



VOICES OF RANGATAHI

ON EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS WHILE
EXPERIENCING *HOMELESSNESS*





PREFACE

We wish to express our gratitude to Te Mahau, Tāmaki Makaurau, and Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education for graciously extending an invitation for our organisation, QES, to participate in the Emergency Housing South initiative. The ethos of this Kaupapa is deeply aligned with our shared values and objectives, and we are humbled to be given the opportunity to contribute to an initiative that we hold in such high esteem. Our participation in this endeavour aims to bring about outcomes for our rangatahi that we strongly believe in and endorse.

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Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia ō tātou mahi

“Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work”



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to ***capture the voice of rangatahi***, predominantly rangatahi Māori who are living in emergency housing and impacted by homelessness. All facets of their lives are overtaken by the issue of homelessness; in this report, we focus on its impact on rangatahi education priorities. Through a wānanga conducted with youth affected by homelessness, we gathered valuable insights and quotes that shed light on the challenges they face in maintaining or re-entering education. The brief highlights the barriers encountered by youth experiencing homelessness, identifies key implications, and proposes recommendations to address this growing issue.

The inception of the report is from an understanding between QES and Te Mahau, Tāmaki Makaurau, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education. According to Ta Mason Durie, Māori educational advancement can be achieved through three interconnected objectives, as outlined below:

Goal 1: To embrace their Māori identity and fully express it.

Goal 2: To actively participate as global citizens.

Goal 3: To enjoy good health and a high standard of living.

It is evident that homelessness has had a detrimental impact on the education of rangatahi and individuals featured throughout this report. Homelessness permeates all aspects of their lives, compromising efforts to advance individuals towards Goals 2 and 3. Moreover, considering the overrepresentation of Māori in homelessness statistics, it also undermines their sense of identity. These findings highlight the challenging reality faced by these young Māori individuals, with homelessness acting as a significant barrier to their well-being and academic progress.





BACKGROUND

Homelessness is a growing issue in Tāmaki Makaurau - South Auckland and all of Aotearoa New Zealand. From the wānanga, it is evident that it has multi-generational impacts on whānau. The rangatahi participants are of school ages 16-19 years old and were all living in emergency housing at the time of the wānanga. Many of the participants had been homeless for over six months and were well acquainted with the different options of housing (the infrastructure) in Auckland, the processes and systems of aid, as well as the roles of agencies designed to support homelessness.

“Māori are disproportionately overrepresented in homelessness in Aotearoa. All wānanga attendees were of Māori and Pacific descent.”

When it comes to addressing homelessness, relying solely on methods like person and journey mapping, considering the voice of the customer, and looking at case studies is insufficient. Homelessness is a multifaceted issue that cannot be solved within the confines of typical commercial frameworks. Those experiencing homelessness are faced with limited and often detrimental options that cannot be adequately addressed through traditional consumer-based approaches. In this context, reliance on external assistance becomes inevitable, as individuals experiencing homelessness find themselves trapped in a system that fails to adequately address their unique challenges. Despite their limitations, these techniques can provide valuable insights into the complexities of rangatahi homelessness and the ways in which it affects their educational decisions.

Personas have been developed based on rangatahi/attendees bringing their personal lived experiences to life throughout this document and are intended to be used for journey mapping and scenario testing. The rangatahi were remunerated for their time and knowledge. We acknowledge the influence of rangatahi and their powerful voices in our community and uphold the mana taiohi code of ethics. Each young person was safely engaged to gain permission to join this wānanga, which signifies our commitment to ethical engagement, respect, and safeguarding their mana and interests during the kaupapa. Rangatahi assented to the use of their whakaaro, photographs which we let them know would become variations of created artwork to protect their identity and mana, and recordings would be used only for legitimate purposes of this report. To further safeguard their mana, their true names and identities have been concealed.



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this brief is to **amplify the voices of rangatahi who are experiencing homelessness** and delve into the barriers they encounter in accessing and sustaining educational opportunities. By shedding light on these issues, the aim is to foster a deeper understanding among stakeholders and the wider community.

The primary focus of the insight report revolves around the challenges that young people experiencing homelessness in South Auckland currently encounter.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that a cross-agency collaborative approach be taken to devise potential solutions. The goal is to create a plan for prototyping, delivering, monitoring, testing, and ultimately scaling these solutions. This approach will ensure that the solutions are effective and sustainable in the long run.



PROBLEM DEFINITION

Homelessness is a growing issue in Aotearoa and with the rise of inflation and the cost of living the problem is only compounding. It's a fact that homelessness hits hard on all generations, and it's becoming more prevalent among younger individuals who face the challenge of meeting their basic requirements for housing, safety, and food. The issue of homelessness is always challenging for individuals and families, but it becomes even more difficult for young people (rangatahi) who may not be eligible for the same services and solutions as adults. Due to their age, they face various restrictions and risks to their safety and well-being. This also creates obstacles to their right to education and learning.



METHODOLOGY

The insight report delves into the prevailing challenges faced by rangatahi affected by homelessness. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the complex barriers they confront, aiming to paint a vivid picture of their lived experiences. The report serves as a foundation for the subsequent recommendations, centring around a cross-agency collaborative approach to co-designing potential solutions.

To gather first-hand perspectives, a wānanga was conducted with a group of rangatahi experiencing homelessness and currently living in emergency housing. During the wānanga, participants shared their experiences and insights regarding the challenges they encountered whilst living in emergency housing and pursuing education. Their quotes, presented as excerpts throughout this brief, serve as powerful testimonials and shed light on the realities faced by rangatahi experiencing homelessness.

Creating a secure environment is paramount in facilitating engagement with rangatahi. We are working with rangatahi who have experienced trauma and have frequently encountered safety breaches, and even the slightest threat can discourage their participation in wānanga or prompt rangatahi to leave. To tackle this issue head-on, QES established a space of āhurutanga where the team implemented paepae tapu; bringing kaupapa māori - tikanga measures to consistently ensure a safe and non-threatening environment for the rangatahi. They dedicated significant time, effort, and resources to cultivate a culturally safe environment that is welcoming, where rangatahi feel heard and valued. This method successfully broke down the barriers of suspicion, creating an opportunity for authentic discussions and diverse viewpoints to be shared.





TESTIMONIES

The testimonies shared by the rangatahi capture the transient nature of their lives, marked by shifting living arrangements, transitioning between different forms of temporary accommodation, and fluctuating educational experiences. Their narratives reflect a dynamic journey that involves living with parents, residing in various types of housing, living in cars, attending schools or courses, and, at times, not being engaged in any formal education or learning. These accounts clearly demonstrate the intricate and constantly evolving conditions that mould the existence of young individuals grappling with homelessness. They exhibit the fluidity of their educational and housing encounters.

PERSONAS

Five personas have been developed based on the wānanga participants. Personas aggregate insights about real people into a typical representation of a group or cluster. The following personas are based on attendees of the first wānanga where youth in emergency housing offered their insights and whakaaro | thoughts and opinions.

KELSEY | FEMALE, MĀORI, 16 YEARS OLD

- Assumes responsibility for younger dependant siblings when emersed in her whānau. This prohibits her commitments elsewhere.
- Planning to become a make-up and eyelash technician and start a business. She has completed courses in this area.
- She is from a single-parent household with a mother battling her own mental health issues. Kelsey is often supporting her mother.
- Addiction has been normalised within her whānau nucleus.
- Recreational use of drugs is not seen as harmful or having consequences of long-term harm.
- Kelsey naturally leads others; she exhibited understanding and patience throughout the wānanga.
- Since the wananga with Kelsey has become a victim of domestic violence, a safety plan was created for Kelsey and her Pepi, where she returned to whānau in the upper north island for a week. QES has since moved Kelsey into a different room to ensure her safety.



NIAL | FEMALE, MĀORI, 17Y0.

- Experienced a breakdown and death of father, which meant the loss of stable accommodation and whānau support.
- She has spent less than one year on a benefit.
- Despite all Nial's challenges she aspires to be a social worker, currently studying social work.
- Nial knows that education can be a powerful tool for empowerment and breaking the cycle of poverty in her whānau.
- Previously, she was required to support her father when schooling due to his sickness.
- Low trust in the schooling system to meet the needs of rangatahi needing extra support.

ELI | MALE, PACIFIC, MĀORI, AND EUROPEAN DESCENT, 17 Y0.

- Holds aspirations to be successful and gain financial wealth.
- Likes to tweet.
- Strong concerns and opinions related to politics, nearing paranoia.
- Heightened physical safety concerns in emergency housing and with other young men.
- On the day of our first wananga Eli had been asked to leave the EH provider he was with due to smoking marijuana in his room.
- Lacks empathy towards others, the rise of the individual.
- Currently searching for suitable family support networks. Eli has expressed that his own family is not a safe option, and he will have to establish a new support system elsewhere.





MAXINE | FEMALE, MĀORI, 16 YO.

- Over the last couple of years, Maxine has frequently bounced across many emergency housing sites.
- She is a mother of two tamariki under the age of three.
- Maxine is showing signs of drug use, and this is a risk factor we are trying to monitor.
- Based on previous information, it was reported that her relationship status was single. However, recent news suggests that she may be dating the father of her child again, which could potentially pose another risk factor for Maxine. It is important to note that young people often lack the necessary tools to manage healthy relationships. Additionally, hotels may ask young people to leave as they do not allow partners to stay in the EH accommodation.
- Ongoing immediate concerns are related to primary needs: accommodation, food, and safety.
- She has spent the entirety of her life in unstable living arrangements.
- Housing is unsafe and dirty, presenting health risks to her children (her primary concern, they are still crawling).
- Planning to become a makeup and eyelash technician and start a business.

TANIA | FEMALE, PACIFIC, MĀORI, AND EUROPEAN DESCENT, 17YO.

- Suffers from anxiety and depression.
- Unstable living arrangements throughout the entirety of her life.
- Experiences random raids into her room.
- Breakdown with her mother; her father lives in another region.
- Aims to get her own place once she secures a job.
- Despite efforts, there has been a lack of available spaces for Transitional Housing options that aren't shared living spaces—which is preferable for the Tania.

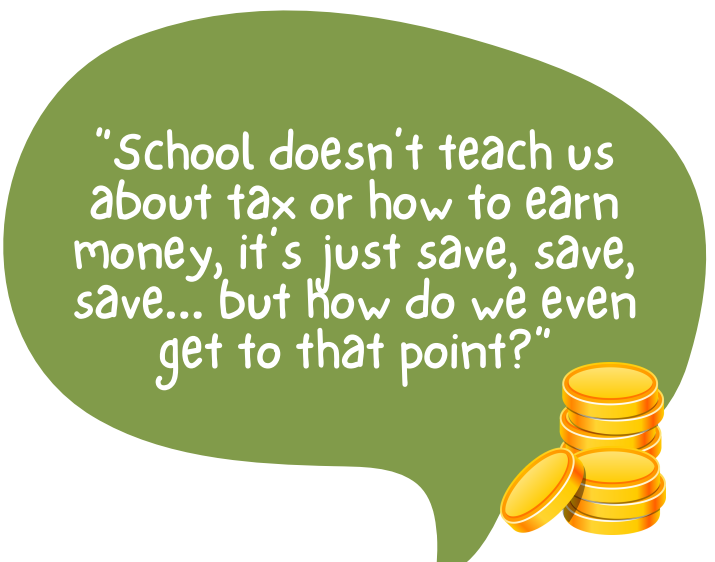


FINDINGS

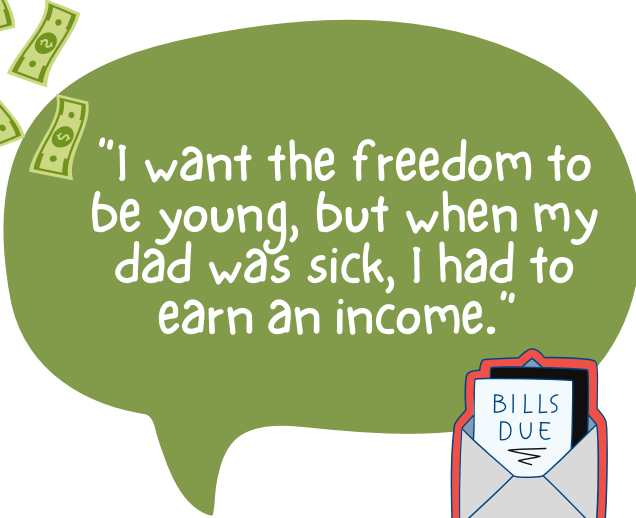
Young people experiencing homelessness face numerous challenges that make it difficult for them to continue or resume their education. These challenges include unstable housing, lack of family support, financial difficulties, hunger and poor diet, limited access to educational resources, disconnection from their cultural heritage, and emotional distress. The academic achievement gap for rangatahi experiencing homelessness is an alarming issue that demands immediate attention. Poverty stands as the primary cause of this inequality, and it must be addressed with urgency. Rangatahi expressed that the current curriculum within schools felt outdated and, in their words, "a waste of time." From the rangatahi perspective, the lessons offered lacked practical value or relevance in their lives. They yearned for educational content that held tangible worth and relevance, aligning with their current and future aspirations.

Limiting characteristics of schooling

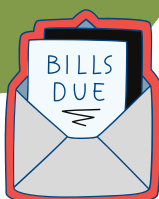
The rangatahi raised significant concerns regarding the limitations of the traditional schooling day. They highlighted the inflexible schedule, which commenced early in the morning and occupied most of their day, leaving them with little time for household responsibilities, employment, and adequate rest.



"School doesn't teach us about tax or how to earn money, it's just save, save, save... but how do we even get to that point?"



"I want the freedom to be young, but when my dad was sick, I had to earn an income."



Conflict of personal responsibilities with schooling requirements

All participants brought up the fact that the parameters set by high schools could be improved to better equip rangatahi with the necessary tools to tackle the issues they face regularly. Separating the complexities of personal home life while attending school is not possible for these individuals. The requirements of both dimensions could not interdependently exist.



KIA ORA NIAL



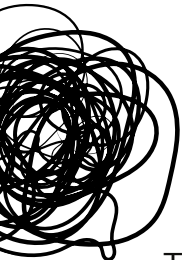
Her high school journey took an unexpected turn when her father fell ill, and their financial situation became strained. To help support her family, Nial bravely stepped into the workforce while continuing her studies as a student.

However, a major obstacle arose when her work schedule coincided with her school hours, overlapping by 30 minutes. Despite her efforts to communicate this predicament to the school Principal, her pleas fell on deaf ears, ultimately resulting in her expulsion due to consistent tardiness .



Lack of suitable mental health and wellness competency

Schools often lack the necessary resources and expertise to effectively address the social support requirements and mental health challenges faced by rangatahi, hindering their academic success. Unfortunately, many rangatahi have had negative experiences with counselling services, where their trust, confidence, and confidentiality were violated through the disclosure of their personal information to their parents/caregivers. Wānanga participants are aware of the need for counsellors to inform parents of red flags that indicate risk of harm to themselves or others but felt that their parents were informed of details that did not pose immediate risks. This often exacerbated their already difficult situations and strained their relationships with caregivers, while further eroding their trust in both school representatives and the support systems in place.



“Rangatahi express a prevailing sentiment that teachers lack empathy towards their individual circumstances, failing to try to understand why they may struggle with punctuality or attendance”

The relationship between school kaimahi | staff and rangatahi is fraught with tension. Rangatahi express a prevailing sentiment that teachers lack empathy towards their individual circumstances, failing to try to understand why they may struggle with punctuality or attendance—two significant barriers and concerns for these young individuals. In the grand scheme of issues that can arise within a school setting, from an outside perspective, these matters can be viewed as relatively minor but quickly escalate into other issues.

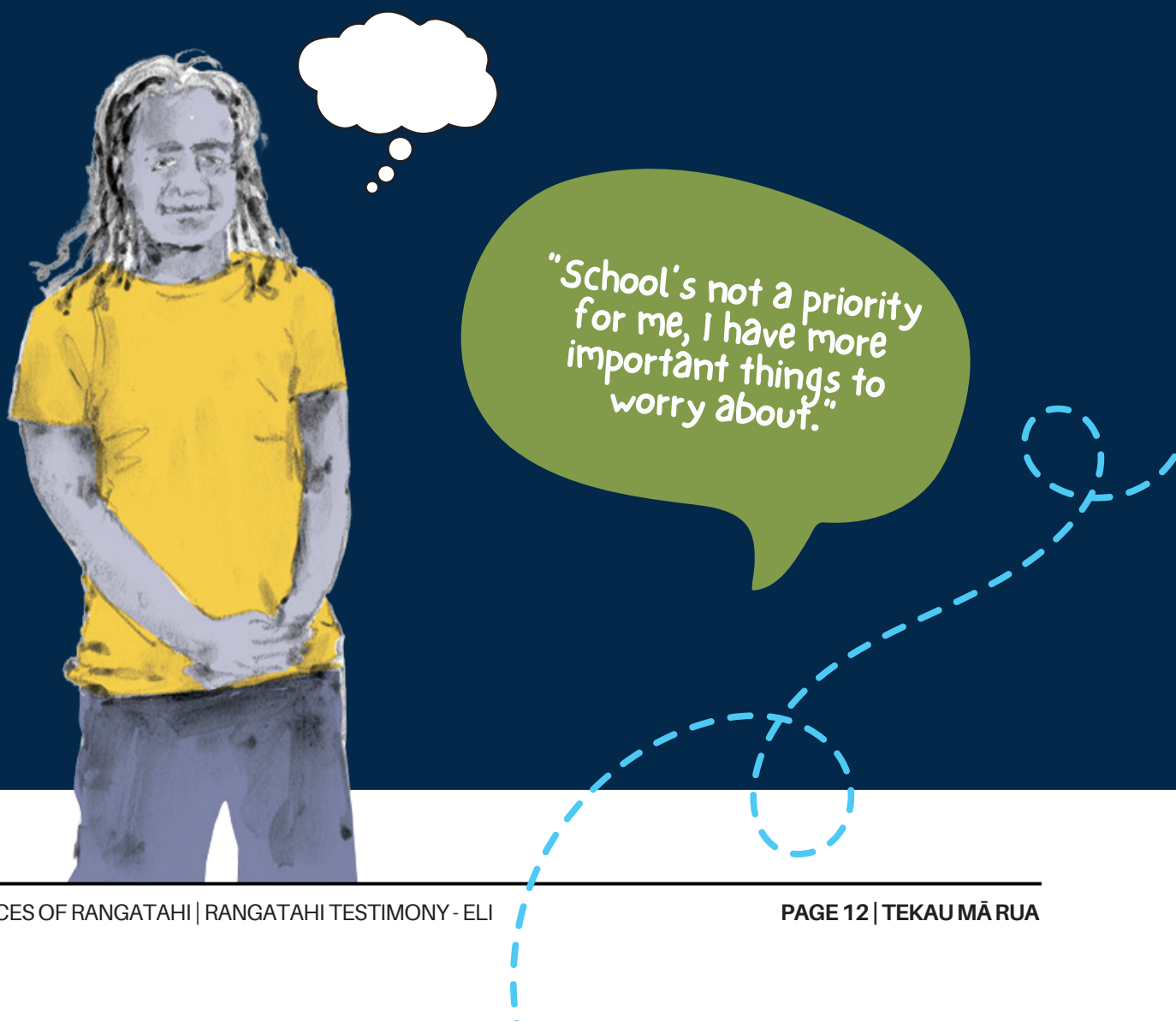
Moreover, the treatment they receive from school kaimahi exacerbates their feelings of unfairness. The students perceive that personal issues and frustrations of the teachers manifest in their interactions, leaving the rangatahi feeling disregarded in terms of their basic needs. Consequently, the rangatahi opt to avoid confronting the staff members, choosing instead to skip classes if running late, just to circumvent even the smallest gestures of disapproval. This cycle of judgment and disengagement perpetuates a sense of mutual evaluation, with the rangatahi scrutinising the teachers' performance and, in turn, continuing a path of disengagement from the educational process.



KIA ORA, ELI

Eli, a brilliant individual of Māori & Pasifika descent, possesses a wealth of wisdom and a unique perspective. However, he harbours a deep-seated mistrust towards many adults and the established system. Despite his remarkable potential, Eli faces a real-time predicament on the day of a wānanga: he desperately needs to secure a place to stay for the night as he has just been asked to leave his current emergency housing. This pressing concern overshadows his active participation in the wānanga, where he contributes valuable insights.

Amidst sharing his thoughts, Eli brings attention to the prevalent issue of drug availability and its ease of access within emergency housing. He vividly describes the presence of drugs, which permeates through the paper-thin walls. As he navigates his reality, Eli recognises the temptation to seek solace in these substances, perceiving them as an easy means of escaping hardships.





Unstable living situations

Rangatahi face frequent changes in living situations, housing is not a stable commodity throughout their upbringing. Often participants experienced sporadic living arrangements when living with a parent, which meant they often would change schools. On occasion, parents would not enrol them into the nearest school due to not knowing when or where the next move would occur, even if the child wanted to attend. The frequent change in school would also equate to extra expenses for new uniforms and resources, such as Wi-Fi, digital hardware, school fees and modes of transport to get to school.

Rangatahi pointed out that often schools would enforce consequences due to not having uniform or the correct resources. They were prohibited by finances and often only had one uniform, and this would get dirty or lost and they were left with nothing else.



Rangatahi experience a high degree of volatility in their living arrangements, housing stability is absent throughout their upbringing. Consequently, they would frequently switch schools. Sometimes parents would opt not to enrol their children in nearby schools due to the uncertainty surrounding future relocations, even when the child wanted to attend.

Rangatahi expressed that frequent school changes are costly for families and often an afterthought. Parents are reluctant to enrol their children into new schools due to the additional financial burden and simply not knowing how long they will be in the area due to their transient living conditions. The focus is a roof over our heads, not education. Every transition creates another challenge, such as buying new uniforms and essential resources, which puts a strain on their already limited financial resources. In addition, many participants mentioned owning only one uniform. When it gets dirty or lost, they are left with no alternative.

"Each transition necessitates the purchase of new uniforms and essential resources, further straining their already limited financial resources."

Rangatahi highlighted the enforcement of consequences by schools in response to not having the correct uniform or resources. These young individuals often face disciplinary measures for not conforming to uniform requirements or lacking the necessary supplies, further hindering their educational progress and growing injustice of schooling.





KIA ORA, KELSEY

Kelsey is constantly juggling responsibilities. As the oldest sibling, she carries the weight of caring for her younger brother with a disability, while her mother battles drug addiction. Kelsey has no choice but to step up and be the primary caregiver for her brother, leaving little time for anything else.

Meanwhile, some of her other siblings are getting involved in dangerous activities like ram raids. Kelsey desperately tries to convince them to steer clear of trouble, knowing the potential consequences. It's a delicate balance between her love for her siblings and her responsibility to keep them safe.

With her family obligations taking precedence, Kelsey can't attend school regularly. Education becomes a distant priority as her focus shifts to managing her brother's needs and dealing with her mother's struggles. The lessons and topics taught in school feel disconnected from her reality, adding to the burden she carries.



Digital and online learning

The group unanimously agreed that the experience of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic did not work for them in their circumstances. Everyone preferred in-person teaching and learning, recognising its inherent value. Unfortunately, the transition to online platforms imposed overwhelming demands on ākonga (students), leaving them to navigate the intricacies of remote education with minimal guidance or assistance. The lack of support compounded the challenges, leaving them feeling isolated and unsupported in their academic journey.

"Online learning was not good, we were pushed to teach ourselves."





TĒNA KOE TANIA



Tania exudes warmth and possesses a compassionate nature. She has become well-acquainted with the concept of moving, as it has been a constant in her life, frequently shuffling between her two parents, one who moves across the North Island and the other who is in the South Island of Aotearoa.

Tania recounted a particular experience of beginning anew at a different school, where the weight of moving compounded her already overwhelming emotions. Overwhelmed by anxiety, she found herself unable to muster the courage to continue attending the new school.

Tania candidly acknowledges her ongoing battles with anxiety and depression, revealing that the school environment often escalated these challenges.



Safety

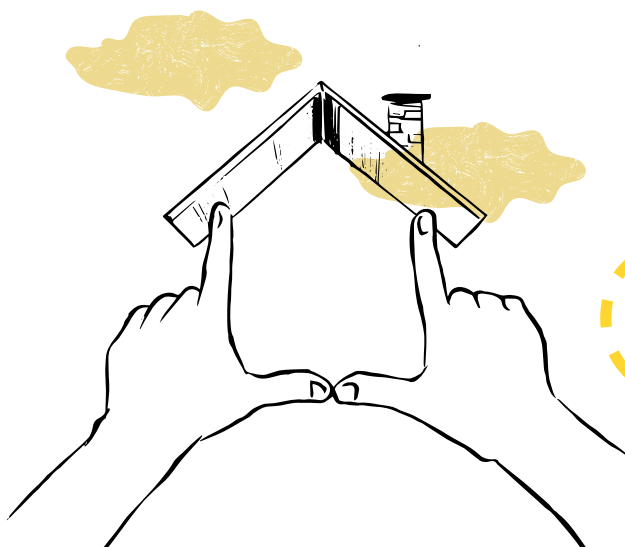
The safety of rangatahi in their housing situations emerges as the foremost and pervasive risk, shaping their everyday decisions and consuming a significant portion of their efforts to address it. Eli, a male participant, feels compelled to carry weapons as a means of personal protection, considering it an absolute necessity, particularly when staying in emergency housing. The female participants express their agreement, acknowledging the shared vulnerability they experience while cohabitating with unfamiliar adults who likely have their own challenges and struggles.

The female participants recount distressing incidents of "room raids," where fellow occupants of emergency housing intrude into the rooms allocated to the individual rangatahi. Additionally, they highlight the added burden of being subjected to new rules and requirements, imposed either by the facility management or neighbouring occupants, solely due to their adolescent status. Despite being young individuals, they are expected to adhere to the same, if not tougher, provisions of adults while grappling with the additional stigma associated with their age.

Moreover, the overall living conditions in the emergency housing facilities are described as poor, characterised by dirtiness and rampant pest infestations. This poses a significant issue for two participants who have young children of their own, often necessitating relocation requests due to concerns about crawling infants and contaminated flooring.

Participants shared accounts of being subjected to unwanted inappropriate sexual advances from adults who occupy and manage emergency housing.

"Despite being young individuals, they are expected to adhere to the same, if not tougher, provisions of adults while grappling with the additional stigma associated with their age.."





“I am a Māmā”

Participants in the wānanga were mothers of young tamariki | children. The challenges they face extend beyond their own well-being, encompassing the care and provision for their children. These additional responsibilities significantly heighten the barriers they encounter when addressing issues such as housing, safety, food, clothing, and various other needs. The idea of personal learning and education is mostly deprioritised amidst the multitude of concerns they must address as young parents.

“The idea of personal learning and education is mostly deprioritised amidst the multitude of concerns they must address as young parents.”

The presence of tamariki in the wānanga was essential to facilitate the active participation of young māmā | mothers. Recognising the importance of allowing the young mothers to attend and contribute, QES made provisions for the children to be present as well. By accommodating the needs of both the māmā and their children, we ensured that the voices and perspectives of these families were fully represented in the discussions. This inclusive approach not only enabled the māmā to engage actively but also created an opportunity to hear the valuable insights and contributions of the tamariki themselves.

One participant shared a single studio with two of her tamariki. Their living space is a single studio, and the only separate room is the bathroom. The tamariki have no provision for an outdoor space, and all she wanted was somewhere for her children to play safely.





KIA ORA, MAXINE



Maxine bravely shares her experience of the cramped living conditions she and her tamariki endure. With limited support for childcare responsibilities, Maxine finds herself with little time for self-care.

Their living situation consists of a single studio, where they all reside together. The only separate space available to them is the bathroom, as there are no additional rooms. Unfortunately, the lack of an outdoor area deprives the tamariki of a space to play and explore, further restricting their living environment.

This confined living arrangement adds additional challenges to Maxine's daily life and underscores the urgent need for improved housing conditions that prioritises the well-being and development of Maxine and her tamariki.



Shared experiences and commonalities among homeless rangatahi

A common thread of shared experiences and traits existed among the wānanga participants. They shared a body of knowledge that exhibit lead and lag indicators to the position they currently face, these include:

- Holding a deep knowledge of systematic issues.
- Exposed to the harsh realities of adulthood yet disregarded due to their age.
- Prevalence of mental health issues.
- Feeling disconnected from their cultural heritage and Te Ao Māori.
- Exposure of addictions through whānau.
- Whānau breakdowns.
- Financial barriers.
- Digital inequity, having no access to Wi-Fi or devices.
- Reliance on public transport or rides from others.
- Higher tendency to access illegal activities.
- Victim of emotional harm from parents | caregivers.

ANALYSIS

The valuable insights gathered from the wānanga have undergone a thorough thematic analysis, which has been visually represented in the diagrams (Appendix A: Voices of Rangatahi living in emergency housing). These diagrams serve as a comprehensive visualisation of the key themes that emerged from the wānanga discussions. Through careful categorisation, the wānanga findings have been organised and presented in a clear and concise manner, offering a deeper understanding of the issues and perspectives shared by the participants.

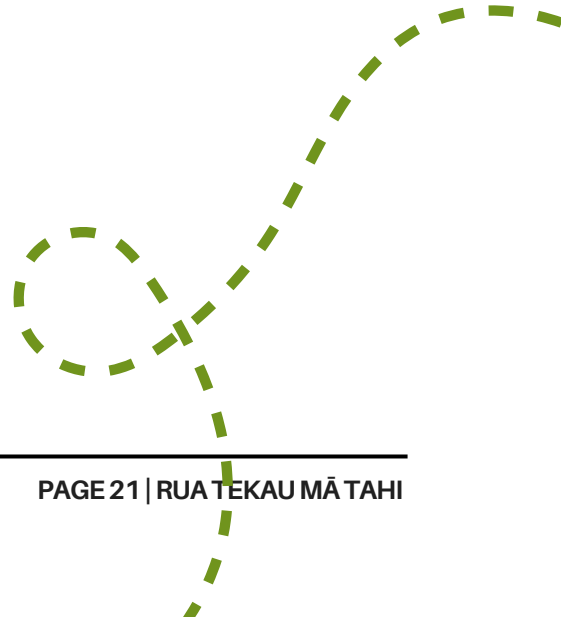
The diagrams act as a valuable resource, allowing stakeholders to easily grasp the overarching themes and connections within the wānanga insights, ultimately guiding future actions and decision-making processes.



IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Number of students directly affected by this initiative:

- Five rangatahi (Māori youth) and one pepi (baby).
- QES is currently supporting 18 school-aged rangatahi in Emergency Housing.
- 80% of the rangatahi supported by QES are of Māori descent, highlighting the focus on supporting indigenous youth.
- 35% of the rangatahi supported by QES are Pasifika, demonstrating a commitment to cultural diversity and inclusivity.
- Rangatahi expressed a preference for a wānanga-style learning environment, citing limitations of their earlier high school experience, such as:
 - Lack of education on financial literacy and money management.
 - Inability to bring their children to class.
 - Focus on rigid rules, including uniform requirements, limiting their sense of freedom.
 - Insufficient life skills preparation for their daily needs in challenging circumstances, such as life on the streets.
- The rangatahi desired a "home" environment rather than a transient hotel experience during their stay.
- It is important to address misconceptions about emergency housing, as people often assume it is a positive solution, but it falls short of meeting the needs of rangatahi and almost always re-exposes young people to trauma.
- The vision is to create a safe and nurturing space where rangatahi can be securely housed, receive education, gain essential life skills, and heal from trauma they have experienced.





RECOMMENDATIONS

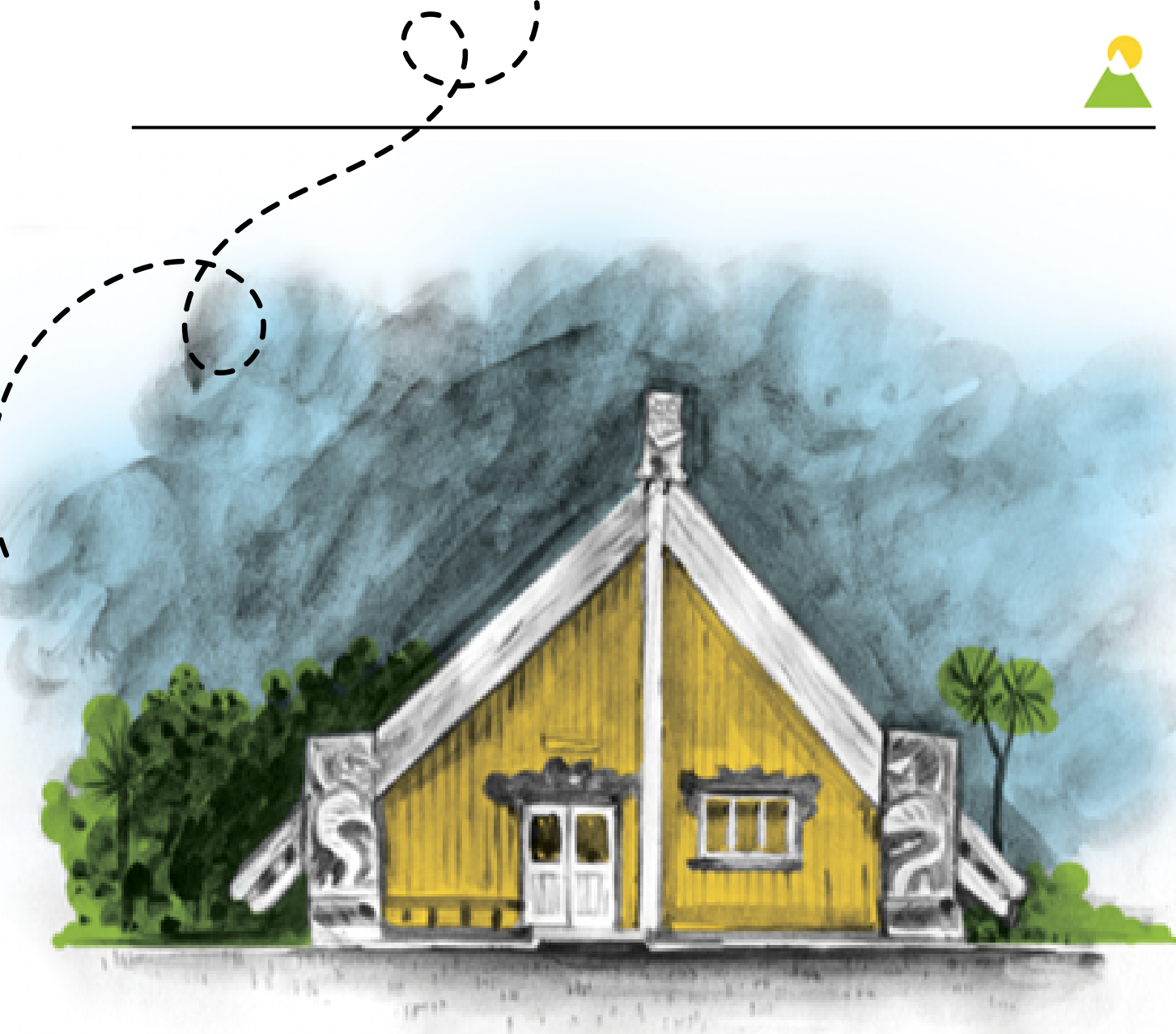
As the kōrero flowed in the wānanga and trust and connection grew naturally, the conversation moved towards what is the change needed to address the fundamental issues these rangatahi face. Ideas were shared, dreams came alive, and it triggered the recommendations for the next steps.

Building upon the insights outlined in this report, it is recommended to embark on a co-design process with rangatahi to develop innovative solutions, specifically, a user-centred design methodology should be applied. This approach entails prototyping, delivering, monitoring, and testing interventions aimed at addressing the identified barriers hindering their learning and overall development. By adopting an iterative approach, these solutions can be refined and optimised to ensure effectiveness and impact.

The target reach for impact will start small with the concept of personalisation but with an ambition to expand to benefit many rangatahi experiencing homelessness and living in emergency housing. The initial scope of reach will be designed by and for Māori, who are overrepresented in homelessness and emergency housing.

The personas developed through this process will play a pivotal role in guiding the design and implementation of solutions. These personas encapsulate the unique experiences, needs, and aspirations of the rangatahi, providing valuable insights for crafting interventions that resonate with their specific circumstances. In addition to developing personas, it is essential to map the journey of these individuals, both within the wānanga setting and in real-life scenarios. This holistic understanding of their experiences will further inform the design process, ensuring that the solutions are tailored to their realities and capable of making a meaningful difference in their lives.

The demographics of homelessness, coupled with the specific geographic context of South Auckland, necessitate a targeted and tailored approach to addressing the challenges faced by rangatahi in the region. Understanding the unique circumstances and dynamics at play in South Auckland is paramount to developing contextually relevant and impactful strategies for supporting rangatahi affected by homelessness in this area.



We intend to explore and implement design planning systems and change concepts from an indigenous perspective. These include the Restorative Systems Change developed by Haumanu and Niho Taniwha, as well as the Six Conditions of Systems Change by Canaan Tuhura of Healthy Families Rotorua, provided that they are deemed appropriate. Prior to their application, we will obtain the necessary permissions.

The outputs will inform a case for change and a business case for funding.

Collaboration and coordination among all service providers involved in the system are paramount to effectively addressing the challenges faced by rangatahi affected by homelessness. The complex nature of their circumstances demands a holistic and comprehensive approach that goes beyond the capabilities of any single organisation or entity. By working together, and sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise, service providers can create a network of support that ensures the rangatahi receive the integrated and cohesive assistance they require and deserve.



LEARNINGS

Throughout the engagement with the rangatahi, numerous valuable learning opportunities emerged. It became evident that to create a conducive environment for their growth and well-being, certain key considerations needed to be taken into account.

Firstly, it was crucial to maintain smaller session sizes. Recognising the acuteness of mental health issues faced by rangatahi, creating an intimate setting was essential. By keeping wānanga informal and conversation-based, a relaxed atmosphere was fostered, allowing for whanaungatanga and open and honest discussions to take place. This approach encouraged active participation and ensured that the rangatahi felt heard and comfortable expressing their thoughts and experiences.

Secondly, building whanaungatanga | relationships and establishing trust were identified as fundamental pillars of successful engagement with the rangatahi. Taking the time to genuinely connect with them on a personal level enabled the development of a safe and supportive space | āhurutanga. Through genuine care and empathy, practitioners and facilitators were able to establish meaningful connections, fostering an environment where rangatahi felt valued, heard, and respected.

Moreover, the incorporation of tikanga (customs and protocols) and respectful ways of operating was found to be essential in creating āhurutanga | safe spaces for rangatahi. By upholding tikanga, cultural values, and protocols, a culturally responsive and inclusive environment was cultivated. This approach promoted a sense of belonging and cultural identity, reinforcing the importance of honouring and embracing the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of rangatahi.

When considering the agreement and desired outputs, it became clear that effective change takes time. It was recognised that the current model needed to be profoundly challenged by adopting a user-centred approach. Placing rangatahi at the centre of decision-making processes and involving them in the co-design and implementation of solutions would lead to more meaningful and sustainable outcomes. This shift towards a user-centred model required patience, flexibility, and a commitment to actively listen and respond to the needs and aspirations of the rangatahi.

In summary, the learning journey with the rangatahi underscored the significance of smaller session sizes, building relationships based on trust, incorporating tikanga, and adopting a user-centred approach for effective change. By embracing these insights, practitioners and stakeholders can create a nurturing and empowering environment that supports the growth, well-being, and self-determination of rangatahi.



ONGOING COLLABORATION

The support infrastructure surrounding youth homelessness, benefit provision and general support for the rangatahi appears fragmented and disconnected. The rangatahi express their frustration with the services and inability to share important information, which can be especially difficult for those who are homeless. They often encounter services that are not coordinated and have difficulty finding timely solutions. This shared pain point highlights the urgent need for collaboration between agencies and government departments to address the complex multidimensional challenges faced by rangatahi.

To improve on existing recommendations, it is crucial to establish cross-agency collaboration. This will enable agencies to optimize their efforts, minimize resource, time, and effort wastage, and ultimately enhance the effectiveness of their initiatives. Such efforts will ultimately benefit the young people in emergency housing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

To facilitate this collaboration for this mahi, meetings were conducted with service providers, where the invaluable insights of rangatahi were shared, following approval from Te Mahau, Tāmaki Makaurau, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education. It became evident that a coordinated approach would be instrumental in advancing the various components required to achieve a comprehensive solution.

Establishing QES as a central hub to oversee and manage the process proved crucial in effectively handling stakeholder relationships and ensuring smooth operations. This centralised management approach fostered efficiency and enhanced the overall effectiveness of the initiative.





FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

This report lays the foundation for our future aspirations in supporting Māori and Pasifika rangatahi, empowering them to access education and significantly reduce poverty. Our approach involves indigenous co-design procedures and a youth-centred design methodology to create personalised interventions that overcome obstacles hindering their learning and development.

We will start with Māori youth affected by homelessness and expand to benefit more youth in the region. Our design process will centre on creating personas that embody their unique experiences and needs to generate tailored solutions.

We acknowledge the unique challenges that rangatahi experiencing homelessness in South Auckland encounter and tailor our approach accordingly.

Our strategy incorporates indigenous perspectives and explores relevant frameworks, while seeking permission for rangatahi participation and cultural sensitivity. Collaborative efforts among service providers are essential for a comprehensive and holistic approach. Our objective is to empower Māori and Pasifika youth to overcome obstacles and achieve success.





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