

The young person chooses a place of significance to them (i.e., their home, a local park, alongside a river, their local beach or football field), and the researcher joins the participant for a walk (or other preferred way of moving). As they walk-talk around this location, the discussion will be informal and directed mostly by the participant with prompts from the researcher to discuss: how recent flooding events effected this place during and immediately after the flooding events, and the current status of this place, and how these events have impacted their personal feelings about this place, their sense of identity and belonging, and imaginings of their futures here.

While this method may seem unconventional, researchers around the world have found the 'walking interview' to be very useful. Place-based conversations while walking together can offer different insights than via a standard interview. This method also empowers the participants as they guide the researcher through their familiar places.

2b) **Co-producing photographs** (10-20 participants)

Participants in the focus groups will be invited to express their interest in working with a local professional photographer (also part of the research team) to co-produce an image (or series of images) they feel reflect their experiences of their (past, present, future) understandings of Tairāwhiti as 'home'. With permission of the youth, some images may feature in a local exhibition in which rangatahi voices and experiences are amplified and shared with the community.