



**YOUTH VOICES, YOUTH CHOICES:  
IDENTITY, INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL COHESION IN CULTURALLY  
DIVERSE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND**

CENTRE FOR APPLIED CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH  
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## **YOUTH VOICES: YOUTH CHOICES: RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

To date, New Zealand has fared relatively well in maintaining racial and religious harmony in the face of rapid social change; however, there are risks as well as benefits to our increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Without a “whole of government” approach to strengthening the relations within and between our diverse communities, the core elements of social cohesion- belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy- may be undermined, and the risks associated with diversity- particularly discrimination, isolation and exclusion- are likely to increase. In light of New Zealand’s changing demographics, this project aims to identify the indicators and determinants of participation and success in Chinese, Pacific and Muslim youth in culturally and religiously diverse Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Youth Voices, Youth Choices (YVYC) arose from two significant strands of government work: the Ministry of Social Development’s (MSD) *Diverse Communities: Exploring the Refugee and Migrant Experiences* report and the 2006 Cabinet paper *Strengthening Relations between our Diverse Communities*, and the associated MSD and Office of Ethnic Affairs’ (OEA) Connecting Diverse Communities (CDC) project. Aligned to this is the government’s response to the UN’s Alliance of Civilizations report and high-level symposium, and the Ministry of Pacific Affairs’ (MPIA) *Ala Fou- New Pathways: Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand*.

### ***Diversity in New Zealand***

Almost 1 in 4 persons in New Zealand is overseas-born, one of the highest rates in the OECD, and 70% of our newcomers are from countries that are linguistically and culturally different from New Zealand. By 2021, 30% of New Zealand’s population is projected to be of non-European ethnicities. Furthermore, ethnic and religious diversity is increasing. The proportion of non-Christian religions in New Zealand more than doubled between 1991 and 2001, and our youth are more ethnically and culturally diverse than the older population.<sup>11</sup>

The proportion of Asian peoples (9.2%) in the 2006 census grew faster than any other ethnic category, and of these, the largest group identified as Chinese (41.6%). The number of Chinese increased 217% between 1991-2001; however, the Chinese community in New Zealand is diverse, including not only new migrants from a range of source countries and with different linguistic backgrounds, but also the more established and relatively assimilated Chinese community descended from nineteenth century migrants. There is evidence to suggest that factors such as employment, income and language fluency, which were identified as indicators of integration and social cohesion in MSD’s *Diverse Communities: Exploring the Refugee and Migrant Experiences*, vary significantly between local and overseas-born Chinese.<sup>2 3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cabinet Paper (2006). *Strengthening Relations between our Diverse Communities*.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Social Development. (2007). *Diverse Communities: Exploring the Refugee and Migrant Experience*.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics New Zealand (2002). *2001 Census: People born overseas*. Wellington: Information and Publishing Services, Statistics New Zealand.

Pacific peoples have enjoyed a special relationship with New Zealand due in part to geographical proximity and historical ties. After Maori and Asians, Pacific peoples, marked by multiple ethnicities, form the largest non-European ethnic group (6.9%). An increasing number of Pacific peoples are now born in New Zealand, and the majority are under 15 years.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, MPIA's *Ala Fou- New Pathways: Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand* identified building cultural confidence, achieving a positive sense of identity and supporting Pacific youth in attaining their aspirations for prosperity amongst their top strategic priorities.<sup>4</sup>

The Muslim population in New Zealand, though small, increased six fold between 1991 and 2006, and now constitutes 1% of the population. Only a minority of Muslims (23%) were born in New Zealand, but most of these (61%) are under 15 years old. The ethnic background of Muslims is mixed, although Indians (29%) and people from the Middle East (Arabs, Iranians and Iraqis, 23%) are the largest communities.<sup>2</sup> The integration of New Zealand's Muslim community is of great concern as there is some evidence that migrants from largely Muslim regions such as Somalia and the Middle East are viewed less favourably than those from other regions.<sup>5 6</sup> Furthermore, the Alliance of Civilizations High Level Symposium (hosted by the Prime Minister in May 2007), which discussed the "clash of Western and Muslim civilizations," recommended priority attention to youth, education, migration and media issues.

### **Research Plan and Objectives**

YVYC has brought together a research team from VUW's Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research (CACR) and Va'aomanu Pasifika (VP) to: 1) engage youth from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities and 2) understand their aspirations for social integration and the indicators and determinants of participation and success. The project has combined national and international research initiatives. On the international level it extends CACR's collaboration with the 13-nation International Comparative Study of Ethno-cultural Youth (ICSEY) to the study of Muslim youth. The project uses a survey methodology to examine factors such as ethnic and national identity, language use and proficiency, peer contacts, acculturation preferences, family values and adaptive outcomes such as school adjustment, behavioural problems, and life satisfaction. Prior to the commencement of YVYC, research had been undertaken with Chinese, Pacific and other migrant and ethnic youth along with their national Maori and New Zealand European peers. These findings were reported in the Ministry of Youth Development's seminar series in 2007.

The survey component of YVYC is complemented with in-depth qualitative approaches, including participatory action research with Chinese, Pacific and Muslim youth that address issues such as: 1) What are the indicators of participation and success for ethnic/Muslim youth? 2) How do ethnic/Muslim youth maintain social and cultural connectedness, construct their identities and negotiate issues pertaining to cultural maintenance and participation in the wider society? and 3) What strategies can be used to promote positive identity, capacity building and leadership within and between ethnic/Muslim communities?

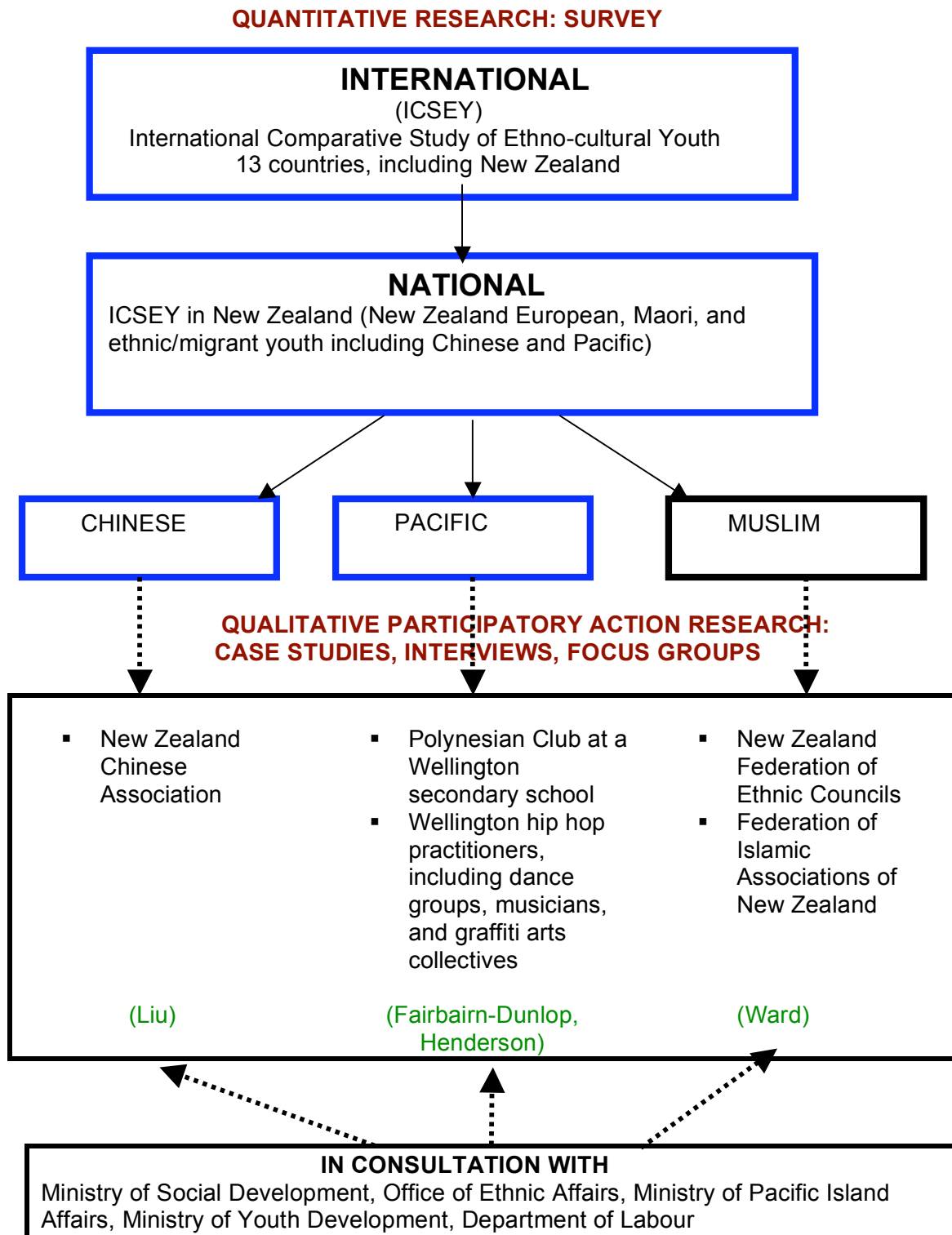
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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2005). *Ala Fou – New Pathways: Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand*.

<sup>5</sup> C. Ward & A.-M. Masgoret. (2008). Attitudes toward immigrants, immigration and multiculturalism in New Zealand. *International Migration Review*.42, 222-243.

<sup>6</sup> C. Ward, & A.-M. Masgoret (2005). *New Zealanders' Perceptions of and Interactions with International Students: A Community Survey*. Report to Education New Zealand.

**FIGURE 1  
YOUTH VOICES, YOUTH CHOICES: RESEARCH OVERVIEW**



Key:  Work completed prior to commencement of YVYC       FRST work

## IDENTITY, ACCULTURATION AND ADAPTATION IN CHINESE, PACIFIC AND MUSLIM YOUTH: SURVEY RESEARCH

### The International Comparative Study of Ethno-cultural Youth

Colleen Ward

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#### **Background**

The International Comparative Study of Ethno-cultural Youth is a 13-nation (Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States) project on Identity, Acculturation and Adaptation. The results of the international project have been published in *Immigrant Youth in Cultural Transition: Acculturation, Identity and Adaptation across National Contexts*, edited by John Berry, Jean Phinney, David Sam and Paul Vedder (Erlbaum, 2006).

The New Zealand component of the study was extended by Professor Colleen Ward so that survey data have been collected from 510 national youth (396 New Zealand Europeans and 114 Maori) and 935 immigrant youth (including 145 Chinese, 188 Koreans, 147 Samoans, 102 Indians, 111 Britons and 101 South Africans) aged 12-19 years.

#### **Method and Research Questions**

In addition to background information, the survey included measures of intercultural factors (such as ethnic and national identity, ethnic and national language usage, ethnic and national peer contact, family values and acculturation attitudes), perceived discrimination, and adaptation (psychological adaptation, including life satisfaction and psychological symptoms, and socio-cultural adaptation, including behavioural problems and school adjustment).

The research addressed three major questions:

1. HOW do immigrant youth live between and within two cultures?
2. HOW WELL do they adapt?
3. What is the relationship between HOW youth engage in intercultural relations and HOW WELL they adapt?

#### **Key Findings**

The research revealed that there were four major acculturation profiles; that is, ways in which migrant and ethnic youth balance pressures for the maintenance of their heritage culture and the challenges posed in connection with their participation in New Zealand society: Integrated, National, Ethnic and Diffuse.

INTEGRATED youth had strong ethnic and national identities, strong ethnic peer contacts, and good English language proficiency. They also endorsed integration as an acculturation strategy. This means that they favoured both the retention of their traditional culture and participation in the wider New Zealand society.

NATIONAL youth had a moderately strong national identity, but a weak ethnic identity. They were highly proficient in English and used it frequently at home.

National youth had strong national, but weak ethnic, peer contacts. They also rejected separation as an acculturation strategy.

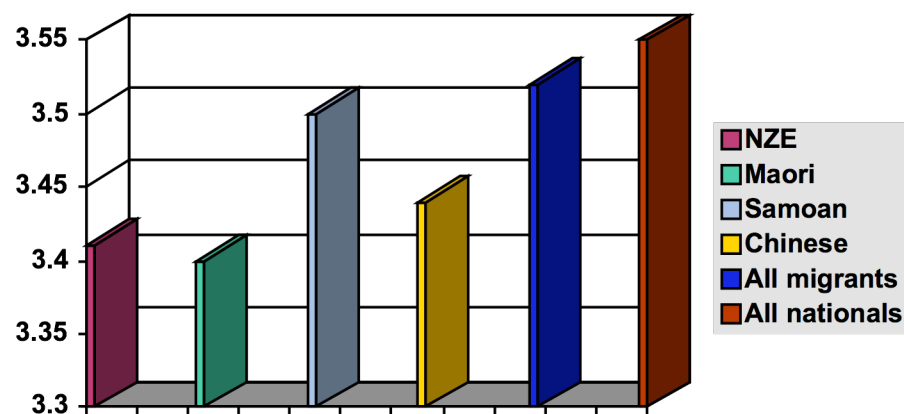
ETHNIC youth leaned more towards original culture. They had a moderately strong ethnic identity, but a weak national identity, strong ethnic peer contacts, but weak national peer contacts. Ethnic youth had poor English language proficiency, but good ethnic language proficiency.

DIFFUSE youth had poor English language proficiency, weak ethnic identity, and they endorsed separation, assimilation and marginalisation.

The research also revealed that there were systematic differences in the adaptation outcomes across integrated, national, ethnic and diffuse youth.

1. Integrated and National youth reported greater life satisfaction than Ethnic and Diffuse.
2. Diffuse youth displayed more psychological symptoms than all other groups.
3. Integrated and Ethnic youth reported fewer behavioural problems than National and Diffuse youth.
4. Diffuse youth reported poorer school adjustment than all other groups.

Finally, the findings indicated that immigrant youth adapted as well as or better in terms of life satisfaction, psychological symptoms, school adjustment and behavioural problems, than national youth. Furthermore, they do well despite visible immigrant groups experiencing more ethnic discrimination than New Zealand European youth.



**Figure 2 Life Satisfaction in Immigrant and National Youth**



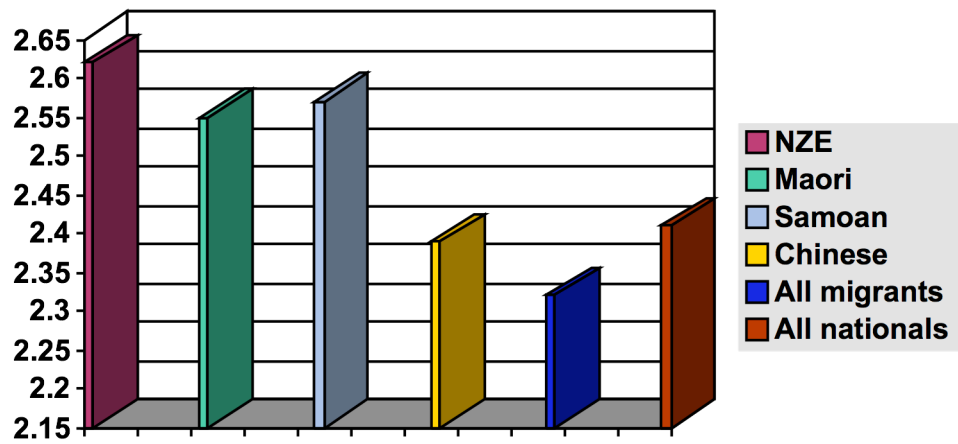


Figure 3 Psychological Symptoms in Immigrant and National Youth

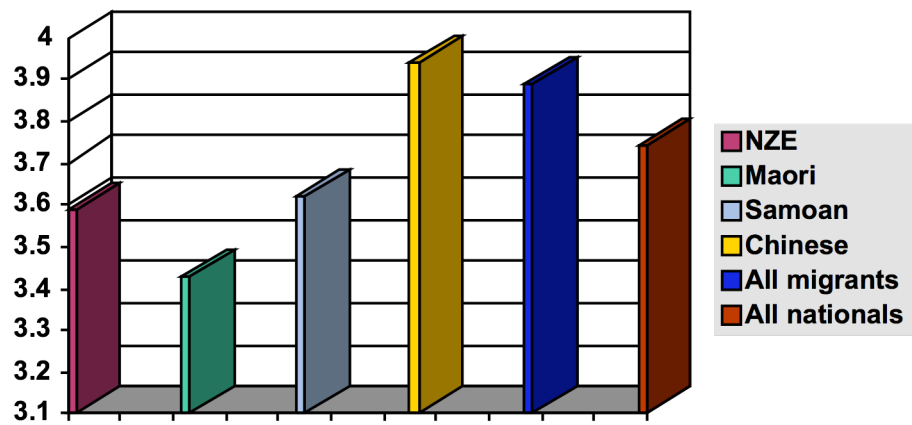
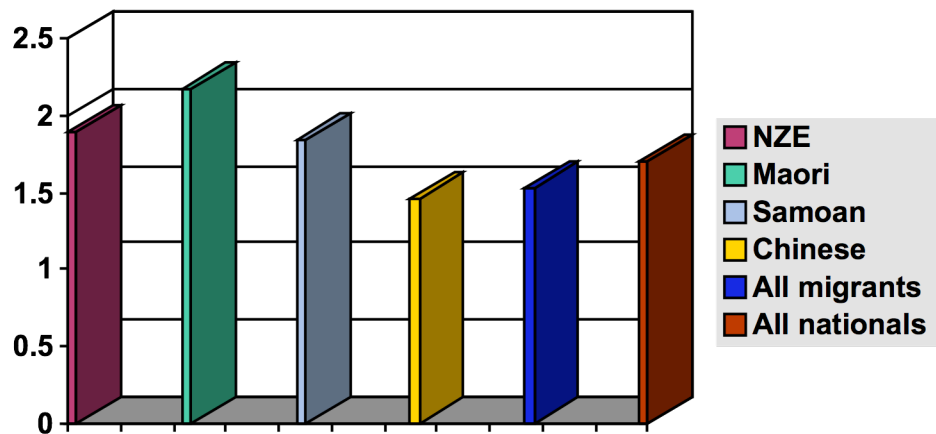


Figure 4 School Adjustment in Immigrant and National Youth



**Figure 5 Behavioural Problems in Immigrant and National Youth**

Figures 2-5 show comparisons of Chinese and Pacific youth with their New Zealand European and Maori peers. The figures also include comparative data from all immigrant and all national youth in the 13-nation ICSEY project. The New Zealand findings show that immigrant youth adapt as well or better in terms of life satisfaction, psychological symptoms, school adjustment and behavioural problems compared to national (Maori and Pakeha) youth. However, it can also be seen that on the indicators of psychological adaptation (life satisfaction and psychological symptoms), neither the immigrant nor national youth appear to do well when compared to youth in other countries. With respect to socio-cultural adaptation (school adjustment and behavioural problems), only the Chinese compare favourably with international youth.

A slide presentation entitled *Identity, Acculturation and Adaptation in Migrant Youth* with a fuller elaboration of these results as presented at the Ministry of Youth Development's Seminar series in 2007 can be retrieved from:  
[http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/powerpoint\\_doc/0016/3742/Ward-2007-Migrant-Youth.ppt](http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/__data/assets/powerpoint_doc/0016/3742/Ward-2007-Migrant-Youth.ppt).

## Identity, Acculturation and Adaptation in Muslim Youth

Colleen Ward

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### **Background**

The study extended the ICSEY research to examine how Muslim youth (age 13-19) preserve traditional values and practices while participating in the wider New Zealand society, how they negotiate issues pertaining to identity and how well that adapt socially and psychologically to life in New Zealand.

### **Method**

One hundred and eighty Muslim youth aged 13-19 years (72% overseas-born) from Asian (65%), African (23%) and Middle Eastern (7%) backgrounds completed a modified version of the International Comparative Study of Ethno-cultural Youth (ICSEY) survey. The survey assessed identity (Muslim, ethnic, New Zealand), social support (from family and friends), family coherence, peer contacts, perceived discrimination, and adaptation: life satisfaction, psychological symptoms, school adjustment and behavioural problems.

### **Key Findings**

Although our research on attitudes toward immigrants has shown that New Zealanders have more negative perceptions of Muslim immigrants than those of other faiths, Muslim youth reported moderately low levels of discrimination on a personal basis; they were, however, more likely to acknowledge discrimination against other Muslims (Table 1).

**Table 1 Perceived Discrimination in Muslim Youth**

	% agreement
I don't feel accepted by New Zealanders.	8
I have been teased or insulted because of my background.	25
I have been threatened or attacked because of my background.	8
Others have behaved in an unfair way towards people of my background.	39

Other key findings include:

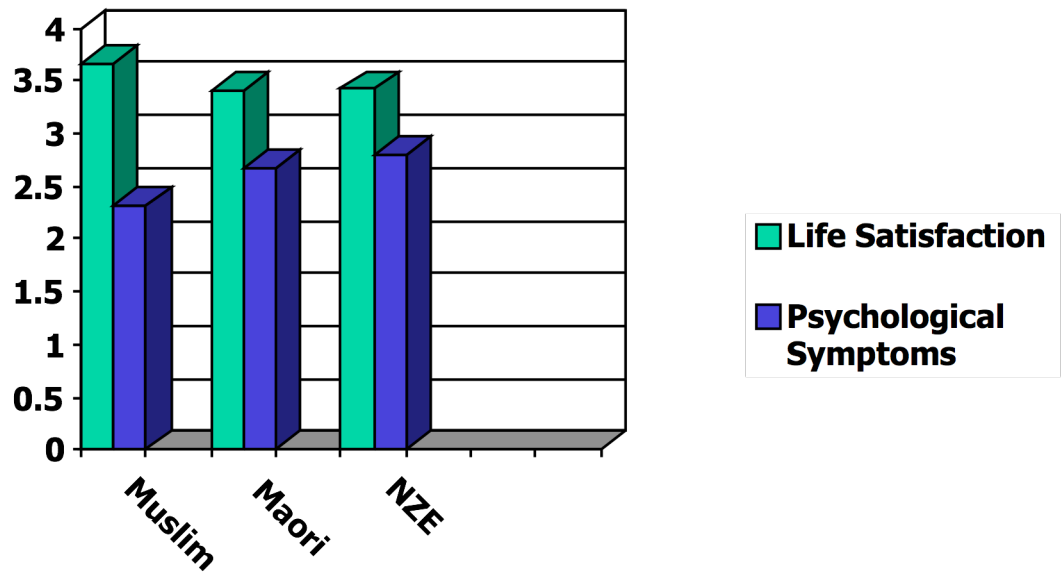
- Muslim youth are most likely to engage with other Muslims from the same ethnic background. They also have stronger peer contacts with Muslims than non-Muslims
- Although religious, ethnic and national identities are all strong in Muslim youth, Muslim identity is stronger than ethnic identity and New Zealand identity.
- 85% of Muslim youth are integrated, meaning that they had a strong Muslim identity and a strong identity as New Zealanders.

- Strong Muslim identity and engagement in Muslim practices are associated with greater life satisfaction, better school adjustment, less antisocial behaviour and fewer symptoms of psychological distress in Muslim youth.
- Muslim identity also buffers the negative impact of discrimination on life satisfaction (Figure 6). Specifically, discrimination is associated with a significant decrease in life satisfaction for those who have a weak Muslim identity. However, discrimination does not significantly impact the life satisfaction of Muslim youth who have a moderately or very strong Muslim identity.
- National (New Zealand) identity is unrelated to adaptive outcomes.
- New Zealand-born Muslim youth reported more behavioural problems than their overseas-born peers.
- Family coherence and support from both family members and friends are associated with better social and psychological outcomes for youth.
- Muslim youth see their religion as being a more frequent source of discrimination than their ethnicity. They are also more likely to report unfair treatment of members of their group than personal discrimination.
- Although the frequency of perceived discrimination is moderately low, it is associated with poor adaptation outcomes.
- Muslim youth adapt well to life in New Zealand and report greater life satisfaction, fewer behavioural problems, better school adjustment and fewer symptoms of psychological distress than both Maori and Pakeha youth (Figure 7).



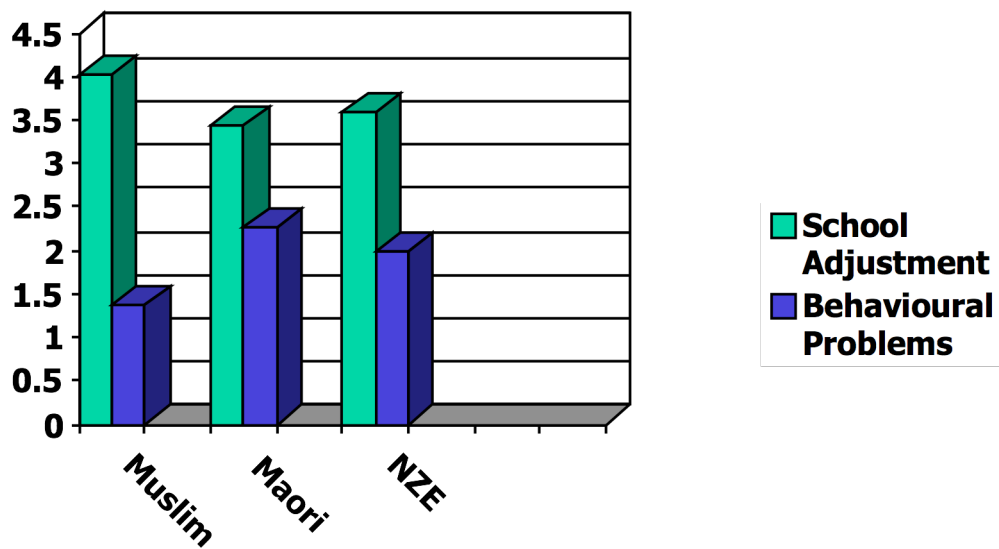
**Figure 6 Muslim Identity as a Buffer of the Negative Impact of Discrimination on Life Satisfaction**

Finally, Figures 7 and 8 compare the psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of Muslim youth with their Maori and Pakeha peers.<sup>7</sup> Analysis indicates that Muslim youth have higher levels of life satisfaction, fewer psychological symptoms, better school adjustment and fewer behavioural problems than comparative samples of both Maori and Pakeha youth.



**Figure 7 Psychological Adaptation in Muslim, New Zealand European and Maori Youth**

<sup>7</sup> These measures were shortened versions of the original scales. Consequently, comparisons can be made on the basis of common items with New Zealand Maori and Pakeha, but the results cannot be compared with the full scale results reported earlier in the 13-nation ICSEY project.



**Figure 8 Socio-cultural Adaptation in Muslim, New Zealand European and Maori Youth**

In conclusion, the findings point to the positive outcomes of a strong Muslim identity and indicate that Muslim youth fare well compared to their Maori and Pakeha peers.

These findings, along with related research on attitudes toward Muslim immigrants and the experiences of Muslim youth, were presented at the CACR-OEA Seminar Series in 2009. The presentation, entitled Youth Voices, Youth Choices: On being Muslim in New Zealand can be found at:

[http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/powerpoint\\_doc/0004/3748/Ward-Stuart-2010-Muslim-in-NZ-presentation.ppt](http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/__data/assets/powerpoint_doc/0004/3748/Ward-Stuart-2010-Muslim-in-NZ-presentation.ppt)

## COMMUNITY RESEARCH WITH PACIFIC, CHINESE AND MUSLIM YOUTH

### Connectedness and Identity in a Multiethnic 'Community of Interest'

April K. Henderson

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#### **Background and Research Objectives**

The Ministry of Social Development defines culture as the “customs, practices, languages, values and world views that define social groups such as those based on nationality, ethnicity, religion or common interests.”<sup>8</sup> This portion of the project complements the other components by qualitatively examining concepts of culture and identity as they are expressed by younger and older members of a “community of interest”—an ethnically and religiously diverse group of people that have developed strong senses of connectedness through shared participation in activities that interest them. While ethno-cultural identity remains a key aspect and indicator of many young peoples’ integration and participation in New Zealand society, this research sheds light on other aspects of self-identification and sense of belonging that also contribute significantly to young people’s societal participation—especially the formation of enduring relationships and sense of connection to fellow participants of diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic, generational, educational, and gender backgrounds.

#### **Methods**

The community of interest chosen for this research was what the primary researcher identifies as the Wellington hip hop community. This group was chosen based on the researcher’s previous doctoral research and the access to a broad range of participants that this previous research afforded. The forty participants’ self-identified ethnic backgrounds included, in whole or in combination: Samoan, Maori, Fijian, Tongan, Greek, pakeha, Filipino, Cambodian, Malawian, Chinese, Indian, Scots-Irish, Chilean, and Brazilian. Some participants, primarily of European descent, also chose to identify simply as ‘New Zealander.’ All are or were active participants in popular music, dance, or visual art practices commonly associated with hip hop culture, and either reside or have previously resided in Wellington. These included practitioners of a variety of “street” or “urban” dance forms (b boying, also called breakdancing; popping; locking; and choreographed urban dance) and aerosol art or graffiti, and those involved in the production and performance of hip hop music (emcees/rappers, deejays, producers, managers, fans). There were twenty-seven males, twelve females, and one participant who identified as transgender.<sup>9</sup> Ages ranged from eleven to over forty years of age. Educational background ranged from active students and school leavers with no formal qualifications to those who had completed postgraduate study. In terms of occupation, participants included those whose primary form of income derives from their art form—including several nationally or internally recognized performing artists—to people working in retail, social services, the health sector, media and entertainment industries, the non-profit sector, and an

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Social Development (2009). *The Social Report 2009*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

<sup>9</sup> This study chose to concentrate primarily on active artists. The disproportionate number of male to female participants reflects the greater representation of males as active artists within hip hop art forms. Had the study had the time or resources to extend the research to a greater number of people who participate as fans, supporters, facilitators, and event organizers, this imbalance could have been rectified.

employee of a government ministry. The diversity of the sample deserves noting, as it defies common perceptions about the type of people involved in hip hop culture.

The research sample was evenly divided between an older group (25 years and older) and a younger group (under 24 years). The older group ranged from 25–45 years of age, while the younger group ranged from 11–24 years of age.<sup>10</sup> The inclusion of both young people and adults in the study allowed for a useful comparison of data; a comprehensive picture of the attachments, relationships, opportunities, and challenges experienced by the older participants in the community may indicate future directions for the young people actively involved now. Additionally, inclusion of this wider age range of participants enabled some aspects of intergenerational connectedness—such as mentoring—to be approached more thoroughly in the research.

Methods of data collection included semi-structured, open-ended interviews; focus groups; and participant observation at public events, as well as a review of relevant literature. For the interviews, a question schedule was devised to prompt detailed commentary and reflection on 1) the participant's background, 2) the history and nature of their participation in their art form and its effects on their lives, 3) their sense of community and connectedness, and 4) their sense of racial, ethnic, gendered, and generational diversity within their community.

Methods of data collection differed for the two age groups but remained closely grounded in the question schedule in both cases. The older group participated in digitally-recorded individual interviews with the primary researcher (in several cases these also included the research assistant), responding directly to the open-ended questions in the question schedule. Differing degrees of participant elaboration meant that the duration of these interviews varied from 40 minutes, at the shortest, to just over three hours in several cases, with many interviews taking around 90 minutes.

For the younger group of participants, the interview question schedule was adapted into a variety of focus group activities, drawing upon the youth development expertise of the research assistant and reflecting the need to utilise a variety of approaches to ensure robust information from young people. The size of these focus groups varied from two to six people, and they for ran approximately three hours each. Activities included: a visual brainstorm session, where participants wrote down all of the things they associated with their art form; a physical continuum, where participants responded to questions by physically placing themselves on a wall-length continuum which ranged from an absolutely affirmative response on one end to an absolutely negative response on the other; visual timelines, where participants visually graphed their history of participation in their art form and all of the key people, events, places and formative moments they associated with that history; a sticker wall, where participants responded substantively to questions on sticky notes that they affixed to the corresponding questions on the wall; and discussion pairs, where participants drew question cards and discussed their individual responses. During each activity, the primary researcher and research assistant prompted participants to verbally elaborate on their verbal and written responses to these activities. All verbal responses were digitally recorded and written material collected for analysis. Additionally, participants individually completed surveys adapted from the adult

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<sup>10</sup> While the research did not initially intend to include participants as young as 11, the 11-year-old was a special case who has grown up as a recognized member of the community by virtue of his parents' significant involvement. He was accompanied in his focus group by his 24-year-old sister. All other young people in the study were between 15–24 years of age.



interview schedule—these served as an additional resource to cross-check activity responses and ensure robust data.

Generally, the primary researcher and research assistant found participants to be very enthusiastic about participating in the research, and received a great deal of informal feedback on how participants had enjoyed or valued their sessions (whether individual interviews or focus groups). The researchers' sense is that participants genuinely valued the opportunity to discuss and reflect more deeply on their participation in activities that they have strong attachments to, and appreciated the researchers' willingness to take that participation seriously and treat their experiences with respect.

### **Key Research Findings**

While research participants came from a wide variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and were diverse in terms of gender and age, their responses evidenced startling consistency on a range of key points, with between 80–100% of the research sample voicing similar views on these points in the individual interviews and focus groups. Participants strongly agreed that:

#### *Hip Hop Culture Embraces Diversity*

Participants strongly felt that participating in hip hop culture, or in any of its individual components (“elements”) such as b boying, visual art, or music, fosters the development of sense of connection to other participants.

Further, respondents believe that participating in hip hop culture, or in any of its individual components, brings people of diverse backgrounds together (100% of participants agreed on this point). As one Filipino participant in his late-teens asserted (and the four pakeha members of his youth focus group adamantly affirmed),

*I think hip hop transcends borders...[if you] go to America or wherever and you look at people at hip hop events—I mean pure ones—you see people of different races, creeds, religions, all in one place, and they all share one thing. Be it dancing, emceeing, graffitiing, deejaying—they all have that same mentality....they may have all these problems at home, but they can go to that venue, or that location, and they can go meet people who are like-minded. They may hate each other outside of that arena, but when they get into, y'know, dancing, they respect each and it's just mutual respect.*

Such sentiments were strongly expressed by adult interviewees as well. A 29-year-old respondent primarily of Cambodian descent (with Chinese and French) offered the following anecdote:

*It's a culture that is un-ethnic specific, to me. I remember going to Egypt in 2002 for a conference that I attended on youth employment, and I had some down time, so I kinda fished out the hip hop community there while I was there and I was able to hook up with some b boys that were breaking, y know. And this was a completely non-Western environment, and they were listening to hip hop and speaking Arabic. And I couldn't communicate with them [verbally], but we put a break on the radio and we could jam and we were doing instant communication even though they couldn't speak English. And the same thing happened in Germany, and in Indonesia as well: looking for people that had*

*that common language, and we could communicate without speaking English or that common verbal language.*

Participants also strongly agreed that ethnic background does not matter if one wants to participate in hip hop or in any of its individual components in Wellington.

#### *Hip Hop Culture Fosters Senses of Community*

According to all respondents, the term “community” is an appropriate word to describe the group of people connected through shared participation in hip hop culture in Wellington, though a statistically significant percentage of participants independently stated that they often use the term “family” or other metaphors of kinship instead of the term “community.”

Further, participants noted that a sense of connectedness through hip hop can and often does extend to people from other geographic regions locally, nationally, and internationally, and can prompt and facilitate the development of connections and relationships across geographic regions through recognition of shared interests. A range of concrete examples were offered and included both social and professional relationships that participants believed to be of value and importance to them.

Notably, the ability of hip hop participation to foster enduring connections across geographic space (across suburbs, between cities) was seen by some participants to work *against* the formation of gangs; in Wellington, initiatives such as the series of “Welli Deep” concerts (running semi-regularly since 2008) have fostered peaceful collaboration and coexistence among artists with familial ties to historically-opposed established gangs. One participant noted how “getting into hip hop” heavily in his teens was an alternative path to the gang involvement of peers in his neighbourhood.

#### *Hip Hop Culture is Participant-Driven and Positively Impacts Participants’ Lives*

Part of participants’ attraction to hip hop culture, or one of its constituent art forms, was their sense that it was a culture that they had the power to shape and interpret. While participants recognised that some aspects of hip hop had become commercialised, they still felt that they had the ability to practice their own version and interpretation of hip hop art forms. Many participants voiced sentiments similar to this statement by a pakeha b boy in his early 20s, who linked his appreciation and participation in b boying to its “rawness.”

Respondents unequivocally believed that participating in hip hop culture or in one of its individual components has positively impacted their lives in a material, emotional, and/or physical way and contributed to their sense of well-being:

- An almost unanimous example given across age groups was participants’ development of greater confidence as result of engaging in hip hop art forms, whether it be b boying, urban dance, deejaying or emceeing, or developing and executing aerosol art pieces. This confidence was linked to a community of critique seen to exist for hip hop artists: by planning and executing a performance or artwork, artists voluntarily subjected themselves to critique and subsequently learned to handle critique more effectively, and to respond to it by continuing to develop themselves and improve their art;
- Related to the preceding point, both older and younger participants also unanimously referred to senses of pleasure, pride, fulfilment and satisfaction associated with their participation. A statistically significant number went into further detail, noting that the inverse of such moments

of joy or satisfaction were the unavoidable moments of frustration and embarrassment when they could not execute a performance or art piece to the standard that they wanted, but these participants all ultimately highlighted the educational value of such moments, as they taught perseverance and dedication and fostered resilience. One Brazilian member of a youth focus group, a dancer, described this as “overcoming hurdles.”

*Overcoming hurdles, with either injuries, or if someone stops dancing, or if you can't do a move or something—just, kind of, getting over it.*

- Further, participants often noted that practicing their hip hop art form, whether individually or with others, provided a form of physical and/or emotional release or stress relief. Describing his participation in b boy “ciphers,” or dance circle, one pakeha b boy in his early 20s likened this release to “meditation.”

*It's like meditation; it's like you go to a certain place where you're not thinking like how you normally think...that central part of the cipher that people love, where there's no head noise, there's no junk—it's just, you're just like, yep, you're free.*

A very similar description was offered by a Samoan member of another focus group in his late teens. A practitioner of a range of urban dance styles, he asserted:

*[When you're dancing] you're like in a totally different mind set. You dance, and everything in the outside world becomes non-existent. It's like, that hour or two hours when you're in the studio, with your best mates, it's like letting go.*

These sentiments were strongly affirmed by the young Samoan's fellow focus group members of Brazilian and mixed Fijian and European descent, with the Brazilian member—in her early 20s—interjecting:

*You can just be yourself, because you know the people you're dancing with and you don't have to be 'safe' or anything.*

- Additional individual examples of the positive benefits of hip hop involvement included older participants citing their participation as either directly or indirectly leading to their current employment, and/or enhancing their on-the-job performance; both older and younger participants discussing how hip hop fosters the formation of enduring friendships and networks of support that extended beyond hip hop-related activities; hip hop offering opportunities for remuneration and travel for many older and even some younger participants; for participants across a range of ages, the garnering of attention, appreciation and respect of friends and strangers and the garnering of attention from the opposite sex; and the facilitation of opportunities to meet established and international artists who they admire.

### *Hip Hop Culture Has Not Negatively Impacted Participants' Lives*

Participating in hip hop or in one of its individual components has not negatively impacted participants' lives in any way, according to the participants themselves.

When pressed on this point, some older participants acknowledged that they could have led different lives had they not chosen to dedicate so much of their time, resources, and energy to their involvement in hip hop, but not a single participant indicated that they would decrease their involvement if given the opportunity to go back and live their lives all over again;

*While Participation in Hip Hop Culture Can Occur Individually, Sense of Community is Fostered when Spaces and Places are Available for Group Participation*

Participants agreed that the availability of both informal and formal spaces and contexts for gathering had been important to the development of their personal sense of connection to other hip hop participants. The specific types of informal environments noted by participants included domestic lounges and garages; public parks; public or church community halls; and other indoor and outdoor gathering places. More formalized environments included organized events and competitions, such as the Wellington City Council-sponsored annual Summer City b boy (breakdance) event “Bodyrock,” and workshops with New Zealand-based and international artists. Thus, while people could participate in the art forms as individuals—such as dancing, drawing, writing lyrics or listening to music alone, for example—the development and nurturing of their sense of connectedness and community required opportunities for face-to-face contact.

*Relationships Between Hip Hop Cultural Identity and Ethnic Cultural Identity are Complex and Varied*

Additionally, a key aspect of these research findings is that senses of identity and cultural belonging for young people are not solely nor exclusively tied to *ethnic* identity or *ethnic* culture. While other components of the *Youth Voices, Youth Choices* project indicate that a well-developed, well-integrated sense of ethnic cultural identity can contribute positively to young people’s sense of connectedness and well-being, this study indicates that young people are also capable of fashioning a functioning, healthy, and well-integrated identity based on a popular cultural form in which they actively participate. In some cases, this self-fashioned hip hop identity was formed as an alternative to a strong ethnic identity because participants did not feel they had sufficient knowledge of or experience in the ethnic culture (for example, New Zealand-raised Samoan or part-Samoan participants who did not attend Samoan churches and had limited Samoan language skills, or urban Maori with limited Maori language skills and no sense of connection to a marae); notably, when asked for this study “What ethnicity do you identify with?,” two adult male respondents of mixed European/Maori and European/African backgrounds, respectively, deliberately chose to identify themselves first as “B boy.”

The salience of hip hop as part of the culture of participants was poignantly and humourously illustrated in an anecdote from another respondent, a male in his late-20s of mixed Samoan and European ancestry. He recounted how, in college, he and two other Samoan friends entered the youth music competition Smokefree Pacifika Beats with their original rap composition:

*I think it was the first year [of the competition]...we didn't make the actual night, but we got a good review and they sent us free tickets and stuff. They just said that the only problem was [our performance] wasn't "cultural": They said what culture are you representing and all I put was hip hop!*

In this example, the presumption that young people of Pacific Islands descent would identify first and foremost with their ethnic culture was at odds with how this young

man chose to identify the culture he intended to represent. Another anecdote from this same respondent added an additional layer of complexity to the relationship between his ethnic and popular culture identities. He relayed that, as an “afakasi” (half-caste) teenager, his participation in hip hop had given him some “cool” status and credibility that enabled him to hang out with the “full-blood” Samoan boys, when his lack of Samoan language skills and fair complexion might have otherwise made him shunned. In this instance, it was his participation in hip hop that helped facilitate a sense of community and connection with Samoan peers.

However, it was certainly not the case for all participants in this sample that hip hop was standing in or substituting for an ethnic identification. For others, their hip hop identity functioned as an additional and even complementary facet to a strong sense of ethnic identity. This was the case for one Fijian participant in his late-20s: born in Fiji, a fluent speaker of Fijian, and a regular attendee of a Fijian-language church. He strongly affirmed his feeling that he was part of a Fijian community in Wellington and described his participation in b boying and urban dance as complementary to his Fijian and other Pacific community activities. He cited examples such as performing hip hop dance at church and community fund-raisers, and related that members of his Fijian community were supportive of his dance, especially after witnessing the positive benefits of the discipline and dedication the dance required:

*They saw that it was good. They saw how, the difference it's done; like, instead of [me] going astray, they saw the difference that it's made*

A Samoan female participant and a Samoan/pakeha male participant both cited their involvement in hip hop as encouraging them to want to learn more about their Samoan cultural heritage—they linked hip hop culture's emphasis on acknowledging origins and getting “schooled up” on one's history to their desire to learn more about not just their hip hop culture, but their ethnic culture as well. After years of participating in various aspects of hip hop culture, both enrolled in Samoan language adult education courses in 2009.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

The key stakeholder for this portion of the YVYC research is Global Focus Aotearoa (GFA, formerly known as The Global Education Centre), a non-profit entity with experience overseeing youth development projects, and especially those utilising an “interest-based learning” model; that is, a youth development model that builds on young people's existing interests to promote healthy personal development and social engagement and participation. The primary researcher liaised regularly with GFA staff in the early stages of developing the young peoples' portion of the research project. It was initially expected that GFA would be subcontracted to assist with the planning and implementation of the youth focus groups, but restructuring and staffing constraints at the organization necessitated an alternative arrangement, where a GFA staff member was instead contracted in an individual capacity as a research assistant.

Additional stakeholders in this portion of the research include the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Youth Development, and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. For the latter, special reportage is planned which highlights the responses of the dozen participants of Pacific Islands descent, as well as the additional eight who are Maori. It is envisaged that this report will shed light on how members of these ethnic groups are forming a strong sense of connection with each other as well as members of other ethnic groups through their shared participation in hip hop.

### **Concluding Comments**

The *Youth Voices, Youth Choices* project contributes to understandings of diversity through detailed examination of young peoples' integration and participation in society, and their sense of connectedness and well-being. While the other portions of the project focus on particular religious (Muslim), ethnic (Chinese; Samoan), or pan-ethnic (Pasifika) groups, this component of the project investigates how young people from a broad array of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds come together and form enduring senses of connection with each other through shared participation in activities that they love and value. They are united, not by the culture or religion that they are born into, but by the culture that they have chosen for themselves. Importantly, one of the most compelling aspects of this culture, noted by many participants in this research, is their feeling that they have more ability to shape and contribute to it; it has not been handed to them by parents or elders as if it is a fully formed thing to which they must conform.

Overall, the findings that emerged from this research overwhelmingly indicated the potential for diverse groups of people to form a significant and lasting sense of connection through shared interest and participation in popular culture activities. While the researcher specifically enquired about the applicability of the term "community" to describe these self-fashioned groupings, the research participants themselves often independently volunteered a much stronger metaphorical term, "family," in addition to affirming the suitability of "community." Participants clearly valued and attributed a range of material, emotional and physical benefits to their participation, indicating that such participation contributes significantly to indicators of well-being for those involved.

The degree of connectedness and cohesion evidenced by the people interviewed for this study was remarkable. It is possible that some of this cohesion owes to Wellington's unique geography, which might foster more interaction and connection across suburbs than in other urban metropolitan areas in New Zealand. Another possible contributing factor—suggested by the interview and focus group data—is that the Wellington City Council has intentionally (and perhaps unintentionally) helped foster senses of community through their support of specific annual large scale events (particularly the annual b boy competition Bodyrock, which has for some years been included as part of the Council's Summer City programme of events), as well as through smaller-scale gatherings (the now defunct Culture Jams that were once hosted by the Council's Youth team), and their overt or tacit approval for legal graffiti walls at the redesigned Waitangi Park and at its predecessor, Chaffers Park. Both younger and older participants cited these spaces, places, and events as significant in terms of establishing and nourishing human connections with others involved in their art forms, as well as giving them safe and legitimate fora for self-expression, where they could receive encouragement and appreciation from both peers and interested passers-by. Based upon the rich and consistent data collected during this research, it is clear that both local and national governmental bodies can and should nurture the healthy and positive benefits and outcomes for young people's participation in hip hop, rather than risk isolating and alienating youth by discounting a culture that is important to them.

## Pacific Youth Connecting through 'Poly'<sup>11</sup>

Tagaloa Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop

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### **Background**

The Pacific component of the *Youth Voices, Youth Choices* project explores a) how Pacific youth construct their identities and negotiate issues relating to cultural maintenance and participation in the wider New Zealand society and, more specifically, b) how youth participation in Polynesian and cultural clubs (school and /or community) promotes positive identity, integration, leadership, and social and cultural connectedness for Pacific youth. The rationale for this focus is that participation in Pacific cultural club activities (customs, practices, language, values and world views) builds in youth a sense of self esteem, belonging, and well being and is positively related to school achievement.<sup>12</sup>

The research focus was determined by a number of factors. First, New Zealand's Pacific population is a rapidly growing one - projections are that by 2021 the Pacific population will form 9% of the total population, an increase from 7% in 2001 and a percentage increase of 59%, and that by 2026, New Zealanders of Pacific descent will be one in eight of 15-39 year olds.<sup>13</sup> The Pacific population is also youthful, hence the importance of documenting the youth voice, and diverse, featuring over 20 Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesia cultures and an even greater number of languages.<sup>14</sup> Adding to this diversity is the fact that 54% of the newborn children of Pacific ethnicity are of multiple ethnicities: 42% of families have at least one partner of non-Pacific identity.<sup>15</sup> Views are that this trend potentially helps bridge ethnic divides and encourage interaction between different ethnic groups. Finally, although most often viewed as 'migrants,' over 58% of Pacific people are now New Zealand born and may never have been to their homeland.

Second is the fact that Pacific peoples' high rates of participation in secondary schooling have not been matched by sound educational outcomes. This is serious, given that secondary school qualifications set the foundation for life-long learning, employment opportunities, access to tertiary education, and social and economic participation<sup>16</sup>. The fact that Pacific female students are achieving better educational outcomes than males<sup>17</sup> reinforces the focus on male youth in this study.

The *Ala Fou* Report of *New Pathways: Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand* (MPIA 2005) notes:

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<sup>11</sup> Polynesian Clubs in many schools are affectionately known as 'poly'

<sup>12</sup> Purkey, W. (1970). *Self concept and school achievement*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

<sup>13</sup> Dr Colin Tukuitonga, CEO of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, personal communication 2009

<sup>14</sup> Median age of 21.0 years compared with European population of 36.8 years

<sup>15</sup> Cook 1999:9-10

<sup>16</sup> After three years of senior secondary schooling, comparatively low proportions of Pasifika candidates have a level 3 qualification and/ or UE (Education Counts: Pacifica Achievement Engagement and Choice). Pasifika are more likely to gain an NCEA qualification with a lower number of credits from achievement standards than non-Pasifika students.

[www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika\\_ed](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika_ed)

<sup>17</sup> Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (2010). He's won, but he's lost it: Applying a Samoa gender lens to education outcomes. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*. <http://www.worldcat.org/issn/1177-1801>.

The issues of Pacific self-identity and cultural preservation have emerged as key issues for Pacific people, particularly for Pacific youth. For some second-generation Pacific peoples, the bonds of Pacific culture are not as strong or dominant and have resulted in a loss or weakening of Pacific identity, particularly for those of mixed marriages, who increasingly do not identify as Pacific. This has implications in terms of cultural and language preservation, Pacific identity and traditional Pacific values.

### ***Stakeholder Engagement***

The school community (teachers, parents and students) were the main stakeholders in this project and our shared discussions added considerably to the knowledge base for this project. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs was the other main stakeholder along with the Ministry of Education, and, Ministry of Youth, and the Wellington City Council, which promotes and organizes the annual Tu Tangata Festival. The Wellington City Council works with teachers from the eight Wellington schools to ensure a quality standard' in fact, organizers visit schools beforehand to ensure this will happen. The Festival is not competitive.

### ***Methods***

The Polynesian Club chosen for this study is at a boys State Secondary School in Wellington with a decile 6 rating. Thirty-six percent of the school roll of 650 (2009) were New Zealand European and 4% were Maori. Other main ethnic groups were 21% Pacific (Samoan 15%, Tongan, 4%, other Pacific 2%); 9% Chinese, and 9% Indian,<sup>18</sup> indicating a very culturally diverse school community. The school has a Pacific programme, the motto of which is '*o le ala i le pule o le tautua*' (service is the pathway to leadership), and the Polynesian Club and club related activities are the main drivers of this programme. The Polynesian Club itself has been active for almost 25 years.<sup>19</sup> It has a reputation for setting a high standard in Wellington's annual Tu Tangata Festival, which is the showcase for Polynesian talent, and, according to one of the students, '*a main reason why I join the club*'. Samoan Studies is an option at the school and Polynesian Dance was introduced as an NCEA subject in 2004 at unit standard level.

A mixed methodology was used for this study which included a semi-structured and open ended group meeting with twelve year 12 and 13 students followed by individual interviews with 10 of these students over a one year period ending in March 2010. All participants were members of the Polynesian Club during the study year and the age range was 16-18 years (see Appendix A).<sup>20</sup> The sample group of 90% Samoan students and one of Cook Island-Maori descent reflected the club membership. In addition, participant observation was carried out at Polynesian Club practices, sleepovers (as the Tu Tangata Festival drew closer), parents' and community meetings, sports days and rugby matches, and the Wellington section of the national Choral Club Competition, which these students entered 'for the first time ever.' Finally, interviews were carried out with teachers, and the school principal supported the study by disaggregating the school data of Pacific student participation by those who attended the Polynesian club and those who did not. An interview schedule of questions used in this study included a) family background and migration

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<sup>18</sup> ERO report January 2010.

<sup>19</sup> These include a weekly homework centre, book club, career evenings and Samoan Parents' Association.

<sup>20</sup> Three of the ten students interviewed had not joined the club in their first three years of school (years 9-11) because their parents thought this would distract them from study.



experience, b) the nature and extent of student participation in the Polynesian Club and related activities and, school activities generally, and c) feelings about community connectedness and future aspirations.

Students reported that they had been challenged by the discussions and especially in reflecting on the differences in their lives and the lives of their parents. The students' views are captured in these comments:

*Not financially wealthy... For the ones who came down first, like my mum and uncles... they kind of had to suffer from that...being in an environment that doesn't really help their generation. So that's where I come in really. They didn't have a chance. I'm trying to do well.*

### **Key Research Findings**

In reporting these findings, prominence has been given to the youth voice:

#### *Identity and Sense of Belonging*

These students identified very strongly, and somewhat uncompromisingly, with their Pacific ethnicity. They defined themselves as: full Samoan (5), NZ Samoan (2), Samoan (2), Afakasi *half caste* 1, PI (1), 'Samoan German English (1), and Cook Island-Maori (1). For this group, language was desirable but not central to being a Samoan / Cook Island Maori. Nor was a trip to the homeland - four of this group had been to the homeland. However, each student was able to recount quite meticulously the family stories of the homeland and the family migration journeys. Comments indicated that these youth were being socialized into the faaSamoa / Cook Island / and Pacific way by their family members and their family and church experiences. For example, four said it had been their grannies (who had come to live with them in New Zealand) who had taught them the language and the faaSamoa. Just as clear, however, was that the school's Poly club had also become a key institution for learning and reinforcing the faaSamoa in New Zealand today:

*I didn't know much... my parents are always working... my granny was the one that always taught me that... really learning.*

*Yes, especially my dance. I've always been interested in the faaSamoa and I've learnt a lot... my parents really wanted me to learn, especially the dancing.*

*Quality (my parents) heard from our friends that Rongotai is a high quality club. Always a high standard. So, they send me to this school and they make me join.*

Two points warrant further research. First, there is a likelihood that the faaSamoa these youth identify with is one that has been constructed in New Zealand and that school Polynesian clubs are helping fashion this process. Second, while prominence in Samoa is usually accorded to the village (nuu) over nation as a main identity marker, these youth identified mainly with the nation or 'being Samoan.'<sup>21</sup> Findings

<sup>21</sup> See Macpherson, C., & Macpherson, L. (2009). *The warm winds of change: Globalisation in contemporary Samoa*. Auckland: Auckland University Press. Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (1991). *I au le inailau a tamaitai: Women, education and development, Western Samoa*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Macquarie University.

were that a significant number of this group of students did not know or identify with a family village.

### *The Polynesian Club or, Poly*

Participation in Poly activities– as a performer, member of the band or leader - was an important part of 'being Pacific' at this school. Views were that it had become the norm for Pacific boys to join and that 'Poly' was almost a school tradition and rite of passage today. Club membership ranged from 70 upwards, which is a very large group to work with, and was open to all students from years 9-13.

Three inter-related themes as to why youth joined the club emerged: the Poly club stood for feelings of brotherhood (however this was defined), it reinforced understandings of 'who I am,' and it focussed on people and relationships and 'what Pacific means.' For some also, Poly was the only reason they came to school:

*Poly is the only thing that keeps me coming to school... and then when I come to school I do my school work... go to classes. Just for me ... poly is a big thing. It's the boys, the teacher, the brothers, just being together.*

*Just the sense of belonging ... in the club... just being able to really be a part of something at school, part of the spirit and the adrenalin of being with your peers.*

*Encouraging you to come to school... do the right thing... a lot of us by the 7<sup>th</sup> form it's hard to keep coming to school every day and on time.... I reckon it's the boys – another reason that I come to school.. They mean a lot to you. If you don't come to school, you won't see the boys..*

### *Brotherhood.*

The club activities and the ways in which these were organized built strong feelings of brotherhood, working together, relying on each other, and everyone pulling together and doing their part to ensure a complete performance, which was 'bigger than just us:'

*Everyone says brotherhood... that's the big word around here. But it's more than that... not sure how I'd discuss it... but it's part of me...precious.*

*The most obvious answer is that we all like to do the performance at the end of the year (but) at Rongotai the common word is brotherhood that I know is used a lot ...when we first started everyone talked about it... so we all went to see what it was like... we all had a basic idea... but over the years it's come to mean even more than this... especially as we know our school years are coming to an end, and we know we probably won't be doing (poly club) five years from now, it's become more important. ..*

*huge influence – my pride in my culture and my school. Just the sense of belonging, the brotherhood in the school, the enjoyment of being part of the group.*

These feelings of being together, as a unit, carried over to their perceptions of the school:

*To be part of Rongotai .. as a student, but to be part of a Samoan Rongotai – to be part of the Poly... if that makes sense.*

*(our Poly) brings a lot of different culture to the country ... but so do Maori.*

*We always finish our performances with the Rongotai haka. We are very proud of that. We don't belong to the Maori Club ... some of them (Maori) join Poly – but we love the Rongotai haka. That is us!*

*Relationships.*

Within the Poly club, many levels of relationships and networks were nurtured-between teachers and students, Pacific students and the wider the Rongotai school community, year 9 students through to year 13 students, within and between Pacific ethnic groups, and, old boys who 'keep coming back to help us' and current students:

*Just binding with the other boys, handing out with the young guys has been a challenge for me*

*...for example x, teaches us the Tokelau dance ... Miss M said 'this is his dance... respect it and do it properly' And we do*

*That is what the Poly Club means...(Miss M) looks after us, guides us through the school...in trouble? She talks to our parents...Personal ... relationships ...of the future and building our confidence to go out. Looks out for us*

Old boys regularly turned up during the study year to help with the Poly sleepovers and practices and show 'how we used to do it,' and to support the Pacific Career Days and community meetings. I was told that this was not unusual – that the Poly club was still regarded as a cherished home base for many past students.

*Cultural knowledge and security*

Cultural knowledge was the core – the platform for everything the Poly Club did. Poly was the place where students shared their knowledge and debated their ideas about culture, identity and changing times:

*It's taught me who I am. A Samoan ... Island boy.*

*It's taught me to be proud of who I am ... and where I'm from and to showcase where I'm from.*

*I think as long as you don't alter it (the traditional ways) too much ... it's good to add your own flavour. Style... but if you take it away from the actual dance type – it's not really Samoan. You can't call it Samoan any more ...*

While the Poly club participated in many school events such as assemblies and community meetings, the annual Tu Tangata Festival was undoubtedly the highlight for the club and the whole Rongotai community as well. Students tried to capture the empowering experience of participating in the Festival:

*...just the feeling you get on the night when you're performing. You don't get it anywhere else.. It's a feeling of happiness, heaps of happiness. Just like*

*nothing is going to go wrong in your whole life again ...Anywhere else. I have never had that feeling... every year. It's just awesome.*

*(didn't join in the third form) I think I was too cool.. spent all my time hanging out with friends....But when xx got the award that year, I thought there's more to it than just your lunchtimes. So I tried it in the fourth form... like it's better than rugby really... but it only lasts for 15 minutes on the night (of the festival)*

*Our school ... we always do it 'properly' We practice it over and over... sometimes tired. But, we do it properly.*

There was one only European student in the club during the study year although there had been better representation in other years. When asked if the Poly club might appear to be threatening for non Pacific students, or might actually discriminate against others joining, responses were:

*We welcome everyone ... but sometimes they don't like the amount of time we give to Poly. We would like them to come and learn and be one of us.*

*Maybe they feel it's not their thing... that they will be mocked or teased... awkwardness. One said to me 'what if I joined?'...you'll stand out in the row. (but) pity they don't join... nice if they want to join and get a taste of other cultures and see something different.*

### *Leadership*

Leadership and learning to take responsibility for one's actions were important values and core expectations in every activity of the Poly Club. One student described the Poly Club as being 'run like a Samoan village... the senior boys take it, the teacher is there (she's *the matai ha ha*) but the senior boys do the work and the rest of us listen and watch and learn.' All students saw this allocation of roles as the way things should be done: the sharing of responsibility, respect for elders, and a way to leadership

From the senior students' point of view:

*Helps me to step up become a leader. Because the Poly really needs leaders Helps me stay committed to something .. stay and go to every practice... a good thing for me I guess. (sometimes I don't want to)*

*It feels good to be a leader, but it's pretty hard as well, pressure, trying to keep all the boys together and at the same time trying to suss out at the new items, for example, and the rules. We make up the movement. We get together during study periods or after school and think about the actions and songs and things that we can add to Poly. (we) try not to repeat things we've done before, or from other schools as well. (we want) that little bit of difference*

Students said:

*We don't mind... we know our turn will come. We know to be patient and watch and learn from the seniors. We look up to them.*

*(Our boys) know how to lead more (in the school not only the Poly) ... I've seen heaps of palagi prefects... they don't know how to act with others. Plus, all the boys (not just the Polys) listen to them - not the other guys*

One of the prefects in the sample was now participating in the Leadership Training Course for School Prefects run in Wellington. He said that while only three of the almost 50 attending these meetings were Pacific, this did not intimidate him. It was as a result of his leadership responsibilities at Rongotai that he felt up to the course.

#### *New Poly ventures- The Festival Cup*

It is the practice for small groups drawn from the Poly Club to sing regularly at school assemblies, community meetings and parents' events. However, during the study year, the decision was made to form a choir and enter the Wellington Region's Big Sing Choral Festival (June 2009). Coordinated by the Poly Club teacher and supported by an old boy (operatic tenor Benjamin Makisi), a choir of 28, comprised of Samoans, one Maori, and one Tokeluan pupil, learnt three formal choral songs and performed together with eight other secondary schools at the Wellington Town Hall. This event was described by all those who had participated and watched as totally awesome. One believed that, just maybe, Rongotai had influenced the 'mainstream' culture on the night:

*(This) was a big jump into another paddock... wasn't really us. But Miss M said we have to do. All the boys, she's got that respect, where all the boys they'll just do it .... I wasn't signing up for the choir, I walked into the room and they were having the practice. She told me to sit down and learn it, but I was pleased. It turned out so great. Yes...taking our place alongside other groups.*

*Winning the Festival Cup? Well...my mum and dad were so pleased. They sat in the Town Hall and watched it all. They saw all the palagi schools... they were so proud that we can do it.*

*We went into it – all those schools with huge choirs... and we were just a few. But we went in, and I think we changed the ways .... We didn't sing their songs, we sang our songs ...and we did it our way ...we challenged the mainstream?... that is our strength.*

There had been some lack of confidence, some awe, and perhaps some feelings of discrimination on the night and in that setting. Feelings were that 'this is not quite us' and 'we are moving into a whole new field of music.' But there were also feelings of 'we did it and we'll do it again.' Two who had performed said they wanted to join the choir again in 2010.

#### *Joining other School related Groups*

Apart from the Poly club, the main school groups these students belonged to were rugby, other sports, and the schools' Stage Challenge team.<sup>22</sup> The passionate interest in rugby was not surprising, given that a current All Black, a Junior All Black and members of the Wellington provincial rugby team were Rongotai and 'Poly' old boys, three of whom regularly attended the Poly practices and sleepovers. Comments indicated that some students could very easily have been tempted to neglect their studies and try for a career in sports - one had already been selected to

<sup>22</sup> National competition for schools featuring a musical performance based on a selected theme.

join the Wellington Rugby Development Squad. That aside, the majority of the Rugby team were members of the Poly club, and they reported the team's chief supporters were club members and 'Miss M.' Seventy-five percent of those interviewed also belonged to the Stage Challenge as stage hands and managers, providers of IT support, as well as performers. Again the challenge here was 'another kind of music,' 'modern music' and dance.

According to these students, they also tried to observe the discipline and respectful behaviour they learnt in the Poly club at inter-college sports meetings:

*When we go to the play sports with other teams, we try to act the way we should... discipline and how Rongotai boys act and how Pacific boys act.*

### *Joining/Connecting to other Communities*

Three patterns of connecting emerged here. Generally speaking, the majority of these youth kept to themselves; the main groups they socialized with (outside of actual classes) were family members, Poly club members, and members of their rugby teams and their church youth. A second group said that, although most of their friends were of Samoan or Pacific ethnicity, they also mixed with friends of many ethnic groups and had no troubles with this. The third group included a student who had very strong affiliations with a local Maori gang and spent most of his time with them, and another whose main friendships were with Wellington's crump community, which he joined as many nights as he could. He spoke very knowledgably about the influence of American youth culture on Pacific youth in New Zealand today. However, the fact that both these youth were not doing well at school and were in danger of getting into trouble outside of school warrants further study. Each was living with other family members, because, for various reasons, their parents had gone back to Samoa.

### *Schooling*

Although all the students were committed to Poly club activities, there were mixed views about whether or not this helped or hindered their school work and education generally:

*Yes it takes a lot of time... but I don't think it interferes with my school work. Because being in Poly actually made me focus more on school, because I'm getting closer to Miss M and she pushes me to do better in class as well.. So that's a good thing. The other years I just sit around doing nothing at lunch time.*

*The drumming sequences, the music the sounds I am learning in Poly club... take these into my own music courses especially my composition.*

There was some puzzlement also, when asked their views, on why it was that Pacific students could be so focused, disciplined and could aim for excellence in Poly club and related activities, yet they did not devote the same commitment to their school work:

*We appreciate all things family ... it's the same with rugby ... we all have a strong sense of commitment to Poly, but trouble is they don't always commit to school. That's the problem.*

*Perhaps... the teacher is not connecting to us?*

The recent introduction of NCEA credits for Poly club involvement was mentioned by only a handful of students. For the majority, joining Poly was 'not to get credit points,' although it was acknowledged that this was an important incentive for others.

Findings from a review of school data for 2009 are of tremendous importance to this study. When student data was broken down by a) those who attend the Polynesian Club and b) those who do not, a significant relationship was found between educational participation and Polynesian club membership. This is ground breaking material! Students who belonged to the club scored higher on every success indicator. They performed better on numeracy and literacy tests and were more likely to be enrolled in and to have completed a higher number of NCEA credits. Furthermore, they were less likely to be absent from school (see Appendix B).

**Conclusions and Policy-level Implications**

The study has shown that, contrary to the *Ala fou* predictions, male students continue to identify strongly with their Pacific ethnicity, however this may be defined. Further, it has shown that this Samoan identity is one which is being constructed in their New Zealand experience, and that the Polynesian club and related activities are central to this process.

The Poly club:

- provides a safe and trusted space for students to engage in cultural activities and processes, build their sense of belonging and identity, gain esteem, confidence and support through shared activities, and gain the strength to launch out of their comfort zone. For example, the strengths of the brotherhood spurred youth participation in the choral festival. This strategy of *deliberately fostering participation* in 'other' arenas outside the Poly club warrants further investigation.
- builds students' cultural knowledge through direct knowledge transfer, and also by the way it organizes the students; for example, membership is open to all the students in the school regardless of age (cross generational). This is also seen in the division of tasks, enabling the development of leadership skills as senior students take responsibility, pride as the Poly club community work together to achieve a desired goal, respect for others, and discipline to the task.
- grows a cadre of Pacific leaders who have an understanding and experience of Pacific and palagi leadership styles and of the responsibilities this implies.
- contributes to educational successes through the relationship between membership in the Poly club and educational outcomes that was found, these students are connecting to the school which, in turn, provides a space for leverage. Again this is an important finding to be tested in other situations.
- demonstrates a teaching/ mentoring model (shown by the Poly club teachers) which could be effectively used with Pacific students in other school activities and curriculum areas. There is a need for such mentors who will mediate Pacific students' pathways into wider and broader community engagement.

- through the availability of NCEA units, recognizes the knowledge and skills that are encapsulated in Pacific dance and performance, and history, identity and spirituality of Pacific's oral culture.
- highlights the importance of career guidance in schools by assisting students to take the appropriate courses for higher level success.

The study has reinforced the value and place of Polynesian clubs and related activities within the school – the learning, discipline, and cultural enrichment - and also its positive correlation with educational participation. In addition to the knowledge and skills exchange and the building of cultural knowledge and identity that takes place in the clubs, findings suggest that the Poly club is a way of getting Pacific students into school and reinforcing skills that are central to academic success, that is, discipline to the task, focus and an aim for excellence. The question is, “if they can achieve this here... how can these positive attitudes be built on and developed in other areas of the school curriculum?”



## Leadership Development: New Zealand Chinese Youth

James Liu

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### **Background**

There are a plethora of Chinese people in New Zealand, most of whom are Mandarin speaking and arrived after immigration policy changes in 1987. Some of these new arrivals have experienced difficulty integrating into mainstream New Zealand society. However, New Zealand is also home to a small but influential community of “Kiwi Chinese,” who are multi-generational residents with deep roots sometimes extending back to the Otago gold rush of the 1860s.<sup>23</sup>

The New Zealand Chinese Association is an umbrella organization from this group, established in 1935 to represent Chinese people in New Zealand and work for their well-being through providing mutual help, social interchange, and recreation. It is one of the oldest and most high profile NGOs in the ethnic communities sector and has been especially active in recent years since the establishment of the Poll Tax Heritage Trust has provided it with a source of funding.<sup>24</sup>

In 2007, the New Zealand Chinese Association (NZCA) inaugurated a summer leadership camp for Chinese young adults ages 18-28 to come together, meet like-minded people, and come to understand and realize their potential as Chinese people in a multicultural society. The leadership development camp was initially developed in Auckland with the aim of allowing New Zealand Chinese young adults to reconnect to their cultural roots in a way similar to the NZCA’s long established winter camp in Guangzhou, China. It quickly developed a life of its own, as the youth participants became, in turn, organizers of subsequent camps, the camps were renamed Leadership Development Conferences, with a decided focus on identity, leadership, and social networking as well as the winter camp’s original focus on reconnecting with cultural roots using arts activities. About 30-50 youth delegates participate every year in a conference where the speakers have included such luminaries as Jonathan Ling (CEO of Fletcher), and Peter Chin and Meng Foon (Mayors).

### **Methods**

A community-based, participant action-research (CBPR) approach using qualitative methods was employed to produce a case study of the New Zealand Chinese Association’s Leadership Development Conference (NZCA LDC). This involved participation by Professor James Liu in the LDC conferences as an active observer, speaker, and interviewer. This method is unique in that it generates in-depth knowledge of a community while simultaneously supporting the community to fulfill its own development agenda. The academic knowledge that was produced focuses on leadership and identity among “Kiwi Chinese,” whereas the organizational aspects of the project have incorporated strategy sessions with NZCA leaders involved in both the LDCs and organizational leadership more broadly.

### **Data Collection**

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<sup>23</sup> There were about 26,000 Chinese in the 1986 census, compared to 147,000 in the 2006 census.

<sup>24</sup> A \$5 million endowment from the government as a gesture of reconciliation for discriminatory legislation against Chinese people in NZ that was only repealed in 1945.

Professor James Liu has been volunteering his time to speak at New Zealand Chinese Association activities since 2006 and has participated as a speaker at all four NZCA LDC's from 2007-2010, living on-site with youth participants at some of the conferences. Participant observation using ethnographic methods was therefore one part of the research methods adopted. This is complemented by interview and focus group data collected over the course of three LDCs. In total two focus groups involving ten youth participants were conducted, together with six individual youth interviews and four interviews with older mentors/organizers. The youth participants were gender balanced (and ranged in age from 17-26), whereas the older mentors were all male. Individual interviews ranged from 30 minutes to an hour or more, and focus groups ranged from 1 to 1.5 hours. In keeping with the demographics of the NZCA, most interviewees were 2<sup>nd</sup> generation or multi-generational Kiwi Chinese, though a few were 1.5 generation Chinese (immigrants who arrived in NZ as children or teenagers).

### *Stakeholder Engagement and Dissemination of Information*

In terms of community-based action research objectives, extensive discussions were held with NZCA LDC organizers. Initially, it was suggested that editing a film selecting highlights from previous LDCs might be a good idea, but this discussion never led to tangible outcomes for a variety of reasons, among them the low quality of the films taken on site. Finally, it was agreed that developing an LDC Alumni Website to facilitate communication and social networking would be the most useful contribution to NZCA goals. This aim was in synergy with the Centre for Applied Cross Cultural Research's (CACR) aims for its own web-based communications, and the CACR has since developed and is currently trialing a news website in collaboration with the NZCA. At present the NZCA website is nested within the CACR website to save on administration, and a full blown website will be tailored for them once the system has been tested and stabilized. Elements of this research have been presented in a colloquium series sponsored by the Office of Ethnic Affairs and taking place at the Human Rights Commission. It will subsequently be presented at the Asian Mental Health Conference in Auckland where many leading researchers on issues facing Asian communities in New Zealand will be present. These reports are also shared with the NZCA who are given an opportunity to provide feedback and revision for the final publications.

### **Key Research Findings**

Ethnographically, a key observation is that in recent years, the NZCA has gained confidence and has acquired the skills and leadership capacities to participate as a high profile non-governmental organization. Especially in Auckland, where Chinese populations are large, four successive Bananas Conferences have drawn international recognition for the voice of this community. There is little question that this would not have been possible without the financial and morale-boosting support from the Poll Tax Trust established in 2002. The LDC is a very conscious effort by this most entrenched of Chinese communities in New Zealand to generate a profile for itself that is not defined by prevailing media accounts of Chinese as new migrants who do not have an established stake in national projects. The older leaders/mentors of the LDC consistently project a Kiwi Chinese approach that celebrates Chineseness as a heritage culture that is part of landscape of New Zealand rather than as an offshoot of Asian culture. This has drawn them into interesting forms of bridging dialogue with overseas Chinese (in English—a blessing and a limitation): for example, the LDC has been received for an evening reception at the Chinese Embassy both times it has been held in Wellington. The Chinese Embassy appears

to regard this group as a viable dialogue partner that is quite different and distinct from itself, just as successive governments have regarded it as an NGO worth keeping on its radar.

The interview and focus group data have been transcribed and thematically analyzed. The initial focus of analytical efforts has been to examine themes concerning leadership and identity. The most striking theme that emerged in terms of identity was that the interviewees distinguished themselves from both the Kiwi mainstream *and* overseas Chinese. There was a strong sense/feeling/intuition of being Kiwi Chinese that was *not* accompanied by clear articulation of what were the distinguishing features of this identity. Rather, it was just a certain sense of comfort being Kiwi or New Zealand Chinese, and feeling comfortable around those with a similar orientation rather than any rejection of either the Kiwi mainstream or overseas Chinese. Underlying this intuition were scattered references to family ties and a strong self-reliant work ethic, but these were not overtly expressed as distinguishing features of the identity.

One of the more articulate statements of identity by a more mature leader was, “So if they are prepared to come and join in our activities that means they are wanting to embrace that New Zealand Chinese identity. Because if they want to be Chinese people just living in New Zealand, they’ll stay within those smaller groups.” A more prototypical statement by a youth participant was, “I guess I thought I’ve been so comfortable with identifying myself as a Chinese New Zealander, but never really thought of myself as really Chinese, or never put any emphasis on that..”; or “The fact that we are all Chinese, it just feels much more comfortable, that you can be yourself..”

- Major Identity Themes: Most participants had a strong sense/feeling/intuition of what it is to be a New Zealand or Kiwi Chinese, typically accompanied by a feeling of comfort of being with other New Zealand Chinese or Asians. However, virtually none of the participants could clearly articulate what it meant to be Kiwi Chinese.

A similar set of findings emerged around themes to do with leadership. Interviewees offered non-culture specific prescriptions for leadership in their Chinese communities, being either reluctant or unable to describe features that distinguished these from leadership in mainstream New Zealand society. Although older New Zealand Chinese talked about a glass ceiling or discrimination in the mainstream being a barrier to leading there, the experience of discrimination was not a prevalent theme among the younger adults.

There was awareness that track record, or putting your dues in to the community, was important to achieving the kind of standing necessary to lead (which would be highly consistent with traditional Chinese culture), but this again was not articulated as a distinguishing feature.

Typically, descriptions of leadership were non-culture specific, as in these quotes:

*Leadership to me is influence; it's whether or not you can guide someone somewhere, and, sort of, take them somewhere, um, or encourage them onto something; um, it's about building someone up, and, um I guess taking them through challenges, yeah.*

*I think if you achieve what you set out to do you get the respect for it, and the next time it comes up people will say, "Hey, this can happen. It's happened before and he's done it before, so maybe he's worth listening to."*

Very few participants could articulate clear differences about what it meant to be a leader in the Chinese community versus in NZ society at large.

- Major Leadership Themes: Qualities of a leader and leadership were spoken of in non-culture specific ways, with participants being unable or unwilling to describe how leadership might differ in the NZ Chinese community compared to mainstream NZ society. Paying dues or having a track record was a feature of becoming a leader that several participants mentioned as important in community work.

Finally, an important theme particularly prevalent among younger Kiwi Chinese was the idea that they were willing and able to bridge differences between communities, be they mainstream New Zealand and Chinese, or overseas Chinese and Kiwi Chinese. Several interviewees, especially the younger ones, felt glad to belong to two cultures and thought that it was a resource that could provide them with opportunities. There was awareness, however, that language was a barrier for some Kiwi Chinese because they could not speak Mandarin.

As one young participant stated, *"I want to proactively to do something and so that's why I've tried to be the bridge, tried to- tried to bring you know both Chinese and Pakehas together and to help other Kiwi Chinese realise you know what they can do as well and umm it's hard, it's very, very challenging."* Many participants claimed that *"It's quite good to have two cultures"* and several stated explicitly that *"I feel like I'm a bridge between different groups of people, and I try as much as I can to bridge the gap."*

- Bridging: Youth participants in particular cherished their dual heritage as Chinese and as New Zealanders and saw it as an asset and an opportunity to bridge the gap between the two.

### **Conclusion: Societal and Policy Implications**

Older mentors/organizers from the NZCA were aware that in their generation opportunities for Chinese people, however Kiwi they might be, to lead in New Zealand society at large were scarce. Younger adults interviewed had not really had much taste of genuine leadership opportunities, but expressed optimism that their bridging capabilities might be useful in the future. The most recent NZCA LDC in Auckland (2009) was notable in that a fair number of 1.5 generation Chinese delegates participated, not just the multi-generational Kiwi Chinese that form the core of NZCA membership. There was a conscious awareness observed that these more recent migrants could build affectively nurturing and pragmatically useful alliances with the multi-generational Kiwi Chinese. The action-research component of this project may directly assist such forms of social networking by providing an internet-based platform for current and future generations of NZCA LDC delegates to maximize the bridging potential of their social capital as both Chinese and New Zealanders.

The NZCA might be said to be a poster child for the current Ethnic Affairs Minister's vision of ethnic communities as "confident, equal, and proud" citizens. But this has taken a long time, and it is difficult to put an objective value on both the process and

the outcome of the Poll Tax Apology that the Labour government issued in 2002. An often noted irony of historical injustice is that it is often the victims, not the perpetrators of injustice, that are ashamed of their past, and this was certainly evident in the multi-generational Poll Tax Chinese community prior to the apology. Many members of this community wanted no part in opening up the wounds of the past, but the process of negotiating with the government and telling their stories and the creation of the \$5 million Poll Tax Trust seemed to galvanize the community so that a raft of ambitious projects emerged subsequently, like the Bananas conferences and the LDCs mentioned here, but also more personal projects like novels, histories, and plays relevant to Chinese in New Zealand. The outcome of the Poll Tax Apology might be said to be a textbook lesson in how to serendipitously galvanize a community so that they feel empowered to participate in the economic and cultural life of New Zealand society in a more prominent way.

These benefits have flowed down most visibly to the participants of the LDCs that have been the subject of this research. The youth delegates of the LDCs were deeply appreciative of the opportunities to express and feel proud of their Chinese heritage in a Kiwi Chinese way, even if they could not articulate exactly what that was. They have learned from a diverse collection of successful Chinese community members and from their peers that their dual cultural heritage is an asset, not a liability in a world increasingly influenced by mainland China. It is the youth delegates themselves, not their elders or the members of this research team, that have been networking after the conference is over. They and the NZCA represent a particular segment of Chinese people who are particularly well-adapted to life in New Zealand. Perhaps a useful future contribution of this research to the cultural life of the community will be to communicate the form and process of identification and leadership that has enabled and will enable Kiwi Chinese in the future to make significant contributions to the cultural life of the nation and set up a virtuous feedback loop leading to greater self-awareness and self-efficacy, as well as a better understanding of this group by society large.

A summary of our research with Chinese youth, presented in the CACR-OEA Seminar series in April 2010 can be found at:  
[http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/powerpoint\\_doc/0005/3749/Liu-Moughan-2010-Chinese-Youth-in-NZ.ppt](http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/__data/assets/powerpoint_doc/0005/3749/Liu-Moughan-2010-Chinese-Youth-in-NZ.ppt)

## **Identity, Leadership and Aspirations for Success in Muslim Youth**

Colleen Ward

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### ***Background and Methods***

Following the survey with Muslim youth, a community-based participant action-research approach was adopted to explore in greater depth issues pertaining to identity, leadership, aspirations for success and social cohesion. This was accomplished through two workshops, which employed qualitative methods, including group brainstorming and facilitated discussions, team building exercises, experiential activities and creative and expressive tasks.

The first workshop, “Young Muslim Leaders,” focused on identity, aspirations for success, and leadership development. This workshop was conducted in both Wellington and Auckland during January 2010. In total 36 Muslim young people from between the ages of 16 and 25 participated in the leadership development workshops, which the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research (CACR) held in partnership with the Federation of Islamic Associations New Zealand (FIANZ), The New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils (NZFMC) and the Islamic Studies Research Unit (ISRU) at Auckland University. The workshop was facilitated by Jaimee Stuart and Zeenah Adam.

The second workshop, “Building Bridges,” dealt with identity and social cohesion, bringing together a diverse group of Muslim and non-Muslim youth to discuss issues of stereotypes and representation. The CACR workshop took place at Wellington East Girls’ College in June 2010, and 24 young women from year 9 were selected by the school to take part. The workshop was facilitated by Jaimee Stuart and Zeenah Adam with support from Gaia DiCastro.

### ***Young Muslim Leaders- Qaadah Muslimoona Shabaab***

#### ***Background and Objectives***

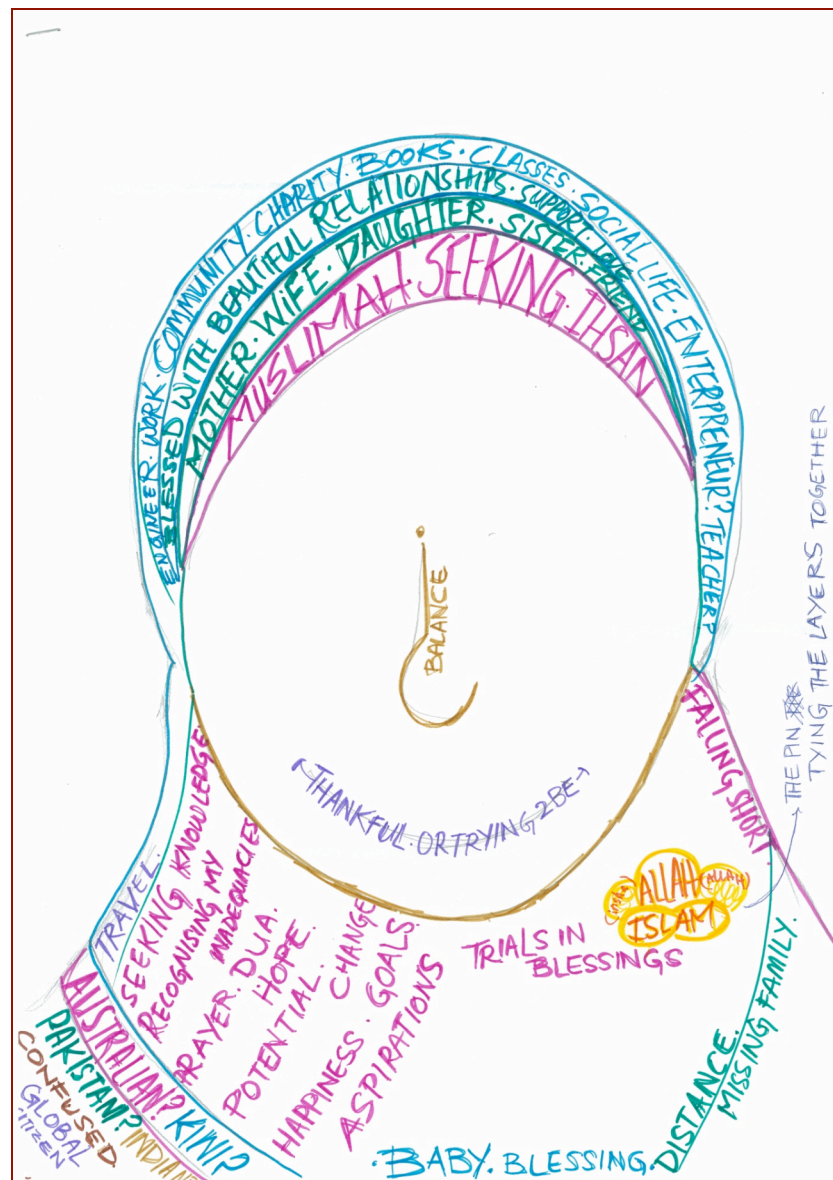
The Wellington workshop ran on the 20th of January at Victoria University of Wellington and was attended by 10 young people. The Auckland Workshop ran on the 23rd of January at Auckland University and was attended by 26 young people. Both of the workshops had approximately one third male participants and two-thirds female participants who worked together in gender separate groups. Ages of the participants ranged from approximately 15 – 25 years old.

The workshops were designed to: 1) explore issues of identity as young Muslim people in New Zealand; 2) describe aspirations for success in young Muslims; 3) identify resources for and obstacles to success in personal and social environments; and 4) create empowering personal and community goals.

#### ***Identity***

Participants created *Identity Maps*, a pictorial representation of their multiple social identities. A major theme to emerge from these maps and related discussions was the notion of “achieving a balance.” This balance alludes to the many, and often contradictory, demands young Muslims in New Zealand manage in their lives- the demands of family (e.g., living up to expectations), peer pressure (e.g., fitting in with

New Zealanders) and the ethnic community (e.g., the relative importance of one's ethnic culture versus their religion). The concept of 'balance' was observed in the identity maps as illustrated in Figure 9.



**Figure 9 Identity Map of a Young Muslim Woman**

### *Definitions of Success*

Participants considered “What does it mean to be a successful young person in New Zealand society?” The definitions of success were broadly categorised into the following five areas:

- 1) Religion (e.g., achieving inner peace through divine awareness, raising a Muslim family)
- 2) Social domains (e.g., being reliable and able to be counted on, being regarded as honest and truthful)
- 3) Personal domains (e.g., achieving balance, being content)

- 4) Material domains (e.g., having a good career, being financially secure)
- 5) Goals and ambitions (e.g., having a purpose in life, making the most of opportunities)

### *Resources and Challenges in the Environment*

Young people are embedded in a variety of environments that influence how well they are able to adjust. In this activity, participants were asked to think about both the sources of strength and the obstacles presented by some of the different social settings. These settings- family, friends, community and New Zealand society- were chosen to represent the most influential factors in a young person's development. By considering both the positive and the negative elements of these environments, this exercise was designed to enable young people to discuss their real-life exposure to risks and their coping resources.

#### 1) Family

Being a member of a well-functioning family was seen as a very important part of development. Not only do family members share support, experience and security, they also provide a sense of connection to religion and values. However, family could also be detrimental to positive adjustment when parents were more traditional than youth, and a 'generational gap' in values began to emerge. Such differences between parents and children could lead to youth feeling pressured and misunderstood.

#### 2) Friends

Peers were also a source of support and companionship. This was especially the case if friends shared the same religious values as it was felt that they could protect against possible negative influences from other young people and help reinforce *halal* (permissible according to Islamic law) activities. Peer pressure and distraction were seen as some of the major negative influences of friends. This was particularly the case if youth feel pressured into behaving in a way that went against their religious values.

#### 3) Community

One of the most important positive elements of the community for young people was the diversity of skilled people they could access. Community members offer knowledge and expertise that young people may not find from their family and friends. This was particularly the case for community leaders, who were often consulted by young people on religious matters. However, it was agreed that some individuals could be judgmental and that the older generation of community leaders were not very open to the issues of youth. There was also tension in the community with regards to culture and religion, with many young people favouring integration of ethnic communities and feeling that this was not supported by some of the community leaders.

#### 4) New Zealand Society

In general, New Zealand was seen as a free and open society in which young people could practice their culture and their religion in whatever way they chose. The government was seen as supportive in funding the building of Mosques and prayer rooms as well as supporting an ethnically and religiously diverse society. However, Muslim youth still experienced discrimination with regards to their religion, their accent and their names. This reinforced their position as minorities.

### *Developing Goals*

Participants worked together to develop some achievable goals that they could implement as a group in order to utilize their strengths and to overcome some of the



barriers to success they faced in their community and in the New Zealand society. These goals are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Goals for Community and New Zealand Society**

<i>Community Goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gatherings for girls – Islamic, social</li> <li>- Use social networking to mobilise people- Facebook</li> <li>- Support the Muslim youth in university study, create study circles</li> <li>- Spreading the word – getting people committed to events, possibly use texting</li> <li>- Develop a good community marketing strategy</li> <li>- Be more involved with non-youth functions</li> <li>- Understand community needs</li> <li>- Create a volunteer network</li> <li>- Overcome the barrier of limited resources (time, money, able and willing volunteers)</li> <li>- Creating awareness through community service</li> <li>- The community needs a focus to create unity</li> </ul>
<i>NZ Society Goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be involved in your neighbourhood</li> <li>- Get to know the first 40 houses around you</li> <li>- Start small (neighbours first)</li> <li>- Involved in awareness groups and other charities (breast cancer awareness)</li> <li>- Make a presence in support groups</li> <li>- Attend rallies (e.g. free Palestine)</li> <li>- Voice in legislation</li> <li>- Voice in the media</li> <li>- Breaking stereotypes – integration</li> <li>- Islamic Awareness week</li> <li>- Clear up misconceptions about Islam</li> <li>- Islamic TV show</li> </ul>

#### *Follow-up*

A web-based social networking page was set up during the course of the workshops in order to keep participants in contact with one another. This tool is currently being used to post workshop information for participants as well as provide resources to encourage the young people to realise the goals they set during the training. Sessions were used to encourage young Muslims to develop their own leadership potential, although it is imperative that they are given the opportunities and resources in order to achieve this.

## ***Building Bridges Workshop -Jusoor Tawaasul***

### *Background and Objectives*

Our previous research has indicated that Muslim youth generally report high levels of psychological and social adaptation despite confronting the challenges of immigration and discrimination. Nevertheless, they often feel negatively stereotyped and misunderstood by other New Zealanders. Furthermore, they have relatively little social contact with their non-Muslim peers. Similar issues were raised by Muslim youth in our Auckland and Wellington Leadership Development Workshops. These findings led us to develop a Building Bridges Workshop that brings together Muslim and non-Muslim youth.

This workshop was run in Wellington East Girls' College with 24 students from year 9 who ranged in age from 13-14 years. The participants' ethnic backgrounds were varied, with six young women from the Pacific Islands, five from South and East Asian countries, four who were Pakeha / NZ European, three from the Middle East, three from Africa and three who were Maori.

The programme aimed to foster cultural and religious integration into the wider school community and add to the already established culture of interethnic tolerance and understanding. From a research perspective the workshop explored issues of identity and social cohesion through two major activities: 1) The Magic Box and 2) the New Zealand Flag.

### *Identity and Stereotyping*

The Magic Box activity is an exercise designed to confront and overcome stereotypes. The purpose of this activity is for the students to identify and address any preconceived ideas they may have about different groups, empathise with their fellow peers, and feel a sense of empowerment as stereotypes are broken down, removed and placed in the "Magic Box."

Participants were asked to write down all the ways in which they identify themselves, and then asked to rank order these. The most important identity was then written onto a piece of paper. Four major types of identity were seen as important by the participants:

- 1) ethnic or religious (e.g., dark skinned person, Muslim);
- 2) characteristics of personality (e.g., shopper, confident);
- 3) affiliations or hobbies (e.g., artist, hockey player); and
- 4) membership in family units (e.g., teenager, younger sister).

Participants identified stereotypes associated with their identities, such as

*People think what you do isn't good enough.*

*People think you are not capable.*

*People think I am different, so they treat me differently than others.*

*People from my culture are dumb, unhealthy and oblivious.*

*Because of the clothes I wear, people call me names.*

and discussed how these stereotypes made them feel. These feelings included *being embarrassed, annoyed, hurt, lonely, excluded, depressed, bullied and self-conscious*.

Ways in which stereotypes were overcome remained consistent regardless of the content of the stereotype. Participants agreed that you should not change who you are because someone else expresses something negative about you. They also thought that it was important that individuals actively seek out others for support and affirmation. Participants reflected that they may have engaged in stereotyping others at some time in the past, and that it was very important to understand how these actions affect others. Following this assertion, it was suggested that one of the most important ways of overcoming stereotypes was to become a support person for someone else, as this enables confidence and strength to be developed.

### *Redesigning the New Zealand Flag*

This activity requires diverse groups to come together for a shared challenge, redesigning the national flag. Participants joined the political debate and considered if the New Zealand flag should be modified to better represent the diversity of our country. If they believed that the flag should be changed, they were asked to design a new flag, present it to a panel of judges and their peers, and explain their rationale. This activity aimed to induce a shared connection between participants, an awareness of unity and diversity issues and insights into what representing New Zealand means to different people. Finally, the exercise provided an opportunity to develop critical thinking.



**Figure 10 New Zealand Flag**

Six flags were presented to the panel of judges, which included Mr. Joris deBres, Race Relations Commissioner; Professor Colleen Ward, Director of the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research; and Ms. Mandy Page, Assistant Principal, Wellington East Girl's College. The flags were judged on symbolism, visual appeal and oral presentation of its underlying rationale. First place prize was awarded to the flag above.

The students' description of the flag was as follows: This flag incorporated strong and clear symbolism and metaphoric use of colour. The letters N and Z filled are coloured black and white and detailed with Maori designs, this represents the bicultural nature of New Zealand society. The silver ferns signify the uniqueness of the environment and how we are connected to the earth and the two stars symbolise the North and South Islands. With regards to the colours in the background, blue represents New Zealand as an island nation, red represents blood and how underneath the skin everyone has the same colour, and yellow represents freedom and happiness. The white stripe through the flag symbolises peace and indicates that which holds us together as a country is the concept of peace and togetherness.

### *Outcomes*

Participants indicated that some of the most important things that they learnt in the workshop were that they were not alone when they were being stereotyped, and that although other people look different or act differently to them, they often share the same feelings.

*Other people have problems just like mine.*

*That we may look different, but we can all have the same problems and we are the same on the inside.*

In terms of what participants would like to see changed in their school environment, one of the consistent suggestions was that bullying should be controlled and integration of social groups (particularly mixing of ethnic groups) should be encouraged.

*To see different cultures hanging out together.*

*Less judgement and bullying on people who are different.*

The workshop was evaluated very positively and suggestions were made that it should be repeated at the School. The concluding comments above suggest that the overall objectives were largely achieved.

A more detailed description of both the Building Bridges and the Young Muslim Leaders workshops can be found at:

[http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/3743/2010-Muslim-Youth-Workshops-Report.pdf](http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/3743/2010-Muslim-Youth-Workshops-Report.pdf)

This report has been distributed to FIANZ, NZFMC, OEA, the Islamic Studies Research Unit and the Nawawi Centre.

### **Concluding Comments**

The multiple identities that Muslim young people manage create challenges, but for the most part, young men and women are striving to achieve integration by balancing their religious and ethnic identities with their emerging identities as New Zealanders. Despite these challenges, they are largely successful and adapt well to life in this

country. However, this success is dependent upon New Zealanders' acceptance of diversity and the "social permission" for the expression of Muslim identity and practices. This is particularly important as a strong Muslim identity is conducive to psychological and social well-being.

Aside from the pressures of multiple social identities, Muslim youth face many of the same challenges as their non-Muslim peers- both immigrant and native-born. These include prejudice, discrimination and negative stereotyping. Their aspirations for success appear to be largely like those of other youth; however, the emphasis on religion is marked as New Zealand is widely known as secular society.

Exercises with Muslim and non-Muslim youth showed that working together for mutually rewarding goals can raise awareness and promote positive intercultural perceptions. There are also ways in which intercultural empathy can be increased by identifying common experiences across diverse groups of youth.

In the end the workshops highlight the importance of strengthening the acceptance of diversity in New Zealand, encouraging interfaith dialogues, enhancing ethnic and Muslim identity, and finding ways to promote intergroup empathy. Policies that support these ends will be beneficial not only to ethnic and religious minorities, but the wider population as a whole.

## YOUTH VOICES, YOUTH CHOICES: CONCLUDING COMMENTS

*Youth Voices, Youth Choices* has brought together a multi-ethnic research team from VUW's Centre for Applied Cross-cultural and Va'aomanu Pasifika to engage youth from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities and to understand their aspirations for success, participation, and social integration. This has been accomplished by combining national and international research programmes, varied investigative approaches, and a range of social action initiatives to examine: 1) What are the indicators of participation and success for ethnic/Muslim youth? 2) How do ethnic/Muslim youth maintain social and cultural connectedness, construct their identities and negotiate issues pertaining to cultural maintenance and participation in the wider society? and 3) What strategies can be used to promote positive identity, capacity building and leadership within and between ethnic/Muslim communities?

The findings are dynamic and multi-faceted. They broadly indicate that identity and sense of belonging are key elements in youth participation and success. Identities may be fostered and supported not only along ethnic or religious lines, but also in other community contexts, including popular art and music "families." What is important in all cases, however, is that youth are given the "space" and support to maintain these identities, the acceptance and respect so that they may feel pride in their communities and the opportunities to participate and achieve in the wider society. If this is the case, *Youth Voices, Youth Choices* will have been instrumental in attaining the project's intermediate outcome that: "The voices of youth from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities will be heard and the communities empowered to determine the ways in which youth can achieve integration."

**APPENDIX A-** Schedule of individual interviews

Interviewed rolling 10 boys – across 2009-2010

	2009	2010
1	Year 13	Student now at
2	Year 13	UPrep
3	Year 13	Student now at VUW
4	Year 13	unknown
5	Year 12	unknown
6	Year 12	Year 13 (prefect)
7	-	Year 13 (prefect)
8	-	Year 12
9	-	Year 12
10	-	Year 12
		Year 12...

**APPENDIX B-** NCEA Dance Assessment.

Poly club school staff have played a key role in adapting the NCEA Dance unit to an NCEA Polynesian Dance and performing arts NCEA level. Aims are for these to be raised to achievement standards. Rongotai staff help other schools with moderation.

2009 - Open to year 10 and 11

18 students did the total  
3 did individuals (worth 6)  
8 did level 2  
6 did level 3