

CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE



Evaluation 2025

Contents

Summary.....	3
The Champions Initiative	6
The Programme	6
The Need Being Met	7
The Theory of Change - How the Programme Works	8
What the Theory Looks Like in Practice.....	10
Methods.....	12
Who We Heard From	12
Data Collection	13
Storyboards	13
Surveys	13
Reporting.....	14
Results.....	16
Minis and Fundamentals.....	16
Juniors and Seniors	18
Experience	18
Outcomes	20
Families and Whānau Views on Member Outcomes	24
Community Partner Views on Outcomes	26
What's Driving Change?	28
What Could be Improved?	29
Conclusions	31
Recommendations	32
References	33



Summary

This evaluation was conducted to help the Champions Initiative (CI) and its academies understand the impact they are having on young people. Many of the academies' members are from difficult backgrounds and engage in high-risk behaviours. The CI contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes. More specifically, young people will:

- develop a sense of belonging,
- become more actively engaged in families, school and communities,
- be more likely and better equipped to fulfil their potential,
- develop boxing skill mastery and improved fitness and wellbeing, and
- develop an outward focus whereby they become more caring and respectful of others.

The evaluation assessed progress towards those outcomes and identified opportunities to increase impact.

Methods

With the CI's academies' help, Point collected feedback from academy members, whānau and community partners (e.g., schools and Police). The youngest members (ages 5 to 11) were invited to create a "storyboard" where they could write and/or draw how they felt about the academy, what they had learnt there and what it helped them do. Members aged 12+, whānau, and community partners completed a survey about their experience of the local academy; what it was doing well, was it having an impact, and any suggested changes or improvements.

Head: The People i'm around make me feel good

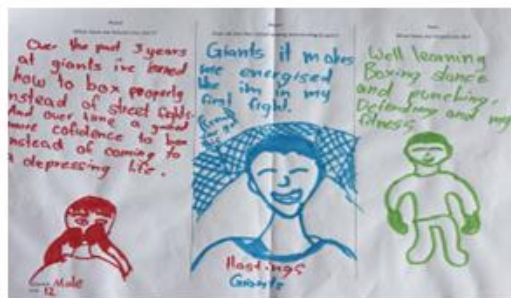
Heart: The gym helps me focus on what I need to do be better

Feet: makes me feel good and have respect



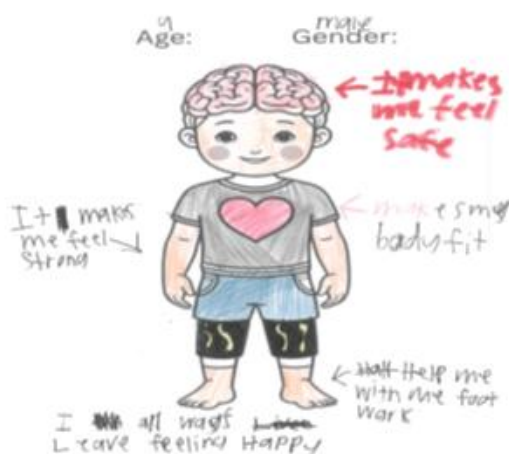
Experience

Almost all members (96%) said they enjoy academy. They see their coaches as positive roles models, feel well supported, connected to the group, and encouraged to do their best. Two significant differences were found: Girls support, and feel more supported by other members, than boys; and when comparing competitive boxers, boys feel more supported by their coaches than girls.



Head-What have we helped you learn?

defence
[Boxing] Punching
Foot + work
fitness
Respectful
maankiatarisa
everything



Outcomes

Remarkably, all members who responded to the survey reported their academy had helped them make positive changes. They reported improved physical wellbeing, that they had become more caring and respectful of others, had more self-belief and confidence, greater sense of belonging, and better friendships. Peer-reviewed research about youth-development focused boxing gyms published in academic journals report similar benefits (e.g.: Gordon 2022; Ryan 2024). The CI was also reported by members to have helped with home-life, school and work. Some individuals indicated they were helped more than others, but there were no statistically significant differences between boys and girls, Māori and non-Māori. The extent of change and range of outcomes reported by members were very similar to those observed by members' parents and care-givers and the academies' community partners.

What leads to positive change

The feedback shows that young people respond well to the CI's values-base, their coaches' belief in young people's potential, their guidance and encouragement, and their ability to build positive relationships. We suggest this helps young people feel safe and supported to connect with others, talk about thoughts and feelings, and develop new habits. We also suggest that routines, such as everyone welcoming people to the gym, group check-ins to start and finish class, group-based exercises and games, and discussing and implementing the values, help reinforce values-based behaviours and relationships. These findings are consistent with literature that suggests boxing grounded in positive youth-development can help young people exposed to negative influences walk away from conflict and anti-social influences without losing face – being a boxer has credibility, and the community offers a sense of belonging.

Conclusions

The evaluation shows that the CI is making significant progress towards its intended outcomes. The similarity in feedback from Invercargill, Ashburton, Naenae, Cannons Creek, Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay and Te Awamutu suggests the model appears to be implemented with a high degree of consistency across the network. The Champions Initiative may be able to make further gains if boys could be helped to be more supportive of their peers, and if girls who want to be competitive are given more help to progress in the sport.

Recommendations

Given the evidence, we recommend the CI explore:

- How the academies could further help girls who want to progress in the sport
- How to help boys be more supportive of each other.

The Champions Initiative

Billy and Kerri Graham established the Naenae Boxing Academy (NBA) in 2006 with a vision of giving back to the community where Billy had grown up during the 1950s. In 1956, Billy was brought into the Railway's Boxing Gym by the local Police Officer Hoppy Hodges in the hope that Billy would get back on the right track. Coach Dick Dunn would have a profound impact on him, playing a key role in supporting Billy to turn his life around. It was Billy's time with Dick Dunn that inspired the establishment of the NBA. From the day the doors opened, young people have been welcomed into the same environment that had helped Billy succeed so many years earlier.

In 2018, the CI (formerly known as "The Billy Graham Youth Foundation") was established following numerous requests from communities and stakeholders throughout New Zealand. They saw that an academy like the NBA would benefit their own communities. In 2025, there are seven academies – Naenae, Southern Queens Invercargill, Mid-Canterbury, Cannons Creek, Wairarapa, Hastings Giants and Te Awamutu, and more are being onboarded. The network's vision is: "Champion young people contributing to their communities".

The Initiative's purpose is to attract the youth of Aotearoa New Zealand to the physical, mental and social benefits of an organised, graded exercise programme. It supports communities throughout Aotearoa to champion young people by providing top-quality resources, relationships, pathways, and structures based on Olympic-style boxing and the principles of positive youth development.¹

The Programme

The programme is structured to provide a developmental pathway for young people wanting to progress to the next level. It consists of a series of progressively more advanced 10-week blocks that take young people from beginner, non-contact boxing through to full-contact competition if they so choose, and their coaches assess them as ready and able to safely do so. The programme is non-contact until 14 years of age, and some boxers may repeat 10-week blocks several times before they are ready to progress to contact.

The anticipated outcomes are that young people:

- Develop a sense of belonging
- Actively engage

¹ In brief, these include providing opportunities for meaningful connection and participation, taking a strengths-based approach, and being evidence-based (MYD, n.d.)



- Develop skill mastery in boxing
- Pursue their potential, and
- Develop an outward focus for those around them.

To help deliver these outcomes, the CI provides each academy with the Champions Programme coaching manual and training. The Initiative does so to ensure programme fidelity, i.e., to ensure that the coaching and classes are essentially the same at all academies. However, there is scope for coaches to adapt according to the members' preferences and skill sets. Furthermore, the Initiative hosts an annual hui for coaches, managers and the Initiative to discuss what is working well and where improvements can be made.

Classes are tailored by age group. There is more 'play' for the youngest members (Minis/Fundamentals), more focus on 'practice' for Juniors and 'performance' for Seniors. As described, while classes for each age group are a little different, there are similarities. For example, a 14-year-old new to boxing will need to learn the same fundamentals as a younger person, but they may be able to progress faster due to physical ability/maturity. Classes run for one hour in the late afternoon or early evening from Monday to Friday. Most members attend two or more classes per week.

The Need Being Met

While 74% of 15–24-year-olds in a recent national survey reported good mental wellbeing (a score of 52 or more on a 0-100 scale), average mental wellbeing scores have continued to decline over time (Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, 2024). Loneliness is more common among 15–24-year-olds than older age groups, as is feeling like they could talk to someone if they felt down (ibid).

A national survey of high-school-aged people found those at lower decile schools were more likely to worry about their whānau being unable to afford essentials. They also gave consistently lower ratings in measures of physical and mental health, higher exposure to harm, and poorer experience of work and education (Ministry of Social Development 2022). On average, females in the high-school students survey were less positive than males about many aspects of their lives (ibid.).

More recently, the Education Review Office reported that disruptive classroom behaviour is a growing problem in Aotearoa, affecting students' enjoyment of school, achievement and attendance (Education Review Office, 2024; Williams, 2024). The



Office is “extremely concerned” that a quarter of the 547 principals surveyed reported every day seeing students physically harming others, damaging property and stealing. The Secondary Principals’ Council chairperson said, “Our schools are a mirror of our communities and the issues being experienced in our communities are brought to school by young people every day.” (Williams, 2024). This is affirmed by the CI, which found that many academy members live in unsafe home situations, are exposed to gang influence, suffer from depression and/or anxiety, and are disengaged or are at-risk of disengaging from education, employment or training (personal communication with Kerri Graham, 7 August 2024).

Young people have shared what could be done to improve their outcomes – they want adults to save their future, they want people to listen to them, they want connection and fun, and they want to be supported (Health New Zealand, 2024).

The Theory of Change - How the Programme Works

As noted above, many academy members have difficult backgrounds, including unsafe homes, gang influence, depression and/or anxiety and disengagement from education, employment and training. Research has identified such challenges as major criminal risk factors, that is, they increase the chance of future criminal behaviour and involvement (Gluckman, 2018). Other risk factors include substance abuse and addiction, early school leaving, and violence and victimisation. Gluckman calls these factors “snares” because they are difficult to escape and significantly increase the likelihood of imprisonment. It is, therefore, critically important that measures are put in place to address these snares as early as possible (Gluckman, 2018, p. 29). To free young people from these snares, they “need strong and positive social ties to desist” (ibid.). Research also shows that for young offenders, the thrill, emotional high and social rewards, such as admiration from their peers, are more important to them than concerns about being caught or facing social disapproval (ibid.). Given this, positive relationships, especially with other young people, seem to be key.

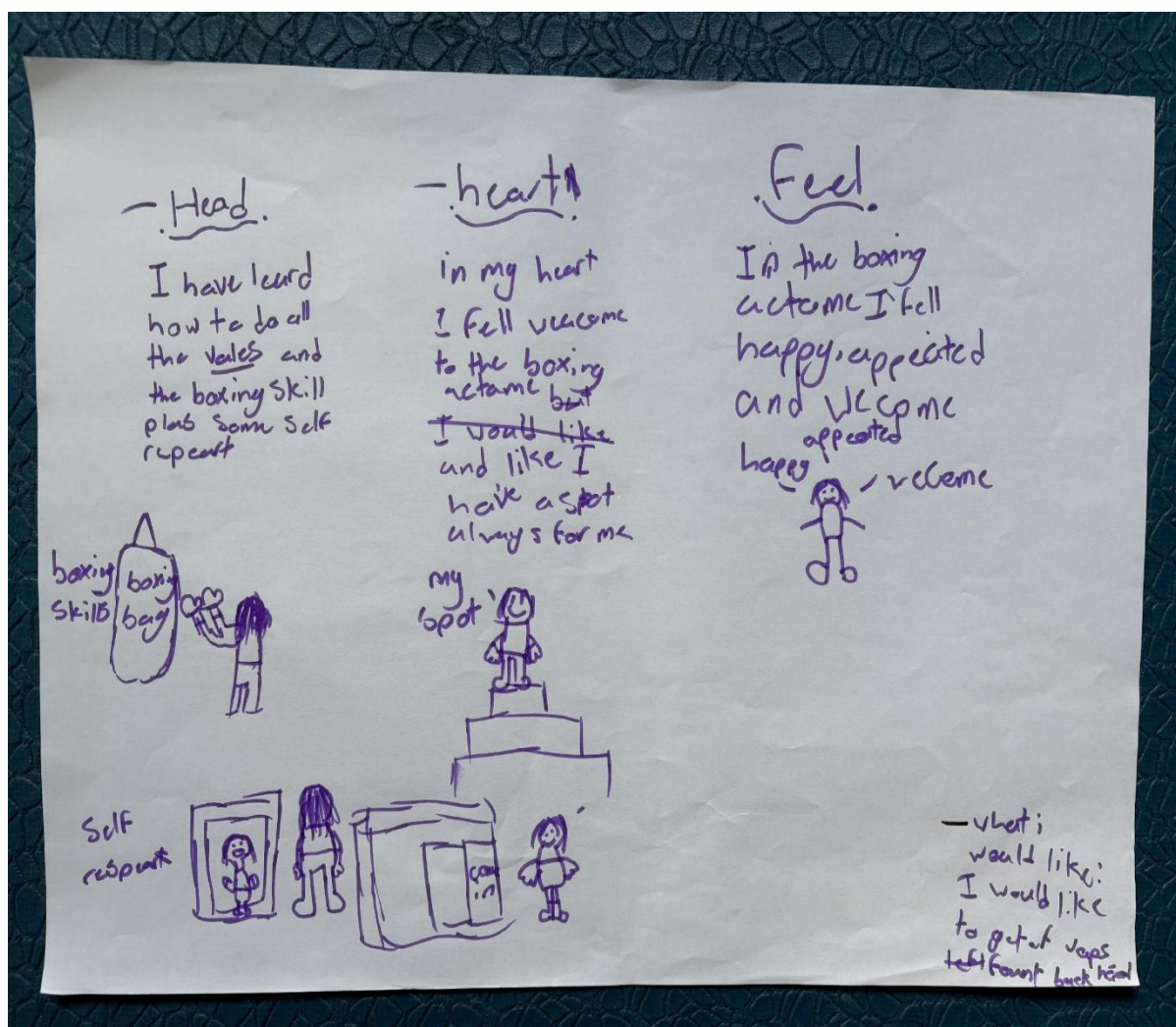
CI aims to create a positive peer community instead of relying on social sanctions and disapproval, aligning with Gluckman's recommendations. Communities “may find more success by instead providing youth with activities and programs that provide alternative, prosocial means of attaining the thrilling experiences and social approval they desire” (ibid.).

CI is mindful of the mix of young people in their classes. The academies aim for about 70% of their members to already demonstrate their values (e.g., discipline, respect,



consideration, kindness). It is anticipated that these young people will positively influence those who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging from school, sports and other pro-social networks or are ensnared in risky and criminal behaviours. Coaches nurture and draw on the 70%'s positive peer-group influence to motivate, influence and teach the other members, 20% of whom are struggling and at risk of disengaging due to their difficult backgrounds and problematic behaviours, but really want to be with an academy. These young people are often brought to an academy by concerned parents or wider whānau. The remaining 10% are disengaged from school, referred by Police or Oranga Tamariki, possibly due to minor criminal offending, and often want to be with an academy because they are excited by the idea of boxing. Getting this 70/20/10 mix right is considered essential for academies to create a positive group culture where everyone has a chance to succeed, including those from high-needs and troubled backgrounds. This approach is considered to be “less of the ‘teacher up front,’ and more of a facilitator weaving together young people into a community” (CI Coaching Handbook).





What the Theory Looks Like in Practice

The Programme is delivered in CI academies' gyms, which are intentionally designed to be open, airy, relaxing, and functional spaces. The spaces are kept clean, and coaches greet every member every time they arrive at the door. This is all part of the CI approach to provide young people a space where they feel safe, secure and welcome.

Classes always begin with whanaungatanga where members sit in a group, play a game or two and check-in about what's been happening or how they're feeling. This is considered essential, especially for young people who do not have someone they feel they can talk to. The group then moves into warm-up exercises, fitness and skills-based sessions. Classes always finish with a check-out where everyone shares how things went and coaches can give updates about what's coming up.

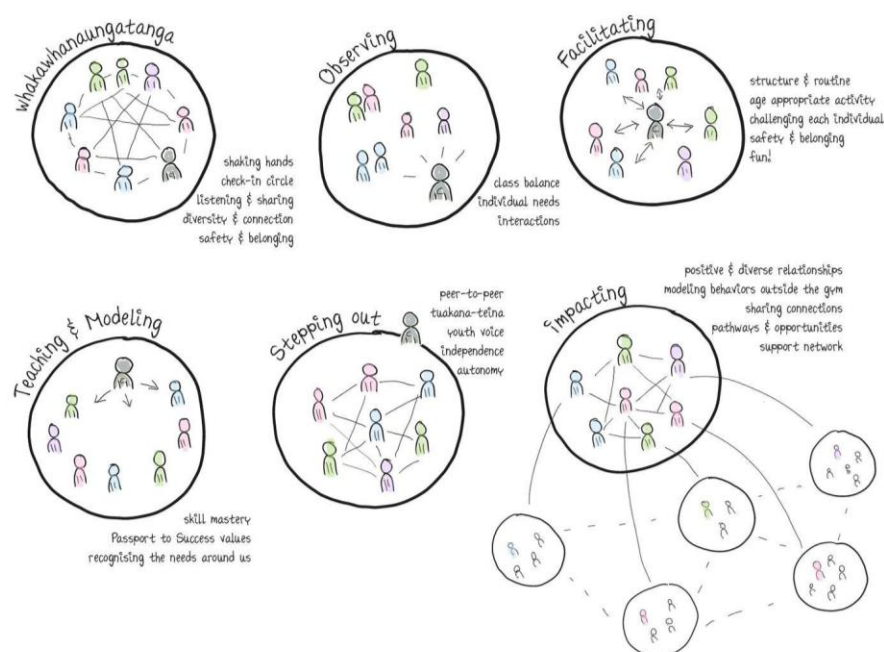
For beginners, coaching begins with non-contact boxing skills and physical conditioning: movement, balance and coordination, before progressing into more technically and physically challenging stages. Each stage is challenging but achievable – there is no shouting or intimidation. The programme includes teaching, role-modelling, and practicing the skills and attitudes people need to succeed in boxing and positively contribute to society. Members practice and master Olympic-style boxing skills, build self-confidence, and form positive connections with others. Class activities often use small-group and pair-based exercises which are frequently changed so that newcomers, and those who are less skilled, can form connections with and learn from those who are more established and capable. All aspects of the classes involve learning social skills, such as:

- Communication: during circle time at the beginning and end of each class where participants are asked to share a success, a concern, or how they are feeling
- Leadership: members are given leadership opportunities, such as choosing an exercise for the group to do, counting the group through reps or demonstrating a technique
- Recall: by naming or describing the “Passport to Success” values.²

The coaching model is illustrated below.

² The values are Respect, Kindness, Compassion, Honesty & Truthfulness, Duty, Consideration, Obedience, Responsibility. The PTS booklet briefly describes each of these.





The academies nurture relationships with other organisations in their community that have shared interests, such as schools and alternative education providers, Police, youth justice and community development organisations. The academies also hold relationships with organisations with a national profile/reach, such as Outward Bound, to provide a small number of members with personal development opportunities. The academies also work with and support participants' families and whānau to enable participation and enhance wellbeing by, for example, gifting food boxes. For some members, this food may be the only food they eat all day (pers. comm. Kerri Graham from NBA).

Methods

Who We Heard From

Two hundred and forty-six Junior and Senior members (ages 12+) completed a survey³. Younger members completed 208 storyboards⁴ and we received surveys from 176 whānau and families and 48 community partners.

Table 1: Survey responses (n=)

Senior surveys	Member storyboards	Whānau surveys	Community surveys
----------------	--------------------	----------------	-------------------

³ A response rate of 65%. That is very high compared to most community service survey response rates.

⁴ An extremely good response rate of 97%. Four older members completed storyboards too.

Cannons Creek	26	30	16	3
Hastings Giants	30	36	22	7
Mid-Canterbury	29	13	11	3
Naenae	49	34	36	9
Southern Queens	28	11	15	14
Te Awamutu	50	59	48	9
Wairarapa	34	29	28	3
TOTALS	246	212	176	48

Data Collection

Storyboards

To create “storyboards”, members were given a piece of paper, pens and pencils to write and/or draw pictures to show what they think or feel about academy. Coaches or managers asked the members three questions – How does academy make you feel? What have you learnt at the academy? What has this helped you do? At some academies those prompts were also written on the paper to help the young people answer the questions.

Storyboards were used primarily with the youngest members (Minis and Fundamentals). A small number of Juniors and Seniors also chose to complete a storyboard. The completed storyboards were sent to Point and Associates for content analysis.

Surveys

Juniors, Seniors, families and whānau, and community partners were surveyed. Point, in consultation with CI, crafted survey questions based on CI’s theory of change to ensure data was relevant to intended outcomes and expected coaching practices.

The members’ questionnaire was tested with a diverse group of Juniors and Seniors to ensure the questions and answer options were relevant, unambiguous and easy to understand. The question and response option wording is particularly informal in the



members survey to maximise its appeal to young people and encourage them to answer the questions.

To gather data for this evaluation, each academy invited their members aged 12 and over, families and whānau, and community partners to complete surveys in class time on their personal devices (some academies provided Chromebooks).

To reach members' families and whānau or caregivers, the academies emailed their members whānau, family and caregivers a survey link to the survey online and also approached people picking up their young person from academy. Southern Queens also held a 'Whānau Day' during the evaluation period to strengthen their community connections and promote response.

Community partners are organisations that the academies work with or provided services to. Academies emailed partners with a survey link.

The surveys were online and anonymous. Members could leave their name if they wanted to.⁵ Point and Associates analysed the feedback and provided CI with a draft for feedback.

Reporting

The number of responses (n=) in the tables and charts varies because blanks/no response, "I didn't need help with this", "Not relevant", "I don't know" and "Not sure" responses have been removed. They have not been included to make the distributions of responses clear amongst those who felt the item was relevant and that they could express an opinion.

Point received feedback from an external peer reviewer and provided the Champions Initiative a draft report for feedback before finalising the report.

⁵ Previously we have found that members sometimes leave comments that could help their coaches understand more about their development and support needs. Hence deciding to give members an option to leave their name.



Tommy's story



Tommy's childhood was influenced by gang culture. There was a bit of violence at home and he often saw family, cousins and uncles getting into fights. But he couldn't understand why they never learnt to fight properly. Tommy was inspired by legends like Mike Tyson and David Tua, even as a young boy. One day at school, a boxing coach who wanted to start a local club came for a visit. "He chatted to all the boys about how he just finished winning nationals at boxing and I was like, 'man that's pretty cool, national level boxing!' He was talking about starting up a boxing gym next year." – Tommy was in!

He was initially nervous but also excited about joining the gym. He loved the positivity, the gym's values, talking with the coaches, and their encouragement. It helped Tommy overcome the negative influences in his family life, especially because Coach could relate to where Tommy had come from. Coach had had those influences in his life, too. "Coach made me feel confident in what he was teaching. He was teaching some of the boys with backgrounds like his and stuff like that. That was pretty cool."

After almost two years boxing Tommy wanted a break. His time at academy had left an impression on him – "I wanted to keep those values and what was instilled in me". He still wanted to be fit and strong but after two years away from boxing he slipped back into being very overweight. A family member made a rude and hurtful comment about his physique which was all the motivation Tommy needed – he got back to boxing.

Tommy lost 40 kilos in three months. He was training hard and progressing through the ranks to the elite competition. But it wasn't easy. "I remember the first day I moved to the elite category for boxing, I got stopped in the first 30 seconds. Then I versed another guy, in another tournament, and the same thing happened again." But Tommy had learnt that he can face adversity. He kept training, and even harder. "I came back later at Golden Gloves and I versed the person that stopped me the second time. And I beat him. Then I versed the best guy in New Zealand, and I bet him in the finals."

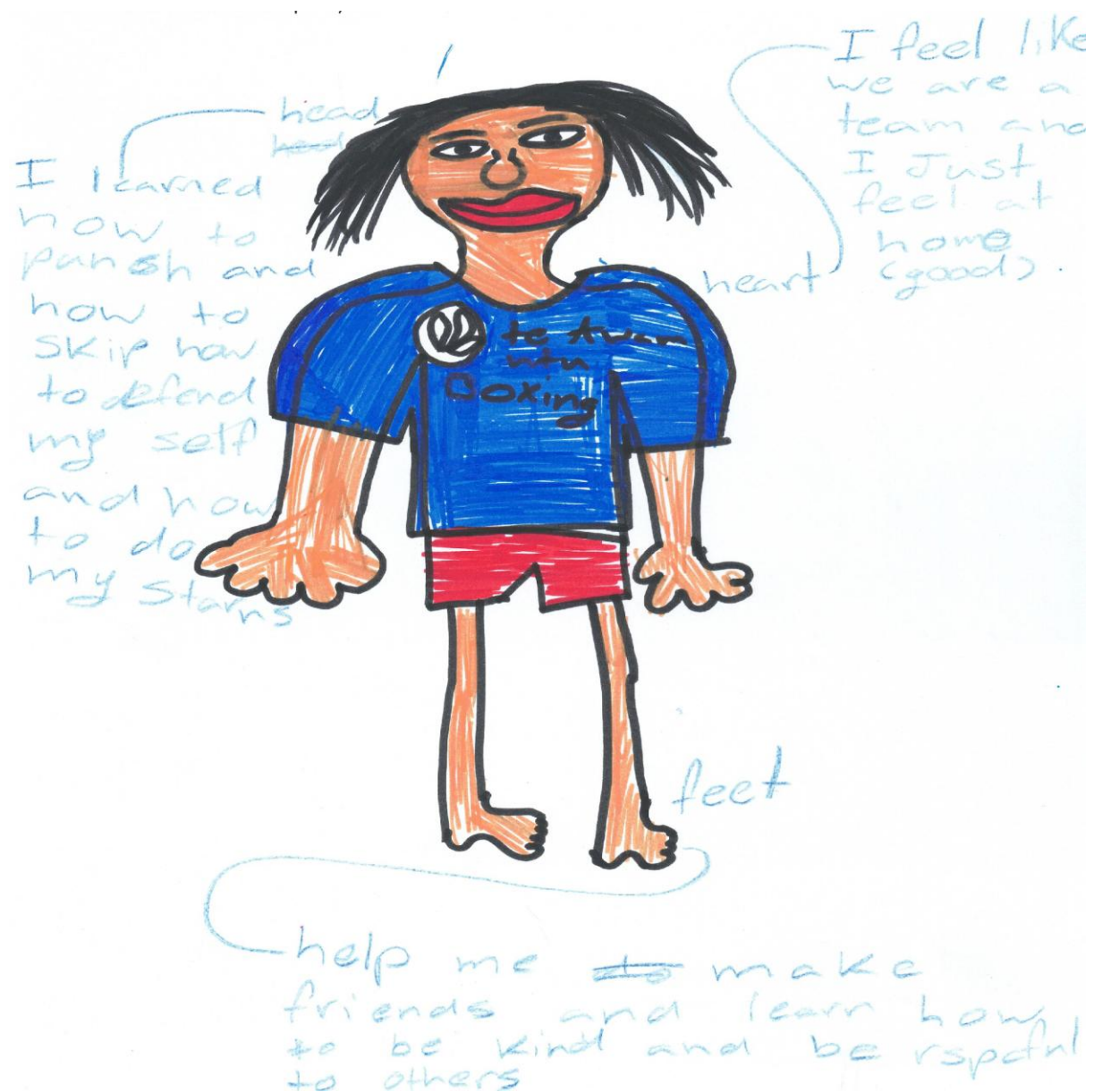
Tommy was excelling and everyone at the gym loved having him around. They brought him into the coaching team. "Teaching the skills made me wanna get back in there and try my best to win. The opportunity that I got given, that people trusted me. It made me wanna try my best every single day."

Tommy credits the academy with positively influencing his personal growth and journey away from gang life. He has surrounded himself with positive influences and finds satisfaction in seeking positive goals and guiding others who want to do the same. Being a coach at the Academy has reinforced his motivations and provides him with a community in which he can positively impact the next generation.

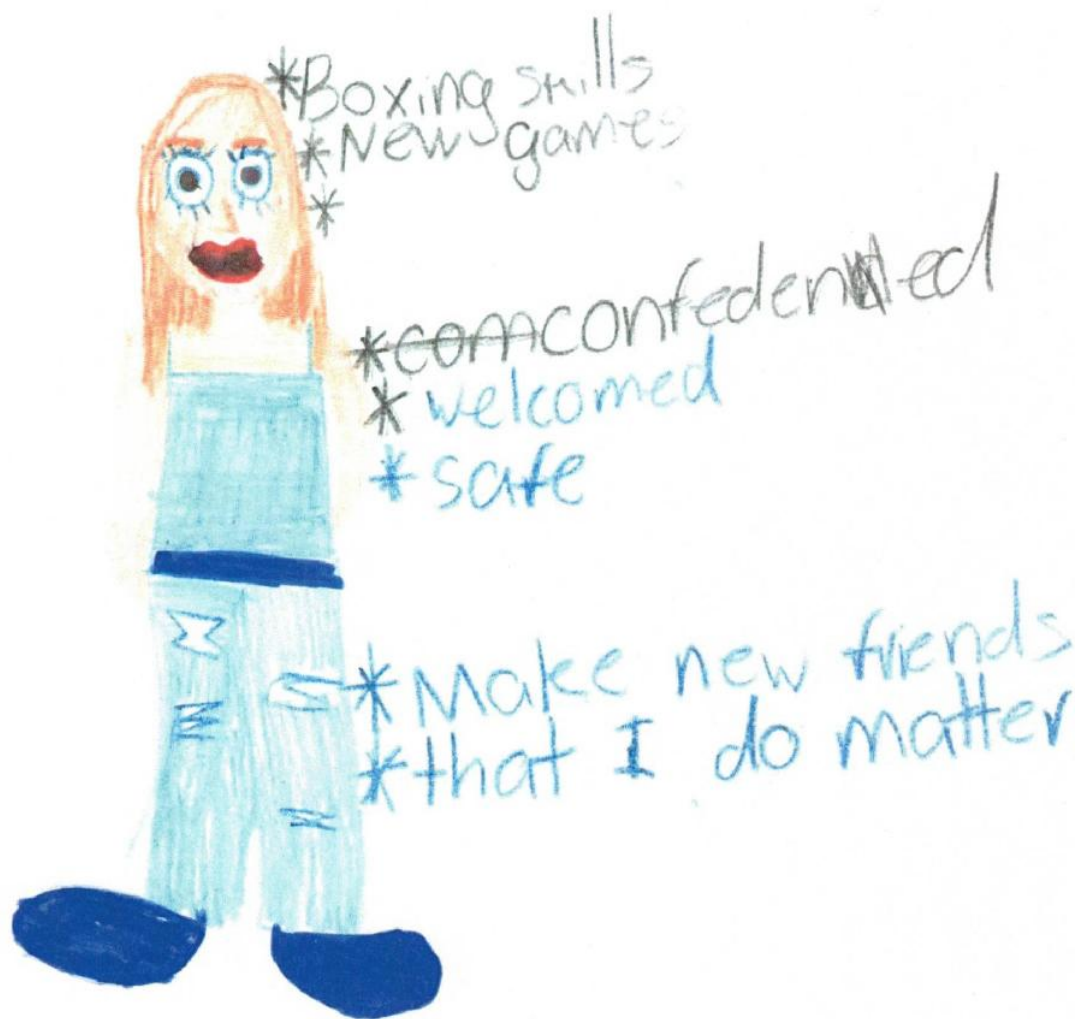
Results

Minis and Fundamentals

The storyboards show that alongside learning to box, members have fun, learn CI's values, develop respectful communication, self-confidence, emotional awareness and control, relationship skills and friendships. We selected a range of storyboards to show how members illustrated their experience and development as both boxers and young people. These storyboards are particularly descriptive and show how deeply members can be affected by their experience at academy.







Juniors and Seniors

Experience

When asked, “How much do you like being a member of our academy?”, half of the survey respondents said “Totally!”, and almost all the others said “Heaps”. No one responded “Not really” or “Not at all”.⁶

⁶ “Not sure” responses (n=5) were excluded to help make it clear, amongst those who wanted to express an opinion, how much members liked academy.

Chart 1: Member satisfaction (n=263) (%)

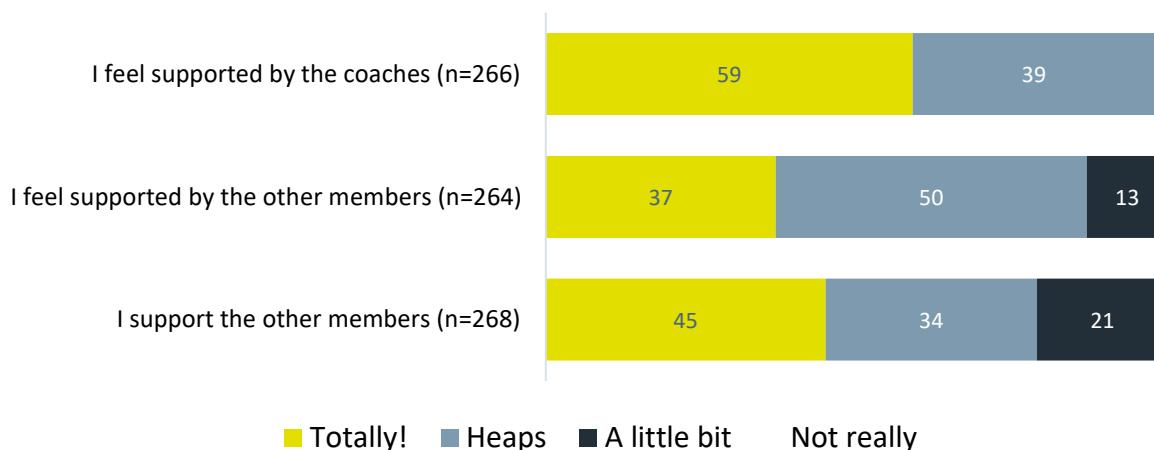


The overall environment is a good mix of fun and discipline. We train hard with the mindset of doing our best, while keeping the sessions fun and enjoyable. Everyone here is positive and motivated, which keeps the academy going strong. The coaches are too epic.

You are still helping me in my fighting style and self-confidence. Mostly motivating me to do better every time I come back. I really like that. Thank you.

As those quotes suggest, members value the supportive environment at their academies. The quantitative data affirms this: almost everyone feels well supported by their coaches but a little less so by other members. The data suggests that some members feel that members could be more supportive of each other. “Not really” does not appear on the chart because only one member said this (in response to “I feel supported by other members”).⁷

Table 2: Support at academy (%)

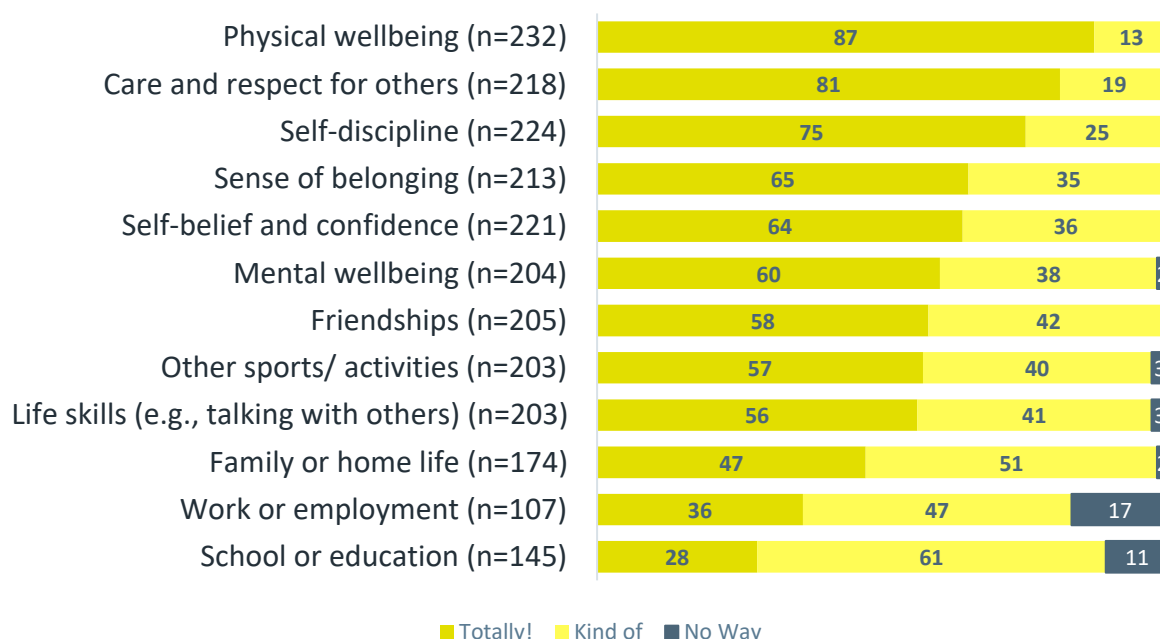


⁷ Blanks and “Not sure” (n=5) responses have been excluded, hence the variance in sample size. Those responses have been excluded to make the distributions of responses amongst those who felt they could express an opinion clear.

Outcomes

Members were asked to indicate the extent to which their academy had helped them in the following areas this year.⁸

Chart 2: Has our academy helped with any of these this year? (%)



A remarkable finding is that *all* respondents who felt they could benefit from help with their physical wellbeing, care and respect for others, sense of belonging, self-belief and confidence, and friendships said their academy had helped.

While the academies were reported to be least helpful in school/education and work/employment compared with other areas, a large majority of respondents said their academy had helped in those areas.

Examples of change:

I have a greater respect for others and myself, better work ethic

Boxing led to a pursuit in personal training and has brought connection of family and a safe environment to learn and prosper. Boxing principles have helped in the workplace with resilience and fortitude under emotional

⁸ The n value varies because the responses “I didn’t need help with this”, “Not relevant” and “I don’t know” have been removed. Those responses have been excluded to make the distributions of responses clear amongst those who felt the item was relevant and that they could express an opinion.

pressure. I also boosted self-confidence which allowed me to connect better with others in conversation. I ran into a lot of health issues that was improved by boxing and learning about the body.

Before I started boxing, I was very unfit and uncoordinated and it has taught me self-discipline and has helped with being more respectful and understanding of others.

Comparing Māori and others

The Champions Initiative is committed to continuous learning, including about matauranga and tikanga Māori. For instance, in 2025 the Initiative held a three-day Hui for all staff at Ōnuku Marae, where they were guided through the history of Aotearoa and the impacts this has had on Māori. Erinna Lane, Director of Systems and Safety, recalls “it was a powerful and confronting experience that deeply moved staff and continues to shape the way they engage with their local communities. It reaffirmed our commitment to everyone, regardless of background, feeling welcome and loved in our spaces and we are seeing more Māori coaches deliver our programmes, which provides important role models”.

The Champions Initiative model requires that academies engage with their local context. “Some use waiata and karakia, while others bring local tikanga into their everyday practices ... We can’t point to one single factor, but we believe these collective efforts are creating meaningful impact.” (Erinna Lane, Director of Systems and Safety, Champions Initiative).

Comparing the survey responses from members who identify as Māori to those who do not show no significant differences in terms of experience or outcomes. This shows that Māori and non-Māori are enjoying and benefiting equally from the Initiative.

Comparing support by gender

When Billy and Kerri Graham established the Naenae Boxing Academy, their focus was on boys. In 2017, the first girls’ classes began at Cannons Creek, and since then the approach has continued to develop and strengthen across the network. While some academies offer mixed sessions, many provide dedicated girls’ classes and have female coaches. The Champions Initiative maintains that best practice — and the best outcomes — are achieved through gender-specific classes.

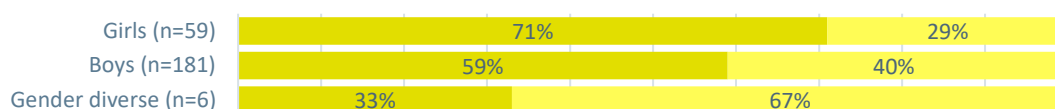


Our evaluation survey asked members how supported they feel and the extent to which they support others. The data shows that girls are significantly more likely to feel “Totally!” supported by other members than boys,⁹ and boys are significantly more likely than girls to say *they* support other members “A little bit”.¹⁰

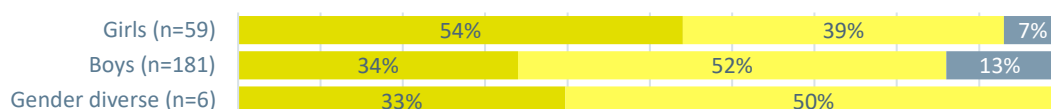
The number of gender-diverse members is too small to allow for statistical analysis. But similarly to girls and boys, their responses show they feel well supported by their coaches and other members.

Charts 3, 4, and 5: Support (%)

Do you feel supported by your coaches at the academy?



The other members at my academy support me



I support the other members at my academy



■ Totally! ■ Heaps ■ A little bit ■ Not really

⁹ $\chi^2=10.12$, $p<0.05$

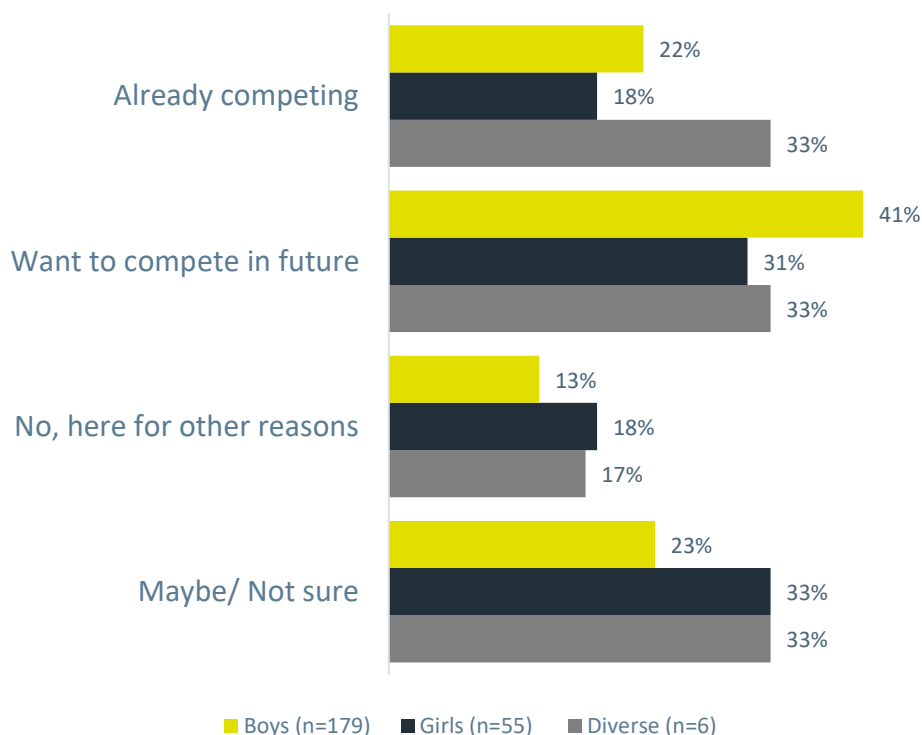
¹⁰ $\chi^2=8.23$, $p<0.05$.

Comparing support by intention to compete

When we look at those who want to compete, there are differences by gender.

Similar proportions of girls and boys at the CI currently compete or want to compete. This suggests they are similarly ambitious in the sport. The chart shows that gender diverse members are competing or are interested in competing too.

Chart 6: Involvement in competition

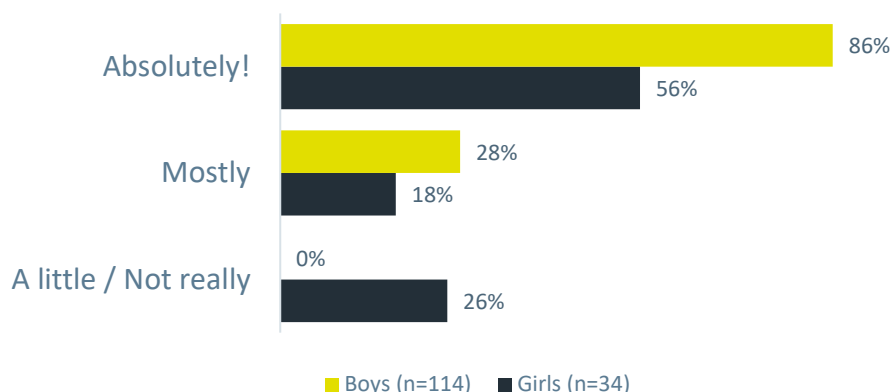


There is an important difference in boys' and girls' perspectives on the amount of support they get to progress in the sport.¹¹ Boys are much more likely than girls to say they are "Absolutely!" being helped to grow and progress, and girls are more likely than boys to say they are "Not really" being helped or helped "A little".¹² No respondent said "Not at all!". The difference between girls' and boys' ratings of Champions Initiative coaching support is large and unlikely to be due to chance.

Chart 7: Are we helping you grow and progress in the sport?

¹¹ The number of gender diverse members is too small to include in the statistical tests.

¹² $\chi^2=32.13$ $p<0.05$

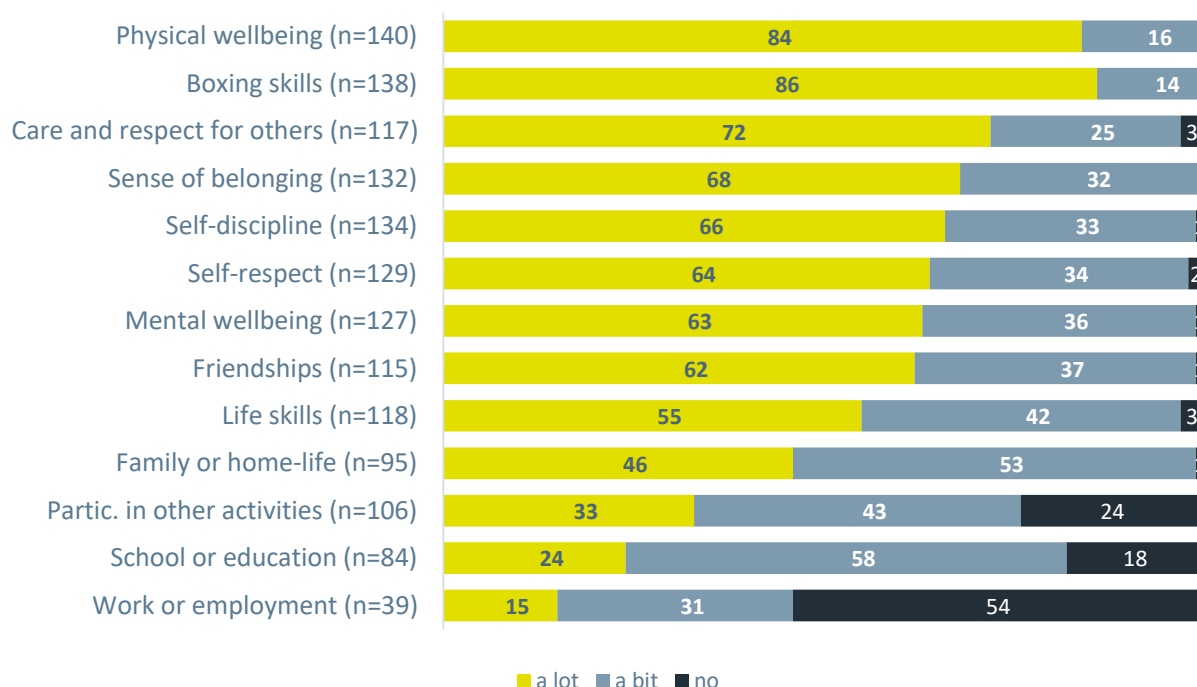


Taken together, these results suggest the CI should consider what more could be done (or done differently) to help girls who want to develop as competitive boxers.

Families and Whānau Views on Member Outcomes

One hundred and seventy-six families and whānau from the seven academies responded to the survey. They were asked: Has your child's academy helped them with any of these this year?¹³

Chart 8: Has our academy helped your child with any of these this year?



¹³ The 'n' values vary because the "I don't know", "Didn't need help with this" and "Not relevant" have been removed.

Sally's story



Sally joined her local academy when she was about 13. She was living with her dad and had a strained relationship with him. "We argued frequently, and he often took his anger out on me. This situation left me feeling angry and frustrated, not knowing where to channel my emotions".

She decided to join the academy because her friend did. They had a winter sport but nothing to do over summer, so looked online for something to do and found the boxing academy. Her friend recognised one of the coaches, so they decided to check it out. "We both felt comfortable and welcomed, which motivated us to join".

At that time, Sally's anger was affecting her friendships. "My friends were scared of me. I was taking out my frustrations on them." She didn't know what to do about it but a coach she connected with at academy really helped. She always talked to me and supported me. My friend who I joined with was also a great support and the actual boxing exercises helped improve my body image and self-esteem". One time a coach had everyone in the class write something positive about each person. "She compiled these into a letter, which I still have today. Reading it always makes me emotional and reminds me of the support I received."

Sally didn't expect to be good at boxing, but she was invited to join development weekends where academies get together for training intensives. "I ended up winning several development belts. This was quite unexpected and exciting for me."

Back when she started, Sally said she was "very angry and aggressive", but as she progressed with her boxing "I became more zen and less easily annoyed". Her friendships improved and she also became more focused on schoolwork. She was invited to start helping with coaching. She enjoyed the work and realised she enjoyed working with kids which led her to participate in Camp America as a camp counsellor.

Now Sally continues to coach and finds fulfilment in helping others. Her journey has influenced her sense of self and professional identity. "I never imagined I would end up as a boxing coach and enjoy working with kids. Boxing has "helped me realize my capabilities and become more zen. It has given me a sense of belonging and a place to evolve". For Sally, the the Academy has given her place of belonging, "where I am wanted and accepted for who I am".

Results show that family and whānau think the academies have helped their young people across all surveyed areas. They say the academies have been most helpful with young people's physical wellbeing, care and respect for others, self-discipline, self-belief and confidence, and sense of belonging. This aligns with where the members themselves reported change.

These quotes are indicative of the range of changes that family and whānau have seen in their children.

He has come out of his shell and is enjoying being himself again. He is a good kid, just needs that confidence boost. We are very thankful for all the effort the academy has put into him.

The academy has helped him develop into a confident, empowered, respectful, and responsible young man.

When he started with the academy he was not in a good place- making very poor decisions socially and at school and had been excluded from school which really knocked his self-esteem and mental wellbeing. He has grown heaps in himself, valuing himself more, respecting others and his behaviour has settled down at both home and school with him being more respectful and disciplined when interacting with others.

My son has only been attending for this term, so I expect we'll see even more of a change in him over time, but he has found something he looks forward to going to/doing (which wasn't the case beforehand), he is much chattier/happier/more engaged with family life for the rest of the evening after attending, he is interested in his health (including realising he eats a lot of crap!)

Community Partner Views on Outcomes

Forty-nine community partners provided feedback from a range of sectors, as indicated in the table below.

Table 3: Community partner sector responses (n=)

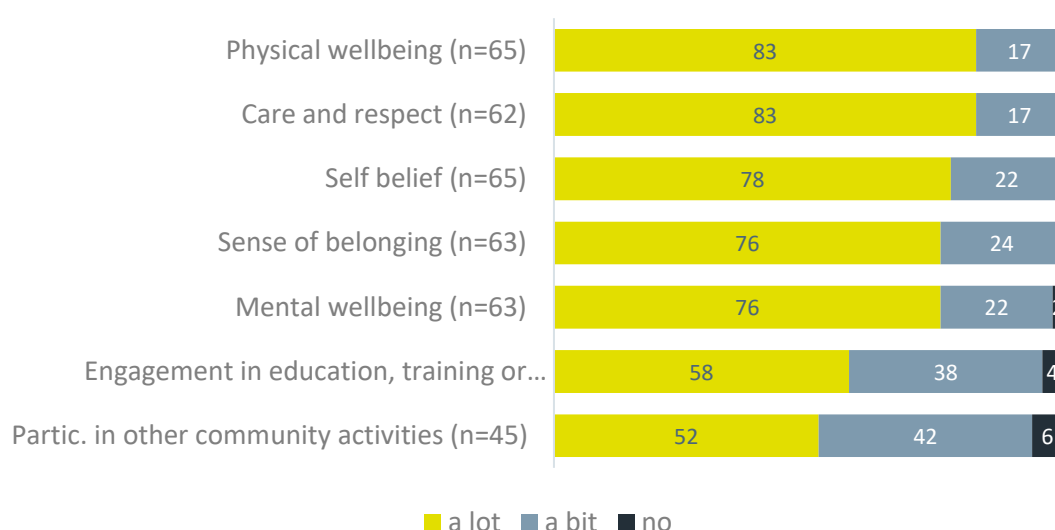
	n
Education	24
Community services or development	8



Youth care and protection	5
Police	4
Other (funding, sports, employment/recruitment, medical)	8
TOTAL	49

They were asked: “Given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?” Again, the feedback indicates the academies are seen to be effective at helping young people make positive change in all surveyed areas.¹⁴

Chart 9: Given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these this year?



These quotes indicate the range of the most important changes that community partners have seen.

We are only 3 sessions in, however I work with one boy in particular who trains outside of school has an incredible set of values for a 13yr old. He has strong mana and self-belief, loyalty, leadership, and respect. As a teacher I have seen him pull other kids into line with a quiet word. He finds me and greets me every day with intention, always shakes hands, sincerely asks how I am and pays attention to my answer. It's a social maturity way beyond his years. That

¹⁴ The 'n' values vary because the “I don't know”, “Didn't need help with this” and “Not relevant” responses have been removed.

is obviously something he has been coached in and stands out from his peers. I attribute this to the academy.

The boys have come together as a group with a strong sense of loyalty. Their focus is incredible, and they follow all instructions with respect.

I can give an example of three fairly neglected teens who are very tight. They were at the cross-roads of acting out and leaving school, but I believe the self-worth and living the academies values got them all the way through to the end of school with no incidents.

What's Driving Change?

The members' survey feedback has been analysed to see what they say helps drive positive change. The most frequently mentioned themes were:

- encouragement and motivation (mentioned 72 times)
- support (mentioned 54 times)
- values-based (mentioned 42 times)
- explaining and teaching (mentioned 38 times)
- building relationships (mentioned 28 times)

These quotes illustrate how those themes were evident in the respondents' comments.

Encouragement

By pushing me through the pain in fitness and cheering on for me.

Building relationships, explaining and teaching

Being patient and kind to us young people with this sport. Building connections with us and helping us improve in boxing

Support and values-based

The team checking in with the fighters especially regarding emotional care, support during mental resistance due to rigorous training, consistency, and a supportive, kind, and compassionate team that created a peer-supportive environment.



Explaining and teaching

By being around confident and great coaching. I was able to learn off that and apply it to my own stuff.

Those themes were also evident in the community partners' and families' feedback. In addition, families and community partners often mentioned the coaches' role-modelling as a reason for change.

Role-modelling and values

They [the coaches] exemplify the values they teach. They are authentic in their interactions and the boys know this.

Role-modelling, values and support

Modelling and demanding good behaviour and exercise. Providing connection/belonging. Praise and recognition for good boxing, leadership etc enabled growth in self-respect and self-discipline

While the members did not explicitly refer to role-modelling, it is evident that they saw their coaches behaving as they expected them to behave, i.e., in positive ways.

Taken together, the responses show that young people respond well to the CI's values-base, their coaches' belief in young people's potential, their guidance and encouragement, and their ability to build positive relationships. We suggest this helps young people feel safe and supported to connect with others, talk about thoughts and feelings, and try new skills. We would also suggest that routines, such as welcoming people to the gym, group check-ins to start and finish class, group-based exercises and games, and discussing and implementing the values, help young people practice values-based behaviours while building positive relationships.

What Could be Improved?

There was much less survey feedback about improvements, but some themes emerged.

Whānau indicated they would like more hours, especially for younger members.



Twice weekly classes for intermediate age – I notice a big difference in the teenager who attends twice a week with regards to sense of belonging and club involvement, as well as fitness and friendships.

One thing I'd love to see is maybe an extra training session during the week. Just having one more would help reinforce what my son's learned both in terms of skills and fitness. He's really enjoying it, and I think that extra time would help build on what he's doing.

Capacity constraints were also raised by community partners', noting long wait times for places at local academies.

Some whānau said there could be better communication about things parents need to know. They also indicated they would like to know more about what their tamariki are doing at the academy.

Whānau contact could use some work. I don't know about everyone else's teenagers but mine often forgets to pass on really important information. I'd appreciate information earlier and either a notice or email.

More comms & updates on social media, so families can see what sort of training has taken place

Community partners also identified communication as an area where improvements could be made.

Ensure schools get timely notification of places availability. It was difficult to get H+S forms out to families and returned and then approved by our H+S team. We had a week to turn this all around.

Punctuality was mentioned by a small percentage of parents from a few academies.

Consistency - the morning trainings were sometimes more than an hour and sometimes half an hour, which made drop-off and pick-up hard.

Time management & punctuality for trainers and session times. Sometimes can go later than expected.



Conclusions

The data shows that the CI is making significant progress towards its intended outcomes for young people: ‘Find a Place of Belonging’, ‘Actively Engage’, ‘Pursue their Potential’, and develop ‘Skill Mastery’ and an ‘Outward Focus’. The data from all academies shows that young people respond well to the Champions Initiative approach to coaching and its routines (such as shaking hands and check-ins). Furthermore, the members report very high rates of positive change, as do whānau and community partners. This suggests the Champions Initiative model is being consistently implemented across the network. Our finding that the Champions Initiative is helping young people make positive change, including young people who may be considered ‘at risk’, is consistent with literature that suggests boxing grounded in positive youth-development can help young people exposed to negative influences walk-away from conflict and anti-social influences without losing face (Gordon, 2022; Ryan 2024): Boxing has credibility, and the Champions Initiative welcomes young people into a pro-social community. Gluckman (2018) noted how important it is for young people at risk of getting caught-up in “snares” to find thrilling, pro-social alternatives coupled with admiration and positive feedback and respect from their peers – our evaluation shows that the Champions Initiative offers this.

A remarkable finding is that *all* Junior and Senior members surveyed reported their academy had (“Totally!” Or “Kind of”) helped them with their:

- Physical wellbeing
- Care and respect for others
- Self-discipline
- Sense of belonging
- Self-belief
- Friendships

There were no significant differences in the extent of outcomes by gender or for Māori and non-Māori. But there were some differences in members’ experiences:

- Girls were more likely to indicate feeling “Totally!” supported by other members than boys
- Girls were more likely to indicate they “Totally” support other members
- Girls who are competing or want to compete were less likely than boys to indicate they are “Absolutely!” being helped to progress in the sport.



That the Champions Initiative could benefit from considering what it could do to be more supportive of women who want to compete may be expected, given that a comprehensive review of research about women in boxing found that the entry of women into the sport has required the negotiation of approaches to management and coaching because boxing has traditionally been dominated by men and seen as a masculine sport (Orszaghova, 2023).

Recommendations

Given these findings, we recommend the CI consider:

- Enhancing coaching pathways and support for girls who want to develop as competitive boxers
- Helping boys be more supportive of each other.

Members, families and whānau, and community partners also suggested expanding opportunities for young people to connect with the Initiative and wanting more timely and thorough communication.



References

Education Review Office, 2024. *Challenging behaviours in New Zealand classrooms at critical levels*. <https://ero.govt.nz/news/challenging-behaviours-in-new-zealand-classrooms-at-critical-levels>

Health New Zealand, 2024. *Youth Health*. [Youth health – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

Gluckman, P., 2018. *It's never too early, never too late: A discussion paper on preventing youth offending in New Zealand*. Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor. Available at www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-10/pmcsa-its-never-too-early-Discussion-paper-on-preventing-youth-offending-in-NZ.pdf

Gordon, B. et al, 2022. *Inside the 'black box' of a long-term sport-based youth development boxing academy in New Zealand*. Sport in Society. DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2021.1920928

Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, 2024. *Focus on youth wellbeing more urgent than ever*. Available at [Focus on youth wellbeing more urgent than ever | Te Hīringa Mahara—Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission](#)

Ministry of Social Development, 2022. *The National Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021 Overview Report 2022*. [Youth health and wellbeing survey - What-About-Me? - Ministry of Social Development](#)

Orszaghova, M., 2023. *The gender of bruising: a critical literature review on gender in boxing*. Sociology Compass. DOI.org/10.1111/soc4.13121

Ryan, A. et al, 2024. *A community perspective on boxing, wellbeing and young people*. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology. *Social Psychology*. DOI.org/10.1002/casp.70024

Williams, K., 2024. *Bad behaviour in Kiwi classrooms a rapidly growing issue, report finds*. Available at <https://www.stuff.co.nz/nz-news/350228680/bad-behaviour-kiwi-classrooms-rapidly-growing-issue-report-finds> Accessed 27 August 2024.





NAENAE BOXING ACADEMY 2025

Naenae Boxing Academy is part of a network of boxing academies supported by the Champions Initiative. The academies and Initiative work together to establish leading-practice, youth focused boxing gyms to develop champion young people who contribute to their communities. Point and Associates was commissioned to evaluate their approach to assess their impact. This report is part of a wider set of reports about each of the other academies and the Champions Initiative as a whole.



Naenae Boxing Academy

Naenae Youth
Charitable Trust

All the academy's youngest ('Fundamental') members (ages 11 and under) and about two-thirds of Junior and Senior members (12-24 years) participated in the evaluation. Thirty-six whānau and nine community partners also provided feedback.

Fundamental Members

Head - You help me learn how to box :)

Heart - the gym makes me feel comfortable because the people are nice.

Feet - Makes me respectful



Head - The People I'm around makes me feel good

Heart - The gym helps me focus on what I need to do to be better

Feet - Makes me feel good and have respect



Thirty-four young (11 years and under) members completed storyboards to describe how the academy makes them feel, what they have learnt and what it has helped them do. The storyboards show that at NBA tamariki feel welcome, safe, respected, excited and happy at academy. They develop care and respect for others and are provided with guidance and support to do their best while they learn how to box.

The gym has helped me learn respect towards others

You guys make me feel like I'm protected, I'm real, and like I'm supposed to be here. I also feel like I am happy and excited.

Juniors and Seniors

NBA contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes.

49 Junior and Senior members completed a survey.

- They all feel well supported by their coaches and most feel well supported by the other members. Some feel they could be more supportive of the other members.
- They all said NBA has helped them develop physical wellbeing, self-belief and confidence, friendships, life skills and mental wellbeing.
- Almost all members were helped with their care and respect for others, self-discipline and in other sports or activities and family or home life.

	Helped A Lot (%)	Helped A Bit	Didn't help
Gained fitness and strength	89	11	
Care and respect for others	80	20	
Self-discipline	77	23	
Sense of belonging and connectedness	69	31	
Mental wellbeing (thoughts and feelings)	68	33	
Life skills (e.g., communication)	68	30	
Self-belief and confidence	62	38	
Friendships	59	41	
Other sports and rec. activities	56	44	
Family or home life	44	52	
Other sports and rec. activities	56	44	
Family or home life	55	42	
Work or employment	33	47	20
School or education	23	59	18

N=49. "Not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Being welcomed into the community at Naenae boxing academy really boosted my self-confidence in approaching and talking to people, along with pushing to ask for things, as I was shy about this before. Also, the help with snack bars and fruit and veg each week really helped me a lot keeping my food intake on track. I love the push to your limits on fitness

Senior members said...

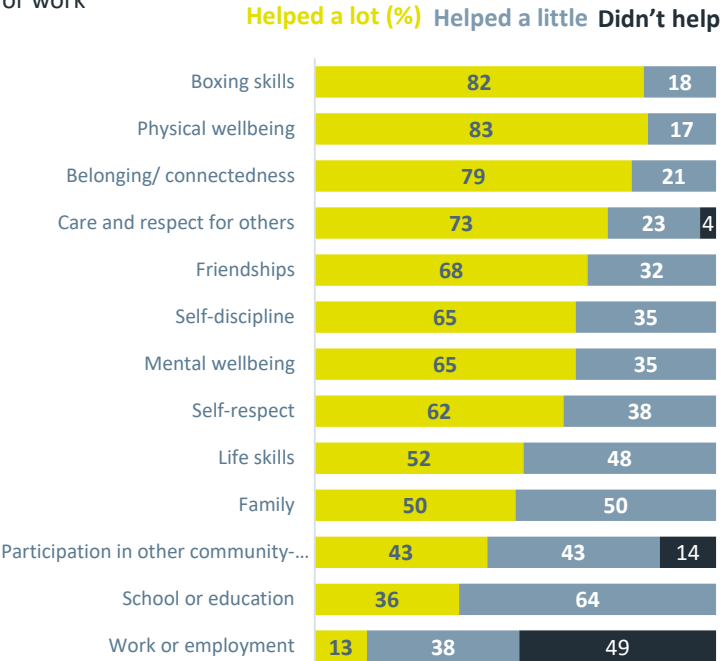
I'm more confident, happy, and fitter, and keen to put myself out there and explore out of my comfort zone

Boxing has helped me gain a more positive look on my physical and mental health and helped me grow to my best potential. I've learnt more about myself through the academy and learnt many useful lessons from the coaches and friends. I've made close friendships through boxing and am very grateful for how supportive everyone here is.



Whānau and Families

The 36 surveys completed by whānau show the extent to which they see their tamariki have benefited from academy this year. All whānau indicated their tamariki have been helped to improve their boxing skills, physically and mental wellbeing and social skills. They also indicated they've been helped with school or education and half have been helped with their employment or work



N=36. "Not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Whānau said NBA has helped their tamariki by making them feel included and that they belong. The coaches communicate and connect well with the members. They provide a safe environment in which the members are encouraged to train hard to get fit and develop their boxing skills.

Good communication, encouraging teaching and inclusive of everyone.

Encourage toughness, patience and perseverance

Saw potential and put time into him to develop further

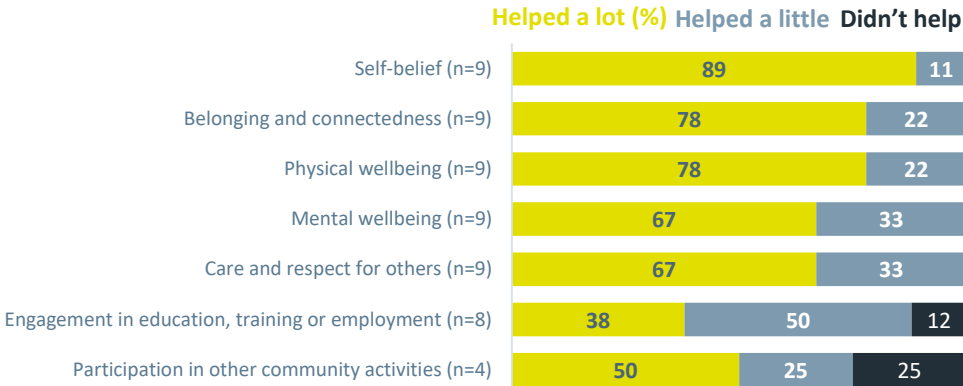
Clear standards delivered with genuine care; consistent coaching; a safe space with high challenge; positive role models and a strong sense of whānau (family) and manaakitanga (care) that kept the girls engaged and thriving.

You provided a welcoming and safe environment for him to grow his boxing and life skills

Showing up for our kids. Your patience and delivery when speaking to our kids. Giving them your time, I know my son respects that a lot.

Community

The nine community partners are in education, policing and law enforcement, youth care and protection and youth and community development. They were asked, "given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?" The "I don't know" responses have been removed.



The agencies said NBA helps young people make positive change through mana-enhancing relationships. The coaches have credibility, are positive, communicate clearly and connect with young people of all ages and abilities. They are consistent with their boundaries and expectations of the members, but they also have fun.

The staff have a way of encouraging our rangatahi with waiata, mihi and the mix of physical activity. The encouragement for the effort the kids put in enhances their mana. They are always made to feel welcome and participate.

They behave with mana and uphold the mana of the boys. They are skilled athletes too.

Respect, compassion, understanding of tricky behaviour and utilising mana enhancing and empowering ways of dealing with it

The debrief at the end of the sessions is encouraging tamariki to express gratitude and recognise success and achievement in themselves, as well as each other.

CANNONS CREEK BOXING ACADEMY 2025

CCBA is part of a network of boxing academies supported by the Champions Initiative. The academies and Initiative work together to establish leading-practice, youth focused boxing gyms to develop champion young people who contribute to their communities. Point and Associates was commissioned to evaluate their approach to assess their impact. This report is part of a wider set of reports about each of the other academies and the Champions Initiative as a whole.

About two-thirds of the academy's youngest ('Fundamental') members ages 11 and under and one half of Junior and Senior members ages 12-24 participated in the evaluation. Sixteen whānau and three community partners also provided feedback.

Fundamental Members

Head-What have we helped you learn?

Defence
[Boxing] Punching
Foot work
fitness
Respectful
Maanakitanga
everything



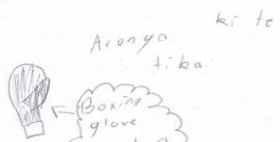
Heart-How do you feel about boxing and coming to the academy?

I enjoy coming to boxing and on Mondays and Wednesdays I am excited to go even when my friends may ask me to play a game with them after school but I don't miss out because I get to come here and learn boxing

kōrero Tika

Feet-What have we helped you with?

I have learnt boxing, respect, and at boxing I don't feel shy or worried to talk and I can be myself at the beginning when we do a check in its fun and you can learn from it.



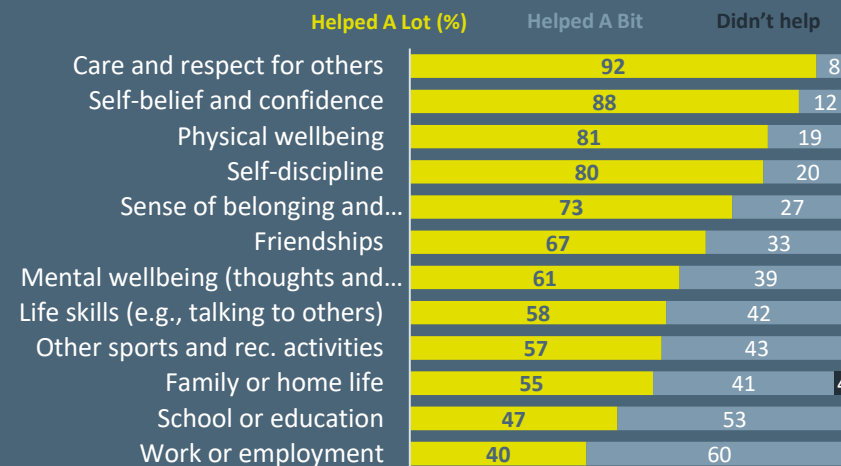
Thirty young members completed storyboards to describe how the academy makes them feel, what they have learnt and what it has helped them do. The storyboards show that at CCBA tamariki feel welcome, safe, respected, excited and happy at academy. They develop care and respect for others and are provided with guidance and support to do their best while they learn how to box.

Juniors and Seniors

CCBA contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes.

26 Junior and Senior members completed a survey.

- All feel well supported by their coaches and most feel well supported by the other members. Some feel they could be more supportive of the other members.
- All respondents said CCBA helped them make improvements in almost all areas.
- The respondents said the academy had most helped them with their care and respect for others and self-belief and confidence.



N=26. "Not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

I've been going to boxing at the Cannons Creek Academy for about 7 months now and it's really helped me improve not only my physical fitness but has also helped me grow connections and feel like I have a second home away from home.

It helped me with confidence and in my general mood. Its rewarding hard work.

Senior members said...

More confidence, like speaking to many people. And ever since I started I cared more about my body like what I eat and exercise.

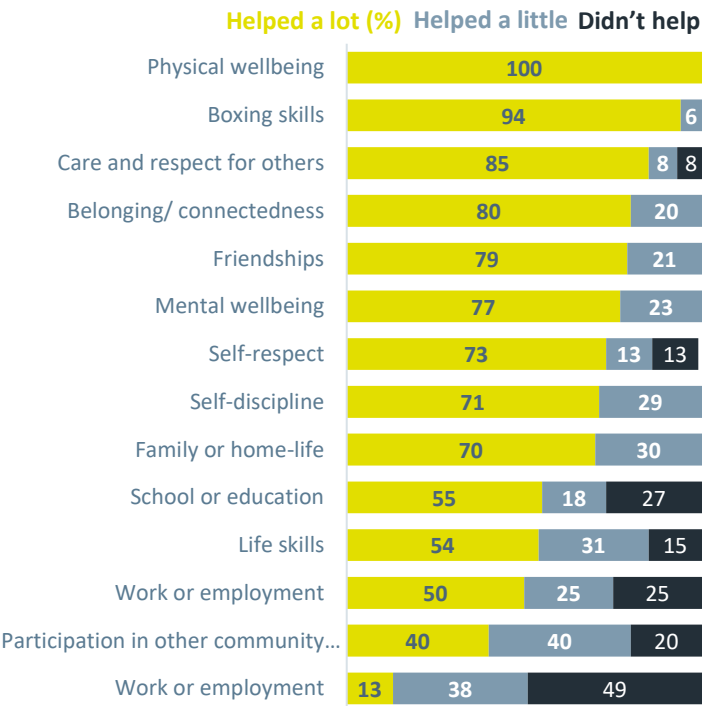
I used to get mad really easy and now I can calm down and just breathe also my self-discipline so much better

I've definitely become a better person, completely changed my life.



Whānau and Families

The 16 surveys completed by whānau show the extent to which they see their tamariki have benefited from CCBA this year. All families and whanau indicated their tamariki have been helped by CCBA to improve their physical wellbeing, boxing skills, sense of belonging and connectedness, friendships, mental wellbeing, self-discipline and family or home life.



N=16. "Not sure" and "They didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Whānau feedback show CCBA helped their tamariki by making them feel included and that they belong. The coaches communicate and connect well with the members. They provide a safe environment in which the members are encouraged to train hard to get fit and develop their boxing skills.

Being supportive and encouraging. Talking to him about his strengths so that he hears it from someone other than his parents

Provide family environment warm and welcoming also teaching the kids life skills that they can use outside of boxing. Mental toughness, resilience etc

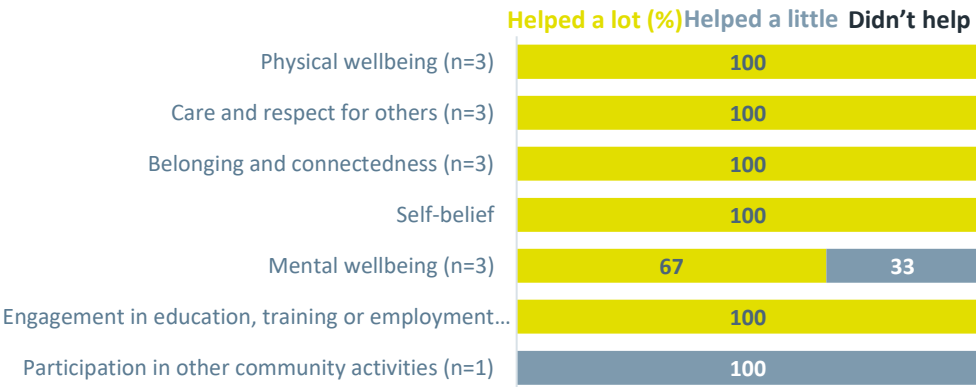
Provided an environment and culture of non-invasive genuinely caring kaupapa

Mentorship. Respect, discipline. Just being there and being consistent. Also the tutors monitor the skill level of each student and are highly engaged and dedicated to what they do. I really think it's incredible, and we can't thank you enough for the hard work and many long hours.



Community

The three community partners are in education and community development. They were asked, "given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?"



The agencies said CCBA helps young people make change through their positivity and attentiveness. They work to people's strengths and make everyone feel included, give individualised attention where needed and make the lessons fun while also having clear boundaries and expectations.

The strength in team (from the office workers to the coaches) the sense of kotahitanga we all felt while in their presence and encouragement towards our tamariki. Coaches always had nothing but a positive approach towards our tamariki.

The tutors helped some find a passion for boxing by making it engaging and fun while learning things along the way.

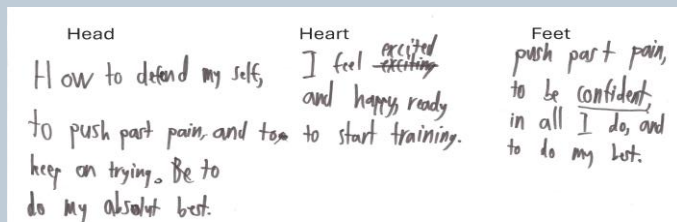
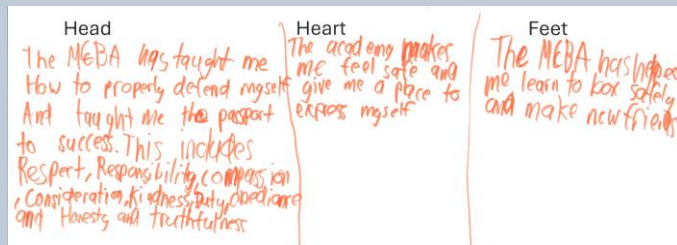
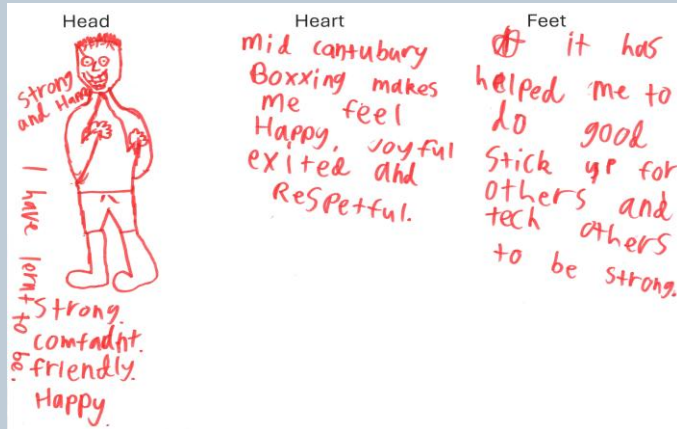
Teach: They take time out of the lesson to work on a tauria when they need extra help, they are always available and approachable.

MID CANTERBURY BOXING ACADEMY 2025

Mid-Canterbury Boxing Academy in Ashburton is part of a network of boxing academies supported by Champions Initiative. The academies and Initiative work together to establish leading-practice, youth focused boxing gyms to develop champion young people who contribute to their communities. Point and Associates was commissioned to evaluate their approach to assess their impact. This report is part of a wider set of reports about each of the other academies and Champions Initiative as a whole.

Almost all Fundamental (ages 11 and under) and Junior and Senior (ages 12-24) members participated in the evaluation. Eleven whānau and three community partners also provided feedback.

Fundamentals



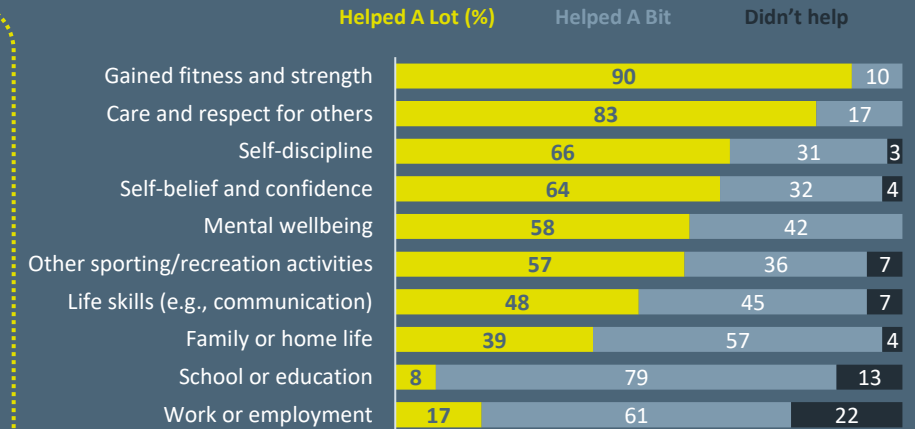
Thirteen members (11 years and under) completed storyboards to describe how the academy makes them feel, what they have learnt and what it has helped them do. The storyboards show that at MCBA tamariki are supported and encouraged to do their best while they learn how to box. They feel respected, safe and happy at academy. They learn values, develop friendships and become stronger and more physically fit.

Juniors and Seniors

MCBA contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes.

29 Junior and Senior members completed a survey.

- **Almost all** feel well supported by their coaches.
- **Most** feel well supported by the other members, and most feel they could be more supportive of the other members.
- **All** said MCBA has helped them improve their physical and mental wellbeing and develop more care and respect for others.
- **Almost all** reported gains in self-discipline, self-belief, confidence, and support with family or home life.



N=29 "Not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Before I started boxing, I was very unfit and uncoordinated. It has taught me self-discipline and has helped with being more respectful and understanding of others

Started caring more about people now which led me to making more friends.

Senior members said...

MCBA is good at involving you and making you feel part of something more than yourself. Gives you a goal and something to work towards

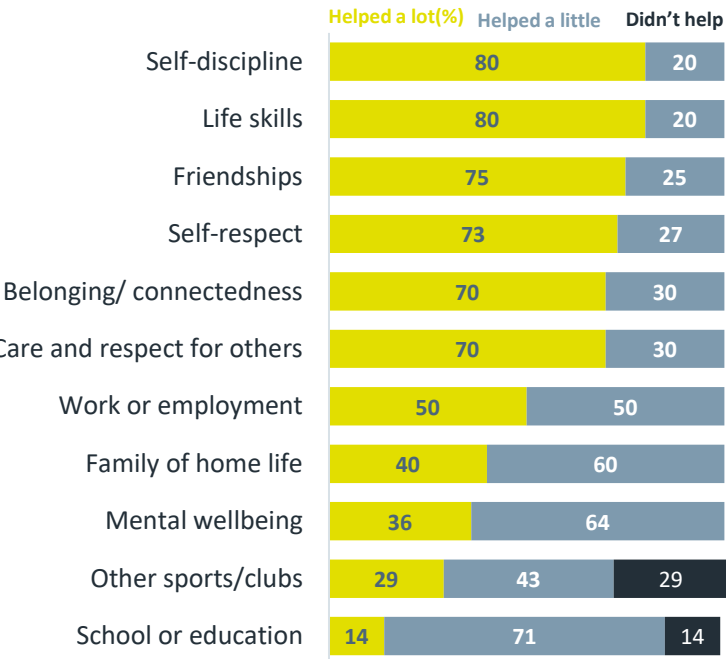
They support the youth with turning their negative thoughts of them self into positive outlooks inside the gym as well as everyday life tasks



Whānau and Families

The 11 surveys completed by families and whānau show the extent to which they see their tamariki have benefited from academy this year. All families and whānau indicated their tamariki have been helped by MCBA to improve their boxing skills, physical and mental wellbeing and social skills. Most also indicated that their tamariki have been helped with their school or work.

All whānau told us that their young person had improved their boxing skills and physical fitness. They also said they noticed improvements in...



“Not sure” and “They didn’t need help” responses have been excluded.

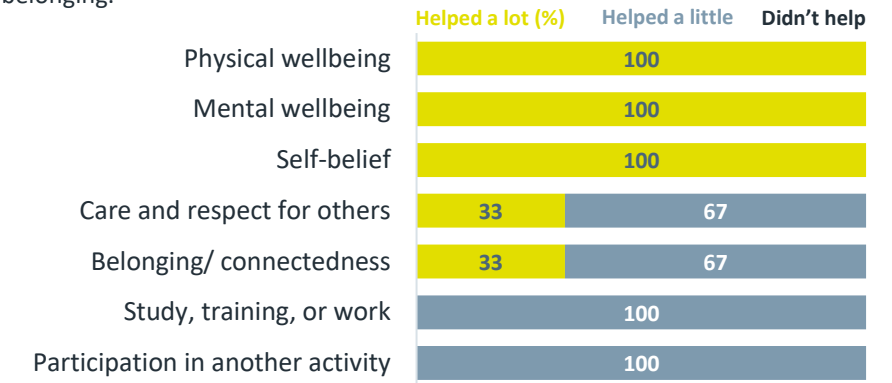


Families and whānau said MCBA has helped their tamariki by making them feel included. They said the coaches communicate and connect well, work from a strong values-base, and provide a safe environment in which the members are encouraged to train hard to get fit and develop their boxing skills.



Community

The three community partners all work in education. They were asked, “given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?” They said MCBA had helped “A lot” with their young people’s physical and mental wellbeing and self-belief. They also reported the academy had helped with their young peoples develop more care and respect for others and a sense of belonging.



Partner agencies said MCBA supports young people to make positive change through the example set by its coaches. The coaches are seen as strong role models, they are positive, good communicators, open to talking about feelings, and able to connect with young people of all ages on multiple levels. They are consistent in maintaining boundaries and expectations, while also bringing fun and energy. Partners described the important changes they have observed as follows:



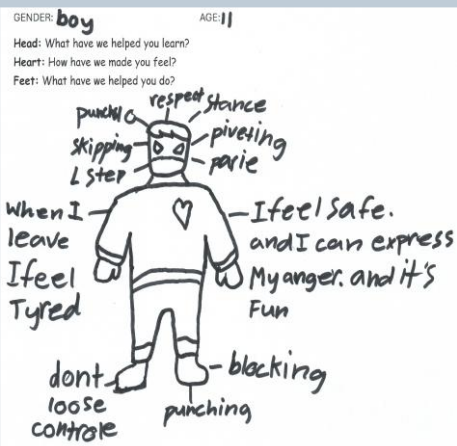
TABA is part of a network of boxing academies supported by the Champions Initiative. The academies and Initiative work together to establish leading-practice, youth focused boxing gyms to develop champion young people who contribute to their communities. Point and Associates was commissioned to evaluate their approach to assess their impact. This report is part of a wider set of reports about each of the other academies and the Champions Initiative as a whole.



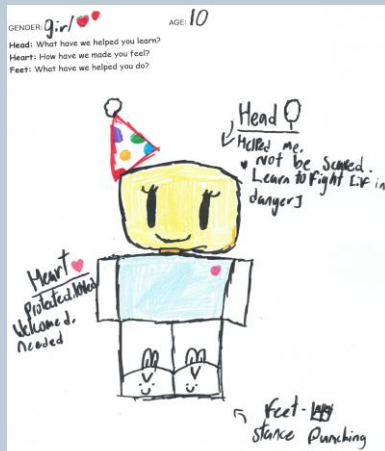
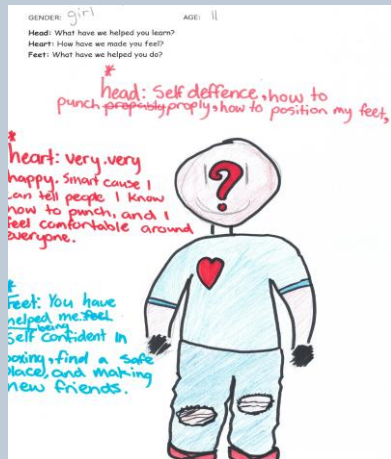
Te Awamutu Boxing Academy

Almost all the academy's youngest ('Fundamental') members did a storyboard and more than half of Junior and Senior members answered the survey. Thirty-five whānau and nine community partners also provided feedback.

Fundamental Members



The storyboards describe how the academy makes their youngest members (11 and under) feel, what they have learnt and what the academy has helped them do. The storyboards show TABA tamariki feel welcome, safe, respected, excited and happy at the academy. They develop care and respect for others and have fun while they learn how to box. Furthermore, members have developed emotional regulation and self-control and better relationships with friends and family.



Juniors and Seniors

TABA contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes.

50 Junior and Senior members (12 to 24 years) completed a survey.

- All respondents feel well supported by their coaches and most feel well supported by the other members. Some feel they could be more supportive of the other members.
- Almost all respondents said TABA has helped them make improvements in most of the areas surveyed.
- The areas of most impact were physical wellbeing, self-discipline and care and respect for others.

	Helped A Lot (%)	Helped A Bit	Didn't help
Physical wellbeing	88		12
Self-discipline	79		21
Care and respect for others	79		21
Other sports and rec. activities	64		36
Self-belief and confidence	63		37
Sense of belonging or connectedness	63		37
Mental wellbeing	58	37	5
Friendships	57	43	
Life skills (e.g. talking to others)	54	41	4
Work or employment	43	36	21
School or education	34	58	8
Family or home-life	33	61	6

N=26. "Not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Since I've been at the boxing academy I've had more self-confidence in my fighting and defending and I have gained more confidence in my life.

It helped make new friendships and make old ones stronger it's made me have a whole new perspective on how to look at others

Senior
members
said...

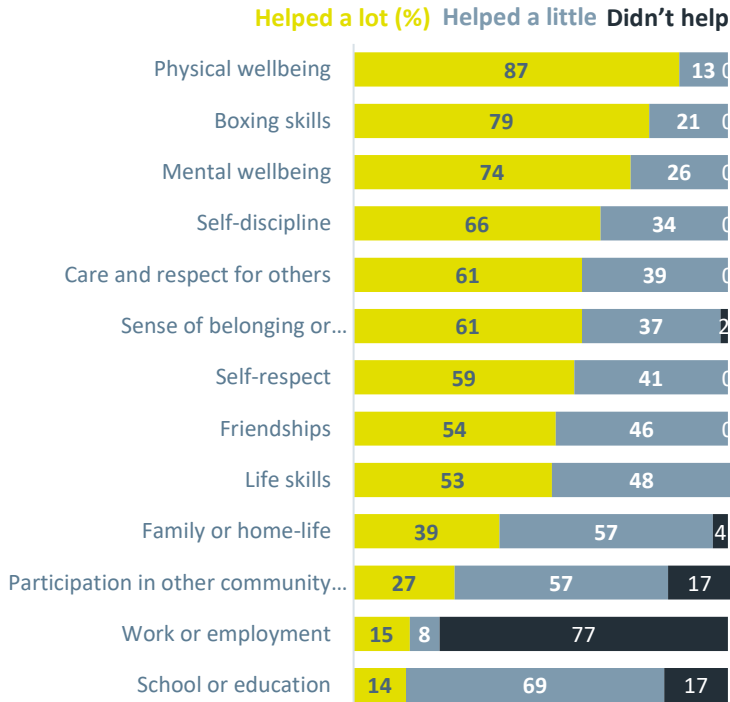
I'm more confident. I can meet with new people and I've got the confidence to talk with other people.

This academy has become a big part of my life. It has helped grow my mental, emotional, physical, spiritual and social well-being in positive ways.



Whānau and Families

The 35 surveys completed by whānau show the extent to which they see their tamariki have been helped by TABA this year. More than half of the respondents said the academy has helped 'A lot' in most areas surveyed. The areas of greatest impact are physical wellbeing and boxing skills, mental wellbeing, self-discipline and care and respect for others, and sense of belonging and connectedness.



N=35. "Not sure" and "They didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Whānau feedback shows TABA helped their tamariki make positive change by making them feel included. The strong values-base is put into action in ways that young people understand and can see. The coaches lead by example, are positive and connect well with the members as a group and individually. The physical training is challenging and purposeful but also fun.

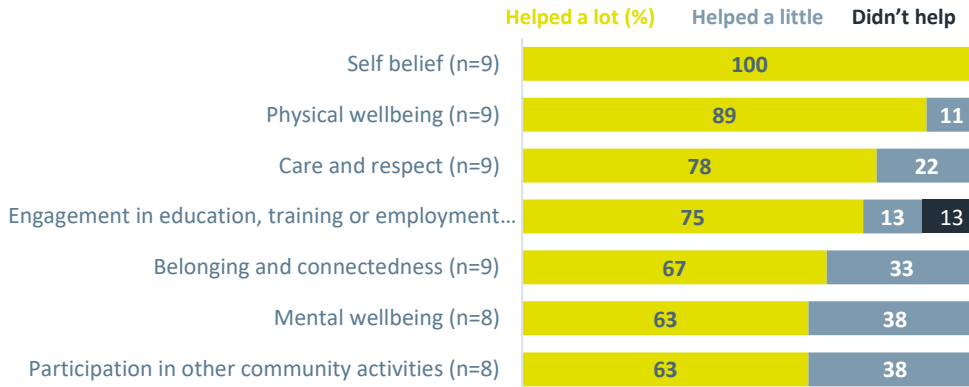
Teaching values, by having frequent talks about respect and how important it is in your community. Having wonderful trainers that the young men respect has made all the difference.

The academy has created an environment where my son is supported both in learning the skills of boxing and in developing as a person. The coaches lead with genuine passion and strong values, which has encouraged him to step up, believe in himself, and work towards his best potential.

You have great structure, rules, guidance and keep it fun. I can see this really works. He thrives on the physicality and having positive male role models. You guys do an amazing job of creating a fun, energetic and vibrant atmosphere where rules are clear and expectations are high.

Community

The nine community partners surveyed for this evaluation are in education (n=8) and Police of law enforcement (n=1). They were asked, "given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?"



The agencies said TABA helps young people make change through their strong relationships with young people. They make the lessons fun, reinforce the values and give individualised attention encouragement and support while also having clear boundaries and expectations.

Having the opportunity for kids to build physical fitness, who may struggle with team sports, gives them a belief they can do it.

The coaching staff are great at contextualising the values into the everyday lives of our students.

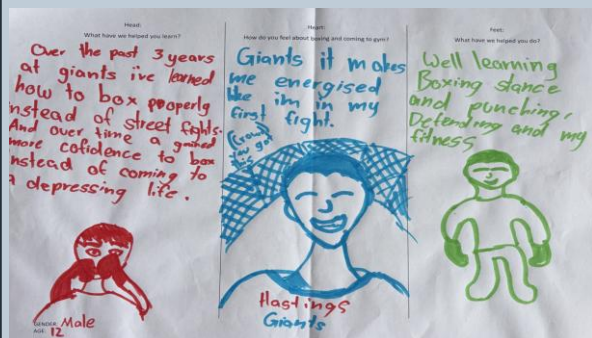
It's being inclusive and treating everyone the same - whether its the stand-out athlete who is actually there to learn to be a boxer, the shy introvert with little confidence, or the loud extrovert who may need to tone it down a bit - they are all treated the same - as a team.

HASTINGS GIANTS BOXING ACADEMY 2025

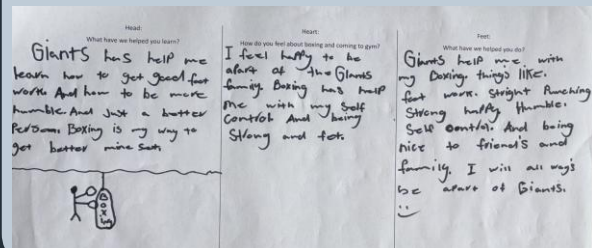
Hastings Giants is part of a network of boxing academies supported by the Champions Initiative. The academies and Initiative work together to establish leading-practice, youth focused boxing gyms to develop champion young people who contribute to their communities. Point and Associates was commissioned to evaluate their approach to assess their impact. This report is part of a wider set of reports about each of the other academies and the Champions Initiative as a whole.

Just over half of the academy's members completed a storyboard or answered a survey for the evaluation. Twenty-two whānau and seven community partners also provided feedback.

Fundamental Members



Thirty-six members (ages 11 and under) described how academy makes them feel, what they have learnt at academy and what that has helped them do. Giants makes them feel welcome, safe, respected, excited and happy at academy. Tamariki develop care and respect for others. They can better regulate their emotions and have better self-control and relationships with friends and family.



You have make me feel stronger, run faster, play better with friends and makes me better at school

Juniors and Seniors

Giants contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes.

28 members aged 12 to 24 completed a survey.

- All feel well supported by their coaches and most feel well supported by the other members. Some members feel they could be more supportive of the other members.
- All member survey respondents said Giants helped them make positive change in all but two of the areas surveyed

	Helped A Lot (%)	Helped A Bit	Didn't help
Physical wellbeing	90		10
Care and respect for others	75		25
Self-discipline	75		25
Sense of belonging or connectedness	75		25
Work or employment	71	21	7
Friendships	67		33
Self-belief and confidence	66		34
Other sports and rec. activities	63		38
Mental wellbeing	62		38
Life skills	52		48
Family or home life	39		61
School or education	23	69	8

N=28. "Not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Boxing gives me a purpose I feel, and has helped me with life skills, made me very disciplined and given me something to work at and a reason to improve myself and my life

Joining the gym has had a trickle on effect where I've gotten involved with other hobbies and developed other interests - I've started saying yes to things.

Senior members said...

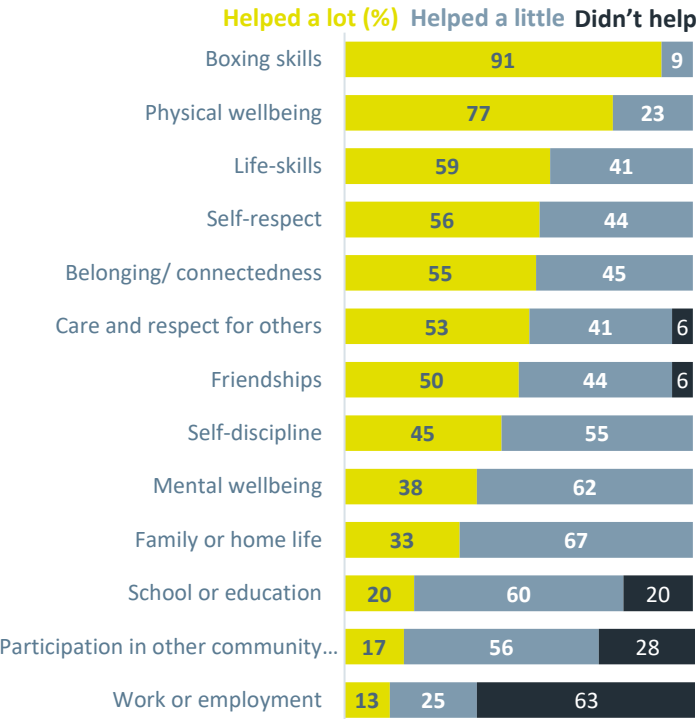
It has helped me a lot with controlling my emotions

It's shown me how to be the best version of myself in my everyday life. I'm living a life that I truly value. I'm grateful for my team at the academy that helps me become a better person. I've also learnt how to encourage others



Whānau and Families

The 22 surveys completed by whānau show the extent to which they see their tamariki have benefited from Hastings Giants this year. All survey respondents see improvements in boxing skills, physical and mental wellbeing, life skills, self-respect and discipline, home-life and sense of belonging and connectedness.



N=22. “Not sure” and “They didn’t need help” responses have been excluded.

Whānau feedback shows Hastings Giants helped their tamariki make positive change by making them feel included. The coaches lead by example, are positive and connect well with the members as a group and individually. They expect the best of young people, provide guidance and create a positive, safe environment in which members are encouraged to train hard to get fit and develop their boxing skills.

A healthy and safe environment to explore what he is capable of giving him the confidence to push himself and set goals to improve himself more and compete.

We really love the kaupapa of Giants. We love that you have a strong sense of whanau, of giving to others and raising each other up instead of tearing each other down. The spirit of this initiative is amazing.

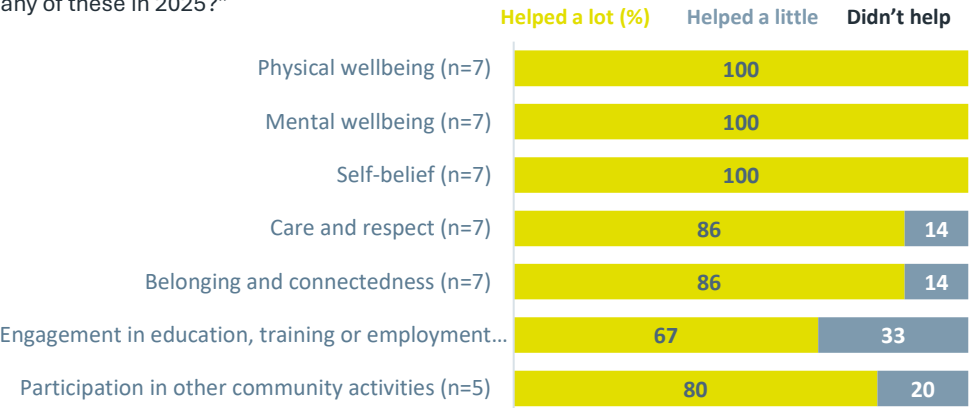
Belong, Believe, Become. It’s as simple as that

They bring people together to grow as people

Making everyone feel like they belong and are welcome from the very second the step foot in the gym

Community

The seven community partners surveyed for this evaluation are in community services and development, sports, education, youth care and protection and employment/recruitment. They were asked, “given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?”



The agencies said Hastings Giants helps young people make change through their role-modelling, positivity and attentiveness. They build strong relationships with young people, reinforce positive values and give individualised attention where needed and make. The lessons are fun while also having clear boundaries and expectations.

Engaging and understand youth, helping as many people as possible

Running sessions that cater to all levels of experience and fitness and include everyone.

Building relationships with clients, open communication. Respectful environment, clear expectations. A space that shows mana and encourages and inspires others to share the values held. Leadership with respect.



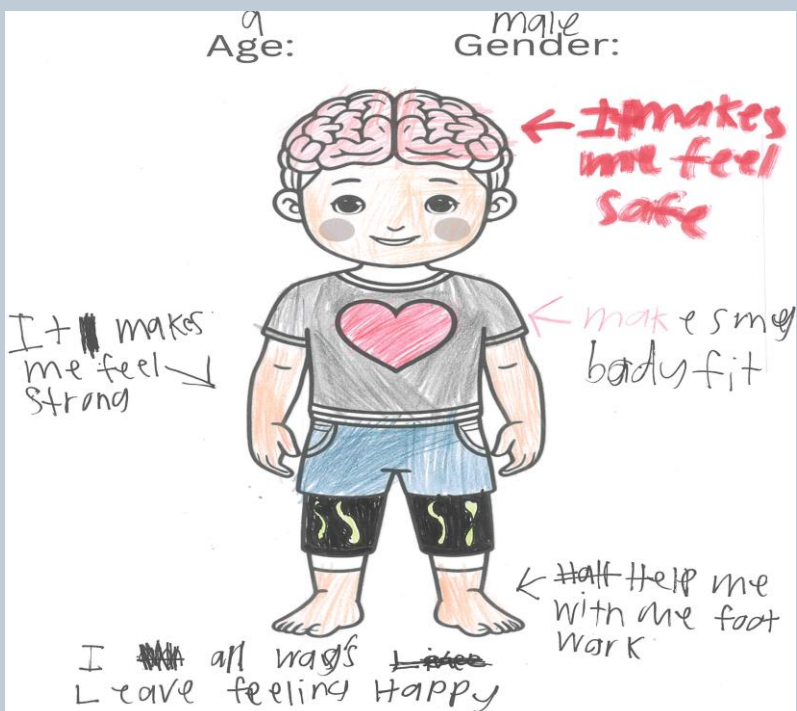
Southern Queens Boxing Gym in Invercargill is part of a network of boxing academies supported by the Champions Initiative. The academies and Initiative work together to establish leading-practice, youth focused boxing gyms to develop champion young people who contribute to their communities. Point and Associates was commissioned to evaluate their approach to assess their impact. This report is part of a wider set of reports about each of the other academies and the Champions Initiative as a whole.



About half the academy's youngest ('Fundamental') members (11 years and under) and all Junior and Senior members (ages 12-24) participated in the evaluation. Fifteen whānau and fourteen community partners also provided feedback.

Fundamental Members

Eleven members (11 years and under) completed storyboards to describe how the academy makes them feel, what they have learnt and what it has helped them do. The storyboards show that at Southern Queens the tamariki are pushed out of their comfort zone while they learn how to box. They are made to feel important, safe and happy at academy, while learning to make better choices, becoming stronger and more physically fit.



Juniors and Seniors

SQBG contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes.

28 Junior and Senior members completed a survey. They all feel well supported by their coaches, almost all feel well supported by the other members, but some feel they could be more supportive of others. They all said Southern Queens has helped them develop physical wellbeing, self-belief and confidence, friendships, life skills and mental wellbeing. Almost all members were also helped with their care and respect for others, self-discipline and in other sports or activities and family or home life.

	Helped A Lot (%)	Helped A Bit	Didn't help
Gained fitness and strength	96	4	
Care and respect for others	85	12	3
Self-discipline	81	11	8
Self-belief and confidence	68	32	
Sense of belonging	65	35	
Friendships	64	36	
Life skills (e.g., communication)	54	46	
Mental wellbeing	52	48	
Other sports and rec. activities	52	44	4
Family or home life	44	52	4
School or education	44	44	12
Work or employment	38	46	16

N=28. "Not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

Boxing led to a pursuit in personal training and has brought connection of family and a safe environment to learn and prosper. Boxing principles have helped in the workplace with resilience and fortitude under emotional pressure. I also boosted self-confidence which allowed me to connect better with others in conversation. I ran into a lot of health issues that was improved by boxing and learning about the body.

Senior members said...

Being physically fit has bettered my mental health which has resulted in positive gains regarding social life, home life and confidence. Discipline especially helps with everyday life

The gym has helped grow my confidence as a person and helped me have a feeling of belonging. Everyone at the gym is so supportive and it feels like a whanau rather than just a gym

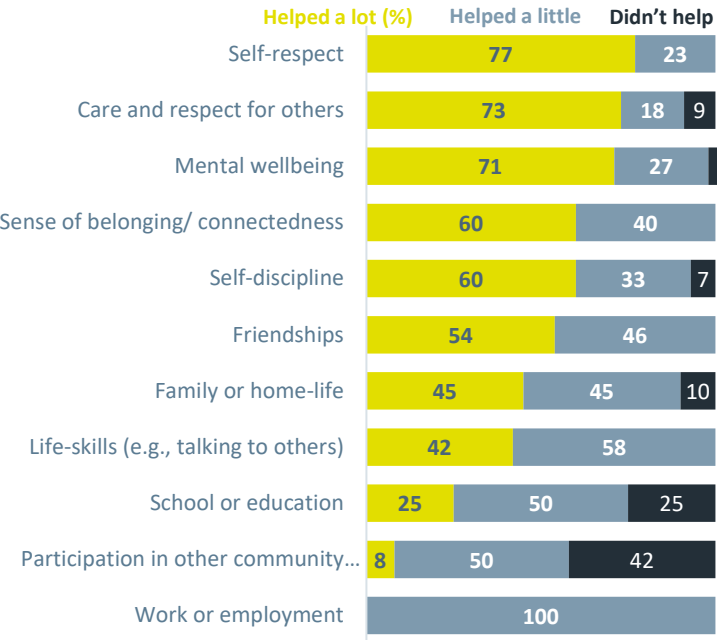
SOUTHERN QUEENS BOXING GYM 2025



Whānau and Families

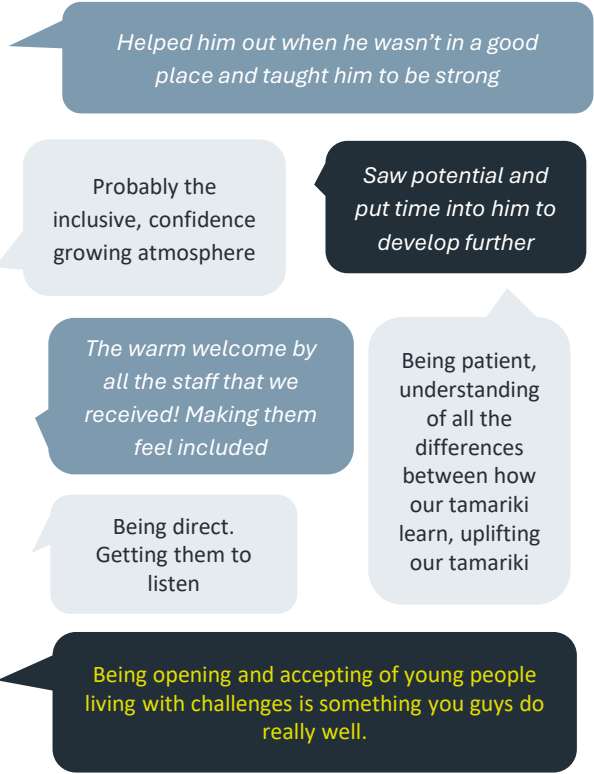
The 15 surveys completed by families and whānau show the extent to which they see their tamariki have benefited from academy this year. All families and whanau indicated their tamariki have been helped by SQBG to improve their boxing skills, physical wellbeing, self-respect, self-belief and confidence, sense of belonging, friendships and life-skills.

All whānau told us that their young person had **improved** their boxing skills and physical wellbeing. They also said they noticed improvements in...



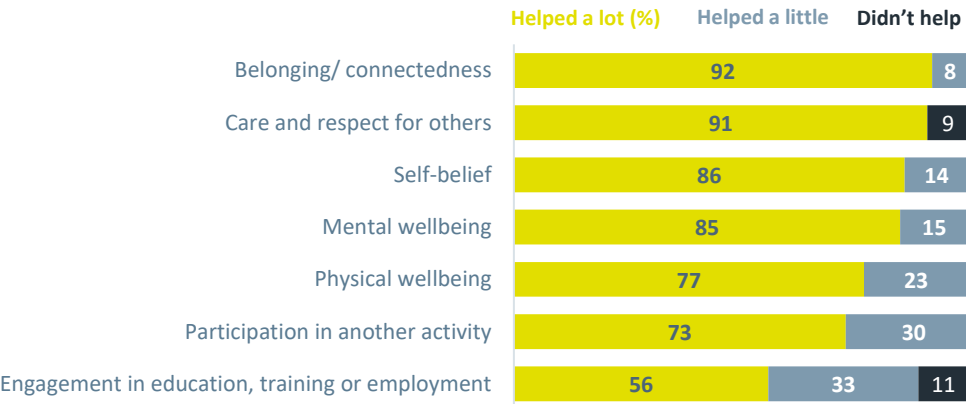
“Not sure” and “They didn’t need help” responses have been excluded.

Families and whanau said Southern Queens has helped their tamariki by making them feel welcome and included, believing in the tamariki, expecting great things from them, and providing individualised attention and support.

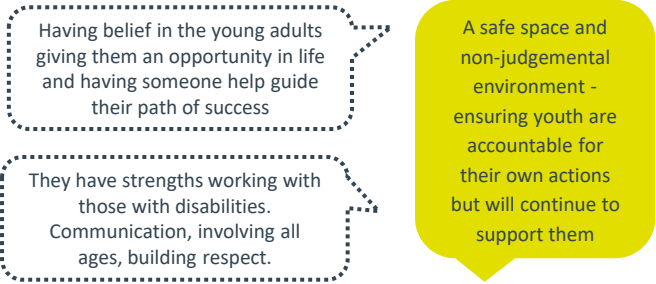


Community

Fourteen community partners in sectors including education, social work, Police and youth care and protection asked, “given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?” All partner agencies said SQBG had helped “A lot” with young people’s sense of belonging, care and respect for others, self-belief, mental and physical wellbeing and participation in community activities.



Partner agencies said Southern Queens helps young people make positive change by taking a holistic approach, having belief in and expecting great things from their young people, providing guidance and support, and connecting with them as individuals.



WAIRARAPA BOXING ACADEMY 2025

WBA is part of a network of boxing academies supported by the Champions Initiative. The academies and Initiative work together to establish leading-practice, youth focused boxing gyms to develop champion young people who contribute to their communities. Point and Associates was commissioned to evaluate their approach to assess their impact. This report is part of a wider set of reports about each of the other academies and the Champions Initiative as a whole.



Almost all the academy's members provided completed a storyboard or answered a survey for the evaluation. Sixteen whānau and three community partners also provided feedback.

Fundamentals

GENDER: *GIN* AGE: *10*

you've Helped me to learn about moving around more.

you've made me feel ~~like~~ Confident and made me have more courage, also made me ~~happier~~ Happier.

you've Help me be ~~more~~ more movable and flexible.

GENDER: *MALE* AGE: *10*

Head- To be light on my feet and keep my guard up.

Heart- I feel confident at boxing and happy while I'm learning

Feet- I have been helped with self defence and striking up for myself

Thirteen young members (ages up to 11) completed storyboards to describe how the academy makes them feel, what they have learnt and what it has helped them do. The storyboards show that at WBA tamariki feel welcome, safe, respected, excited and happy at academy. They develop care and respect for others and are provided with guidance and support to do their best while they learn how to box.

You have made me feel amazing, happy, refreshed, part of the team and confident

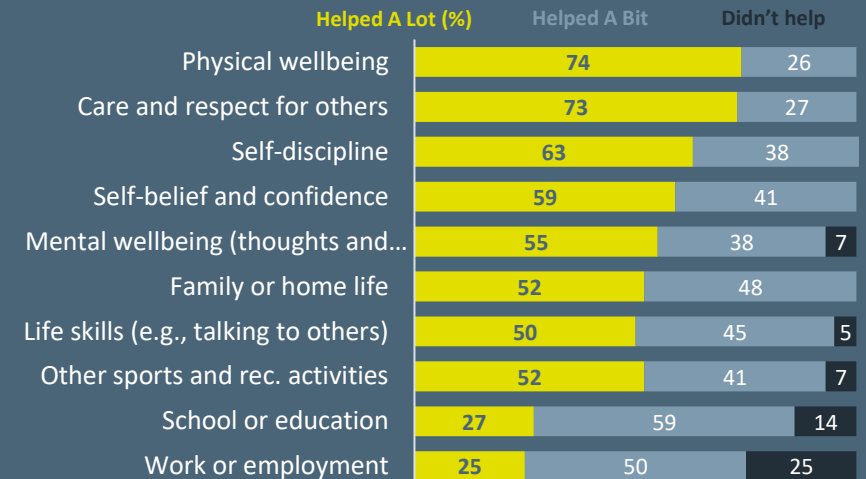
You have helped me learn respect, make new friends, get stronger, be brave, and be confident in the ring

Juniors and Seniors

WBA contends that positive peer relationships, supportive role models, enjoyable activities and meaningful goals are needed to counter the effects of negative experiences, harmful relationships and high-risk behaviours and lifestyles and achieve positive outcomes.

31 Junior and Senior members (12-24 years) completed a survey.

- All respondents feel well supported by their coaches and most feel well supported by the other members. Some feel they could be more supportive of the other members.
- All members surveyed said WBA has helped them make improvements in their physical wellbeing, care and respect for others, self-discipline, belief and confidence, and family or home life.



N=31. Note that "not sure" and "I didn't need help" responses have been excluded.

I've been able to make friends by working together during boxing sessions, My fitness and muscles have increased from all the warming up runs and from boxing.

Overall confidence in every situation and discipline to put my mind into anything

Senior members said...

Training here helps me to be present and focused on training and keeps me connected to an awesome community.

Laurence has been a massive support system for me and the gym helps me with self-confidence and growth

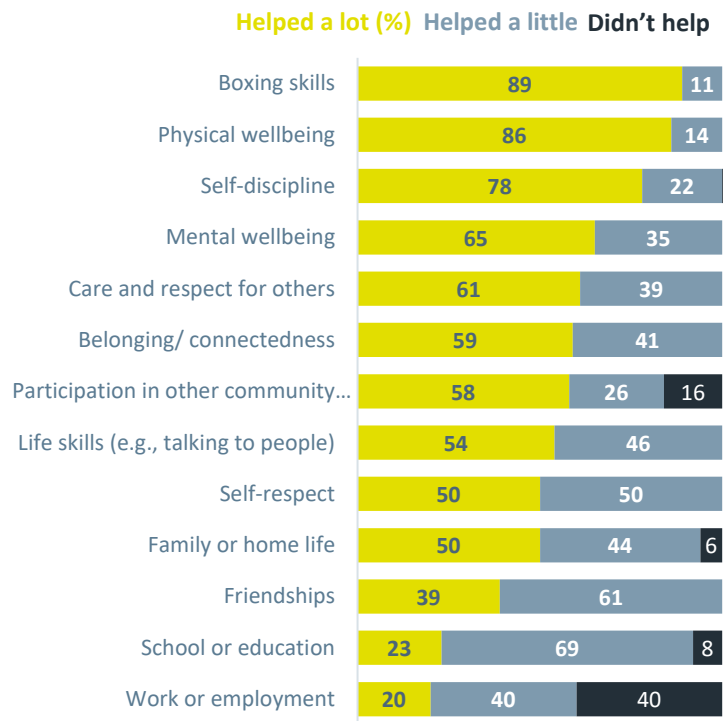
My fitness is a big part but also having friends outside of school.

WAIRARAPA BOXING ACADEMY 2025



Whānau and Families

The 16 surveys completed by whānau show the extent to which they see their tamariki have benefited from WBA this year. All families and whanau indicated their tamariki have been helped by WBA to make positive change in most areas.



N=16. “Not sure” and “They didn’t need help” responses have been excluded.

Whānau feedback show WBA helped their tamariki by making them feel included and that they belong. The coaches lead by example, communicate and connect well with the members as a group and individually. They provide a positive, safe environment in which members are encouraged to train hard to get fit and develop their boxing skills. .

Making him feel comfortable and giving him that attention and just positive

It's as simple as being a role model, being a shoulder to lean on an ear to listen, and a voice for advice, WBA invest time and effort into the lads push them physically and mentally.

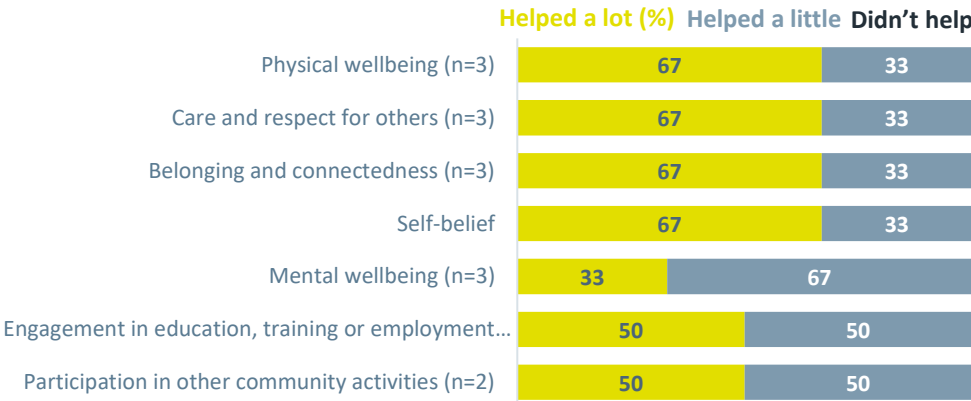
Support, continuing to be present in the gym and outside. Being present with their personal lives, understanding their own personalities. Two of them are in the competitive team and have grown immensely as brothers but also boxers

WBA has opened doors to our children in many ways - given them a true sense of belonging, community and self-worth and an unwavering sense of commitment and hard work ethic. Our kids have learned from their seniors and peers and positive role models who display the core values

Community



The three community partners surveyed for this evaluation are in education and sports. They were asked, “given what you know, has your local academy helped young people with any of these in 2025?”



The agencies said WBA helps young people make change through their positivity and attentiveness. They work to people’s strengths and make everyone feel included, give individualised attention where needed and make the lessons fun while also having clear boundaries and expectations.

That you accept people as they are and encourage them to be the best they can be and that looks different for everyone

I think WBA does really well at building relationships. They can joke around and have fun but the kids also know there’s a discipline aspect as well.

The club is a friendly environment, with supportive coaches, no nonsense and direct manner.