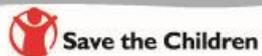


HEAR OUR VOICES



HEAR OUR VOICES WE ENTREAT

**NEW ZEALAND'S CHILD PARTICIPATION REPORT TO THE UNITED
NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, 2010.**

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
About Save the Children New Zealand.....	5
How the insights were achieved.....	5
Summary	6
Recommendations	7
Awareness of the convention	8
The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People.....	9
Climate change.....	9
When do you become an adult?.....	10
General principles of UNCRC.....	10
Best Interests of the Child.....	12
Civil Rights and Freedoms	15
Family Environment and Alternative Care.....	16
Basic health and health equity.....	18
Education and Leisure.....	18
Special Protection Measures.....	22
Conclusions.....	24
Appendices: Transcripts to digital stories	25

A Save the Children New Zealand report prepared by Dr. Fiona Beals (Global Focus Aotearoa)
and
Anna Zam (Youth Participant).

Acknowledgements

Save the Children would like to thank all those who have been involved in this project and the preparation of this report including:

- The children and young people in New Zealand who participated with enthusiasm, thoughtfulness and creativity in the compilation of this report.
- All the organisations, schools, families and youth workers whose support for the young people made it possible for them to participate.
- The Office of the Children’s Commissioner Young People’s Reference Group, for ideas, support and sampling the digital story method.
- Anna Zam, youth participant, for working with Dr. Fiona Beals in preparing this report.

Researchers:

- Rebecca Thomson, of Whakaaro Tika Consultants, for conducting a comprehensive literature review on consulting with children and running focus groups in Phase 1.
- Dr. Fiona Beals and Sara Tamati both of Global Focus Aotearoa, for facilitating focus groups and working with children and young people to create their own digital stories in Phase 2.

Groups and organisations that supported this project; particularly the UNCRC Advisory Group for providing guidance and advice on ethics, reporting processes, website, review and editing of the report;

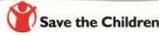
- Office of the Children’s Commissioner.
- Human Rights Commission.
- UNICEF.
- Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa Incorporated.
- YouthLaw
- Ministry of Social Development.
- Human Rights in Education Trust

Transcription of digital stories:

- Abigail Allen, Save the Children volunteer.

Thanks to UNICEF and the Ministry of Youth Development for their financial contributions.

HEAR OUR VOICES



Whakataka te hau ki te uru

Whakataka te hau ki te tonga

Kiamākinakinaki uta

Kiamātaratarakitai

Kia hi akeana te atakura

He tio he huka, he hahū!

Tihei Maui Ora

Cease the winds from the west and the south

Let the pervasive calm ascend upon the sea and shores

Let the red tipped dawn come with a sharpened air,

A touch of frost, and the promise of a new day!

There is life.

In this report children and young people provide opinions on their lives in Aotearoa New Zealand. The report has been created for the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and will be relevant to policy makers and anyone interested in the rights of children and young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The report uses plain language so that children and young people can read and get an idea about the research, what happened and what their peers wanted to share.

This report shows, many children and young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand know very little about the Convention on the Rights on the Child (UNCRC). Despite 'human rights' being mentioned in the school curriculum, the UNCRC is not taught in schools or promoted through the media. The New Zealand Government has provided the UN with a report about how well the rights of Aotearoa/New Zealand children and youth are being met. As a result, non-governmental organisations interested in the rights of children came together to respond to the Government report through the NGO report and the children and young people's report. Save the Children New Zealand wanted to ensure that children and young people are included in the conversation. The report you are reading sits alongside the NGO report. It gives the opinions of children and young people.

The report starts with a karakia (cultural prayer). The karakia opens a space for you to see and hear the voices and stories of rangatahi (young people) and then closes that space so that both you and the young people can move on without losing mana (face/dignity/worth). Please respect this space and the stories that the young people want to share with you.

These stories are taonga (treasures) both to the young people that shared them and to the researchers and communities involved in the project. Some of the stories will make you cry and others will make you laugh. They are the stories of young people who live in supportive environments and young people who live in places without love and affection. They show that Aotearoa/New Zealand is a place of paradox and contradiction. It is a country where some young people are supported but others are hurting emotionally, physically and culturally.

Kuatakototemanuka

The leaves of the manuka tree have been laid down

Tikanga Māori (Māori custom) is to test the intentions of strangers with a wero (challenge) when they first arrive on a marae. An important part of this is the laying down of leaves before the visitors which they are invited to pick up. In accepting the challenge the visitors then join with their host and debate the issues at hand in a peaceful manner. This report is a challenge to those 18 years and older, including the Government to listen, hear and respond to the voices of the children of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In their story *Racism in New Zealand* one group said 'We don't want war ... We want to be heard ... Let us be heard!' Let us pick up the leaves that this report represents, read it and begin to take the challenge that the young people have made.

About Save the Children New Zealand

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for children, making a positive and lasting difference to children's lives in over 120 countries. The organisation is non-political and non-sectarian. Our values are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The mission of Save the Children is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. Part of this involves providing opportunities for children and young people to have a say in issues that affect them.

How the insights were achieved

This report comes from a series of focus groups held with 199 children and young people throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand from May 2009 to April 2010. Save the Children New Zealand wanted to carry out a small study which would show the United Nations what young people knew and felt about their rights in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The young people came from a variety of groups and communities including young mothers; refugee and migrants, mental health, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) and under sixes; under 12s; Māori; Pakeha; Pacific; Asian; African; young people in alternative education; young people with disabilities; young people in the justice system or with experience of the justice system; young people with experiences of emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse/assault; young people living in isolated communities; young people who have lived in alternative care or living in alternative care.

In phase one of the project children and young people requested that digital technology be a big part of the report.

- Digital story telling was recognised as one of the most innovative ways to facilitate the voices and opinions of children and young people.
- Focus groups of no more than 16 young people were held in phase two of the project. To make the digital stories, young people were further divided into smaller groups of three or four participants.
- Every group had an adult supporter to ensure each person had a say.
- After a full group discussion on rights, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)'s last feedback to the New Zealand Government, each small group brainstormed

HEAR OUR VOICES



what was 'Hot' (good) about rights in Aotearoa/New Zealand and what was (bad) 'Not' good about rights in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

- From the brainstorm session groups picked one message they wanted to send to the UN and policy makers which was further developed into four key points which formed the basis of the story.

It is important to acknowledge that the messages in the stories are what the young people felt the UN needed to hear – they came from the hearts and minds of the young people involved. Each message has its own story. Some details have been omitted to keep the identities of the children and young people private.

- Participants used Google and Flickr or suitable clipart software to find creative images to construct their story and created the background music. The five-year-olds drew their own pictures and for this group only, the technology was most of the time handled by an adult.
- The Stories were placed on a restricted and moderated social-networking site (<http://a12aotearoa.ning.com>). Although this idea followed from consultations with young people in the initial scoping of the project, it did not prove to be a huge success. This was because the bulk of young people involved in the research being either under 12 and/or coming from marginalised communities did not have access to the internet or a computer at home. This is contrary to the belief that young people today are spending their lives on the net. Only 16 young people over the age of sixteen responded to an online survey publicised by schools and organisations working with children and young people.

While the discussions revolved around themes of the CRC's last recommendations to New Zealand, the children and young people also had their own ideas as seen on their focus on climate change. Participants chose words from Aotearoa/New Zealand's national anthem 'Hear Our Voices We Entreat' as a title for this report because national anthems are intended to promote personal and national pride. The title asks the leaders to listen to, and take pride in children and young people so that they can also be proud to be citizens of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Summary

This report follows the thematic structure of the NGO and Government reports.

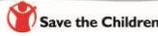
In the digital stories, children and young people show that while there are many good things about Aotearoa/New Zealand there are many areas that can be improved upon in relation to the rights of the children.

What's hot (good) about children's and young people's rights in Aotearoa/New Zealand?

The children and young people said we have;

- Families, schools and community groups that care about young people.
- Health care for children and young people.
- Good food.
- Opportunities to learn and be educated.
- Great things to do outdoors in our green environment.

HEAR OUR VOICES



- Lots of fun things that we can do with our friends and families.

Children and young people also said 'we are nuclear-free and protected from war'.

What's not (hot)? What needs to be addressed and improved upon? Aotearoa/ New Zealand needs;

- Greater awareness of the Convention.
- To treat Māori people and their opinions with respect; especially when it comes to their rights as tangata whenua (the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand).
- To respond to climate change.
- To act on the discrimination of Māori and Pacific young people, young mothers, young people with mental illness and GLBT youth.
- To make sure that young mothers can access public transport without discrimination.
- To act on the effects of drug and alcohol addiction on adults and children.
- To listen to and include the opinions of children and young people in local and national government.
- To make sure that our schools meet the needs of all students.
- To include sexuality education in schools.
- To make sure the New Zealand Police have a good relationship with the young people they work with.
- To protect the rights of young people in the workplace.

Aotearoa/ New Zealand has;

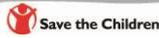
- A problem with gangs that are contributing to crime and abuse in the home. Young people are joining gangs for safety and are becoming victims of gang life.
- A problem with bullying – particularly of specific groups like refugee and migrant young people.
- A problem with child abuse which is not just statistics or features in death notices in newspapers but a reality that many of the young story tellers knew and experienced.
- An issue with domestic violence affecting the lives of many children and young people.

Recommendations

Given the key findings of this research, the following recommendations were made by the young storytellers. Aotearoa/New Zealand needs to;

1. Teach New Zealanders about the Convention.
2. Respect the rights of, and listen to the opinions of Māori people, leaders and activists.

HEAR OUR VOICES



3. Include young people in discussions about climate change.
4. Address bullying by teaching acceptance of everyone despite their differences.
5. Make sure that everyone can access public transport.
6. Look at the connections between gangs, drugs, alcohol and child abuse and implement programmes that address the effects of gang culture on young people.
7. Give young people a better voice in national and local Government, include and listen to their opinions.
8. Ensure the education system meets the needs of different groups of young people particularly if alternative schools and activity centres are closing.
9. Talk to children and young people when making changes to education.
10. Teach about diversity and sexuality in New Zealand schools.
11. Celebrate families.
12. Address the effects of domestic violence on children.
13. Investigate the relationship between front-line police and young people and focus on encouraging police to prevent young people from becoming criminals.
14. Ensure that young people have rights in the workplace that protect them from discrimination.

General measures of implementation. (Articles 4, 42, 44(6))

Awareness of the convention

Knowing how the Government is promoting the UNCRC in policies and communities was a hard issue for children and young people to comment on. In the digital storytelling focus groups only one participant knew about the Convention. As a result, teaching children and young people about the Convention became an essential part of the research process.

In some places the caregivers, parents and even teachers and youth workers were concerned about including their children or young people in the project. They did not know what the UNCRC was and were fearful that too much power or control would be given to their children. When this happened adults were informed about the about the rights and responsibilities children and young people have in the Convention. The fact that the Convention seeks to support families and communities to maintain a caring and supportive environment for children to grow up in was also highlighted.

The lack of awareness of the UNCRC is evident in the story *Limited Rights! Limited Knowledge*. The young people in this group said that lack of information leads to fewer opportunities 'now and in the future'.

This group of young people all had an interest in human rights and the treatment of children in other countries. They were passionate about making a difference in the world. The only person who knew about UNCRC was in this group. The rest of the group did not know that the Convention existed and that the New Zealand Government had signed onto it. The children said that lack of knowledge

HEAR OUR VOICES



of their rights was literally a wall between their own rights and opportunities: ‘... it’s like something in between and you can’t get it’.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Limited Rights, Limited Knowledge*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njzyDWTJdTQ>

The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People

In April 2010, the New Zealand Government told the UN that it would be supporting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Before this, Aotearoa/New Zealand was one of four UN members to oppose the Declaration. Although children and young people did not specifically talk about the Declaration in their stories, a group of rangatahi, in their story *Racism in New Zealand*, felt that the rights of their people to have a voice and opinion on matters related to Tiriti o te Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) was not respected.

This group felt that the treatment of their leaders and people by Government authorities was encouraging racism and fear between Māori and Pakeha. They saw the anti-terrorism raids in October 2007 and the reaction of the Government to the seabed and foreshore claims in 2004 as hasty. To them, the Government in both instances had reacted without thinking of or talking to the people involved.

Their first statement involves a picture of Tame Iti (a Māori activist of the Tuhoeiwi) with the words ‘I see a leader, an activist for Māori rights. His rights were abused’. If children and young people learn about how the world accepts them by looking at how their leaders are respected then the negative treatment of Tame Iti by the media, law enforcement, politicians and others sends a sad message. The children and young people said ‘We are human, but they treat us as rats.’

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Racism in New Zealand*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTk3edOnTiA>

Climate change

In their story *Climate Change*, a group of children and young people shared the environmental changes threatening the planet. The young people were refugee and migrant youth from Africa. They were aware of the dependence of humans and animals on their environments and how simple environmental changes can destroy humans and many species of animals.

A powerful message in the story is the group’s challenge, ‘Where are our rights? Where’s my rights?’ Children and young people know that they are inheriting the planet. It is the responsibility of adults to make sure that the planet given is one that that can be passed on. The young people were displaced from homelands affected by poverty, war and famine; their call to action is timely as the future may bring many more displaced peoples, many more ‘refugees’. In the words of this group: ‘Think about it!’

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Climate Change*.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jS1Lv_2bll4

Recommendations

- Teach New Zealanders about the UNCRC.
- Respect the rights of, and listen to the opinions of Māori people, leaders and activists.

- Include young people in discussions about climate change.

When do you become an adult? (Article 1)

When it came to what age young people should begin to be considered an adult, none of the focus groups thought that this was a real concern for them right now. However, a couple of groups mentioned age in relation to Government policy. In their story *Education Systems* a group of high school students felt that the current school leaving age of 16 was okay because it ‘... gives you the basic knowledge’. However, they also felt that students should be supported so that they can make the most of their time at school. Another group of young people in their story *The government don’t listen* felt that it was wrong that they had to turn 18 before the government listened to them: ‘They only hear us when they want our votes.’

General principles of UNCRC. (Articles 2,3,6,12)

Non-Discrimination

Seventeen of the digital stories either mentioned, or focused on, discrimination. Young people felt that particular groups of young people are discriminated against. These included:

- Māori and Pacific young people.
- Young mothers.
- Young people with mental illness.
- Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) young people.

You’re the wrong colour!

As in the story *Racism in New Zealand*, many young people felt that racism existed in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In many places, young people also talked about the connection between racism and gangs. Many of the participants had gang connections or family members in a gang. They felt that they were in gangs because of being poor and being ‘brown’. When asked what they wanted to do when they grew older, most of the time participants with gang connections felt that the only future they had was to continue in the gang, go to prison or give up.

One of the focus groups was made up of young people that lived in a gang neighbourhood. One person in the group was completely against gangs, another hated gangs having lost a friend the year before to a gang fight, and one young person felt that gang life for many was okay – ‘gangs aren’t all that bad’. The young person had a deep respect for the gang members he knew personally, felt safe in the gang and believed that he had a future with them. Everyone had a different opinion and they decided to make a story that would show these contradictions.

Their story *Gang Affiliation* is against gangs and for gangs. It talks about gangs and young people: ‘There are young people who are born into gangs ... I still respect them ... I had a friend killed over gang rivalries ... Sometimes gangs aren’t a safe choice, they can cause trouble.’ The digital story is a space where young people with different opinions show respect for each other and come to a shared story.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Gang Affiliation*.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OD4_WRgNB0k

There were several gang stories in the focus groups. Most of them talked about the discrimination that occurs through New Zealand gangs such as the blue Crips (youth) and New Zealand Blackpower (adult), red Bloods (youth) and New Zealand Mongrel Mob (adults). The two key gang colours have led to violence and discrimination between different groups of Māori youth. *Gang Affiliation* tries to challenge this by combining the two colours and asking 'Is there a way through it?' The young people felt that the solution was not simple. They felt that gangs were a result of poverty and racism. However, the solution was not locking gang members up or giving poor families a lot of money. Participants felt that gangs were proof that inequalities, and discrimination exist in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

One group of young people talked directly about the violent discrimination that occurs between gangs in their story *Fighting is !h!!*. The young people talked about facing violence every day because of the way that they were dressed in their neighbourhood. Their story shows that young people cannot solve the gang problem by themselves. Efforts to do so lead to more discrimination and abuse because many of the youth gangs are attached to adult gangs. In another group a young person had experienced stabbing while trying to stop a fight. The young people ask the Government to address gangs in a way that will not destroy families and will ensure that factors leading to gangs such as discrimination and poverty are addressed.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Fighting is !h!!*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9qPUnb0910>

Bullying and discrimination

Many of the stories connected discrimination to bullying. The children and young people said discrimination happened among young people in and out of school, most of the time to certain groups of young people.

One group which wanted the UN to hear their story of discrimination came from the refugee and migrant community. The young people felt that there were many great things about Aotearoa/New Zealand. They felt that while they had plenty of opportunities they felt discriminated against because of their identity and, for some of them, limited English. The group used emotive words along with images to express what they feel, see, hear and know. A powerful image in this story is a face over Africa being transformed as a young person says 'I see racism, I image racism, I hate racism, I feel racism'.

Their story talks about how their experiences of bullying come from the stereotypes about refugees: 'They put people down and make people feel unequal'. The feeling of being unequal compared to others is caused by discrimination and bullying.

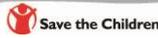
Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Bullying*.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGIMzRjdASE>

Young people with a mental illness

Young people who had a mental illness or experience of one shared the same feeling of discrimination as refugee and migrant children. They felt that often they were seen as different, weird and strange by their own peers. This made them feel alone, unwanted and unloved leading to feelings of suicide and self-harm. Isolation and feeling of difference and exclusion did more harm to them and in some cases made their symptoms worse.

The story *Discrimination against people with mental illness* has already begun to have an impact on local young people. The story was played to different groups of young people to give them an idea of the

HEAR OUR VOICES



concept of digital storytelling. The response from young people was ‘whoa – that makes sense.’ The story gave children and young people a chance to talk to each other about the connection between bullying and discrimination: ‘When you treat me like an outsider, this is how I feel ... I am all alone ... Why have I ended up here? Has my forever come to an end?’

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Discrimination Against People with Mental Illness*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZM-uRFhOLc>

Young mothers

A group of young mothers shared the types of discrimination they face being young and with a baby. They experienced being put down and talked to in negative ways because some adults thought that they had chosen to have a baby at a young age in order to get a welfare benefit. The young mums were aware of the effect of stereotypes and asked not to be called ‘teen mums’. They were not teens gone astray but young mothers.

The young mums in this digital story share their public transport experiences. Each of the young mums had experienced buses driving past them whilst they waited to get a ride to school. They felt that the drivers were reluctant to stop because of the time it would take to get the baby, pram and mother on the bus. When buses stopped, the bus drivers did not help but asked the young mothers to hurry up and collapse their pram. One mum decided to stop taking the pram altogether and carried her baby instead.

Sometimes bus drivers doubted or did not accept the young mothers’ student identification. A young mum was told by the bus driver that her school did not exist. When drivers did not believe the young mothers, they were forced to pay adult fares. The group had also experienced being stared at by other passengers and were made to feel horrible. They finish by saying: ‘Young mums deserve respect and rights to an education.’ Young mothers deserve support not discrimination.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Prams on Buses*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVpGgqzsSZU>

Best Interests of the Child

Providing opportunities for children

One group of primary students, in their story *Opportunities for Kids*, talked about what they felt the New Zealand Government should be doing about their rights. They felt that the Government’s key role is to make sure all New Zealand children have the same opportunities. All children have a right to an education and a right to have fun. Their story reminds us that children need to be protected and cared for so that these opportunities become a reality.

This story finishes with a dream of: ‘... a world where children are not forced to work.’ This final comment is not a reflection on the New Zealand Government but on the conditions of children in other countries. This group was aware that all Government policy should consider the rights of the child. They knew that in other places in the world, the best interests of children were often overlooked and that they do not have opportunities to learn and have fun.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Opportunities for Kids*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84MAvaZ3EUE>

The right to life

Gangs, drugs and child abuse

Stories about gangs and the effect they have on young people were linked to stories about horrific child abuse and drug use by family members. In one group all the young people had experienced physical abuse and gang culture. Some of the young people shared how adults drink, take drugs, get into fights or beat children up.

When sourcing images for the *Gangs and Violence* story the group spent a significant amount of time searching for a 'child abuse picture'. The one they chose is of a young baby covered in blood. When asked whether they needed such a disturbing picture one of the young people shared the experience of watching their baby sibling being attacked.

Children and young people said you are marked for life with scars and later by gang or prison tattoos. One of the group members had a family member who was tattooed by force in prison on a visible part of their body – they were marked for life in more ways than one. For these young people, living life on the edge of life and death, 'violence is not the answer'. Aotearoa/New Zealand must act on child abuse. Children and young people deserve protection.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Gangs and Violence*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNvQsnNjHKw>

In another group the participants focused only on the effects of drugs and alcohol. Most of the group had been using marijuana and alcohol since they were at primary school. They had all been expelled from the formal school system and were working well in an alternative education setting. They shared what it was like to have parents addicted to drugs and marijuana and the abuse that happens in the home and community after 'a heavy night or morning'.

Children and young people talked about the reality of their neighbourhood where adults offer to shout (freely buy) them large bottles of spirits from the alcohol store. At times adults made them smoke. The participants had started 'using' at a young age which led to them skipping school. They were now coping with the effects of these negative experiences.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Drugs and Alcohol*

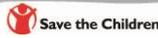
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rpbdb0eOF4>

Respect for the opinions of children and young people

When it came to a right for an opinion and respect for that opinion, all the focus groups focused on national and local government. Across many of the groups, children and young people felt that there was very little opportunity for them to give their point of view and when they did, they were often not listened to. Most of these groups (mainly young people over the age of 12) knew that a number of youth representation groups exist but they felt that these groups did not represent their opinions. This could have been due to the fact that some of the participants came from marginalised groups and outside of New Zealand's main centres. However, it is also true that while children and young people have opinions only a small group want to or are empowered to 'represent' young people or actively engage with Government. It was clear that young people saw the Save the Children New Zealand consultations as 'respecting their opinions' without the pressure of speaking to adults on adult terms and conditions.

The Ministry of Youth Development showed a respect for gathering children and young people's opinions by suggesting communities and groups for the research. The Office of the Children's

HEAR OUR VOICES



Commissioner and the Human Rights in Education Trust, supplied information, stickers, posters and rights-based publications that were most appreciated by the participants.

Government

An example of how young people felt about Government respect for their opinion came from a group of secondary students in the story *The Government Don't Listen*. The story starts with a picture of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. The picture was purposefully chosen to show what it feels like when a Government is not interested in youth opinions: 'it feels like you live in a dictatorship, not a democracy.' The young people in this group felt that when their opinion is not asked for, or represented, it is as if they have their mouths taped shut: 'We have no voice'.

The young people felt that the Government would 'listen' if young people could vote in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Young people are able to vote when they reach the age of 18. The story shows what it is like to be 16 or 17 and see decisions made on health and education without consultation. In this group's opinion, votes shaped Government policy and having no ability to vote led to no voice in Government decisions.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *The Government Don't Listen*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F47yJqTFluo>

In their story on tertiary education secondary school students most of them in the last year of their schooling wanted to be consulted on matters affecting them. During 2010, the Government announced changes to tertiary education courses and funding. The young people were concerned that they had yet to be informed or asked about their opinions concerning policy decisions that would affect their future study. As they did not live in a university city the young people would have to move to one or take a local polytechnic course. The students felt angry that they did not know and could not plan their future. Referring to their isolation, confusion and frustration they said 'We lose money when you change the grades.'

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Our Choice. Our Future*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBnu5o2ovxg>

Local Government

One primary school group shared their feelings about lack of consultation by their local council. A decision was made to put a major road in their neighbourhood. The road was built and their lives changed dramatically. Several of the group could no longer walk to school because the road cut between their home and school. One of the group could not go to the playground alone. The children found themselves dependent on parents to get around the city. Prior to the construction of the new road, children had been able to move around on their own.

The group said children have opinions. They were aware that local governments consult with secondary school students but see primary school children as having no opinion: 'I believe I have a voice. I know more than you think.'

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Our Opinion*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYnxgKYBRP0>

Recommendations

- Address bullying by teaching acceptance of everyone despite their differences.
- Make sure that everyone can access public transport in the cities and towns.
- Look at the connections between gangs, drugs, alcohol and child abuse and look at programmes that can address the effects of gang culture on young people.
- Give young people a better voice in national and local Government, include and listen to their opinions.

Civil Rights and Freedoms (Articles 7,8, 13,14,15,16,17,37(a))

Although you might find this section quite small, many of the groups talked about their right to be who they are (a good example being *Racism in New Zealand*), their right to express themselves and be free from discrimination (*Bullying and Prams on Buses*) and their right to live a life without torture (*Gangs and Violence*). Two other groups talked about the right to identity (to be who you want to be) and the right to information.

Two stories are about education and in them children and young people ask:

- Does education in Aotearoa/New Zealand suit every young person?
- Does education in Aotearoa/New Zealand allow young people to grow their individuality?

Identity, Expression, Thought, Conscience and Association

A group of young people focused their story on the New Zealand education system. Their story came from their consideration of having to wear a uniform in most secondary schools. The story asks why many young people lack opportunities in education because of the way they dress. Each young person in this group had experiences of exclusion related to uniform or not fitting into the mould of a 'normal' student.

The key point in this story is that every young person is different, 'you just have to look at their clothing.' Instead of restricting their future by making judgements, education must open doors, give support and allow young people to become themselves.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *The New Zealand Secondary Education System*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4bQ-M-DJlw>

Access to Information

A group of GLBT young people shared their anger at being discriminated against in schools because they could not get appropriate information about sexuality. They also felt that mainstream media lacked appropriate information and that when local dramas featured GLBT characters (such as *Shortland Street*) they were stereotyped and could not be considered role models.

A participant with a passion for the arts experienced having his artwork withdrawn from competitions because it had Queer suggestions within it. The group also shared how schools are required to give sex education in Aotearoa/New Zealand but not sexuality education. This means that young people learn about sex between a male and female. They do not learn about the connection between sexuality and identity. Young people said that if you do not fit into the lesson

you find yourself seen, and treated, as different by others. This has negative effects on personal identity and sense of wellbeing.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Where are Our Queer Rights?*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJcZoxcH5ng>

Recommendations

- Ensure that the education system meets the needs of different groups of young people particularly if alternative schools and activity centres are closing.
- Teach about diversity and sexuality in New Zealand schools.

Family Environment and Alternative Care (Articles 5, 9, 10, 11, 18.1, 18.2, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27.4, 39)

The young people in the focus groups came from a wide range of families; from two-parent to single-parent families. Some young people did not live with mum or dad but with another family member. Others lived in families where there was abuse occurring to them or someone else while others lived in stable home environments. Issues of child abuse, domestic violence and gangs were evident in stories from stable and unstable homes. Children and young people felt that violence in the home and community needs to be dealt with because it leads to many problems in communities.

The following stories show the highs and lows of families in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Having a good family

The love in some New Zealand families was evident in *It's fancy living in Aotearoa*. In this story, a group of primary school students said living in Aotearoa/New Zealand was great because of the things you get to do with your family and the love expressed. For the young people swimming in Lake Taupo and shopping are big family events as they involve many kilometres of travel. The children show that when you have a great family life – New Zealand/Aotearoa is fantastic for children.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *It's Fancy Living in Aotearoa/New Zealand*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mF96RJJzxHE>

Another group of primary school students shared the diversities of their families in their story *Inspiring Kids of the River*. The children from a rural community talked about differences not only in their families but in their community. There are two stories within this short video.

The first is about Aunt Missy who is the school cleaner. The young boy says he loves his 'whaea'. The word 'whaea' (Aunt) is a sign of respect for many people in this community. When you are called whaea, you are considered part of the family. Aunt Missy was whaea for all the children in the school through family ties or respect. 'It's not fair when Aunt Missy has to clean up the mess' is a reminder of the respect and love that the children have for her and she for the children and the school. It shows how in some rural towns in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the adults of the community connect with the local school and the difference that this can have on children and young people.

The other story is of a young boy whose father was in prison for committing a crime against another family in the same community. The young boy did not see his father often but took pride in saying that he loved to go hunting with him at night. He had also lost a young sister to illness and really missed not having dad with him. The child was in a difficult place because although Dad was in prison

HEAR OUR VOICES



for being bad and for hurting another family in the community and in the school, families in the community still cared for him.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Inspiring Kids of the River*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwU-IRf5ZMQ>

Violence at home

There are two types of stories around violence in the home. The first was from children and young people who felt that their families are loving and caring and that violence was not a problem in their home but a problem in others. The second group were stories of violence from young people in families associated with crime or gangs.

One group of primary school students felt that they had good families and because of this great opportunities. However, they also felt that other children their age did not have this. Their story shows how fighting between parents makes life difficult for children. The group said that when a child experiences violence at home it affects everything – it stops them getting the most out of their education and negatively impacts the rest of their life: ‘Domestic violence – it’s not okay.’

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Domestic Violence*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONHMb0NVwps>

Gangs and violence

Some New Zealand Asian youth like other children and young people felt that gangs, domestic violence, child abuse and drugs are key issues that need to be resolved. They said that New Zealanders had the ability to solve their own problems. When they wrote their story the children and young people talked a lot about what it was like to live on one side of an urban area which was relatively safe compared to another where it was dangerous to walk the streets. They shared the concerns their parents have about the families living in dangerous areas and the ‘gang problem’.

The young people also felt that although young people did live in violent communities, the media exaggerated this and promoted fear. They felt that a solution to violence needed to be found so that all young people could live in safety.

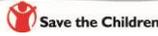
Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Our Country, Our Problem, Our Solution*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgsSQY4snsk>

A group of rangatahi shared similar concerns as the Asian young people. They all came from a supportive and loving community but felt that a key issue facing Māori youth in Aotearoa/New Zealand was the effects of abuse. Their story shows that in order to address issues like crime and violence, it is important to look into the home to address the ways in which children are raised. If young people are raised within a violent gang culture it affects what they become.

The story *How were you raised?* is engaging because it comes from a group of rangatahi attached to their culture and language on a marae. The history of Māori gangs in Aotearoa/New Zealand connects them to the movement of Māori people from their homes to urban centres and, gradually, into urban poverty. This story encourages us to reflect on our history when it comes to the inequalities faced by Māori children and young people. These rangatahi ask ‘How will you raise your kids?’ New Zealand has a responsibility to address history in order to make a better future for children.

HEAR OUR VOICES



Watch on DVD or click this link to view *How were you Raised?*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5BDtrljdwM>

Young people in an urban community who are attached to gang or living in a gang family said gangs are scary but they are a part of their lives: 'When your family chooses to be in gangs, it ruins your future.' Their story shares the reality of gang life for girls and women. Young girls are forced to become prostitutes and are disrespected by male members. One member of this group had a sibling raped by gang members. One female decided that she would try to become a member of a rival ethnic gang because she felt the women had a little more respect in that gang. The young people challenge adults to always put their families first.

Their story is about connections to gangs and the reality of gang violence, prostitution and a ruined future. The hope is that service organisations that are connected with children and young people; teachers, youth workers and volunteers have resources, love and support to show that adults in Aotearoa/New Zealand do care.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *New Zealand Gangz*.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C86D_z3cQHo

Recommendations

- Celebrate families.
- Look at the effects of domestic violence on children and address these.
- Explore the connections between gangs, drugs, alcohol and child abuse and look at programmes that can address the effects of gang culture on young people.

Basic health and health equity (Articles 6, 18.3, 23,24,26,27.1-3)

Health and health equity were not directly addressed by young people in their stories although one group talked about dole queues in their story about youth employment. The majority of children and young people felt that Aotearoa/New Zealand was a good place to live because you could access health services including doctors and dentists. For many young people being able to eat good food was another positive thing about living in Aotearoa/ New Zealand.

A group of primary school students talk about health in their story *Our Rights in New Zealand*. They were happy that they could have fruit like strawberries in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This point makes most people smile. The key point the children wanted to make to the UN was that strawberries are fantastic yet some children do not have them.

The rest of the story reflects aspects of family and leisure. The children can play and they are protected by their families when they swim. They remind us that health and wellbeing involves having a supportive family and access to fun whether it is at home or at the river.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Our Rights in New Zealand*.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_G-KPFukvo

Education and Leisure (Articles 28, 29, 31)

Education – An opportunity for all

Most of the young people appreciated the opportunity for schooling and education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, depending upon their experiences, children and young people differed in their

HEAR OUR VOICES



agreement with some feeling that everyone can go to school and have the same opportunities. Others felt that although everyone could go to school, some young people struggled to have the same opportunity and experience. The following stories give three different views on education.

Having experienced education in another country, a group of refugee and migrant children in the story *We Like Our Country. We Love Education* compared education in Aotearoa/New Zealand with education in their African home. The key message in the story is that children and young people are supported to succeed in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Education is not a sacrifice for the family but is seen and respected as a basic right. The group share hope they have for tertiary education and the fact that lack of money does not restrict possibilities for refugee and migrant young people.

Aotearoa/New Zealand does not prejudice them because of their background, skin-colour or finances. It is safer and it provides opportunities not found in other countries. This group felt that the only real problem with education was bullying amongst young people.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *We Like Our Country. We Love Education*.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ_No2tPiAA

Students at an activity centre also talked about education opportunities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The young people had been expelled and stood down from the formal school system and were getting back on track in a centre attached to a national high school. The story is a reflection of their own learning at the activity centre where they were finding purpose in education: 'with better education, comes better opportunities'. They point out that whilst most New Zealanders can afford education, factors like peer pressure can either help or damage the young person's decision to make the most of schooling.

Most of the young people in this centre shared how their attitude towards schooling had changed with the opportunity to 'get back on track' outside the formal school. However, the group had two concerns. First, that the alternatives to formal schooling work but are not seen as effective by the community. They feared that their having attended an activity centre would affect their education and employment outcomes as they would be seen as only suitable for manual labour jobs like road works. Second, young people at this centre were concerned that if they returned to mainstream schooling, they would not be given a fresh start but would be judged and treated as if they were still a problem student.

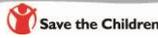
Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Misused Education*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8lWXCwai4l>

A mixture of state and alternative education students focused their story on the types of support young people need to achieve in education. In some stories like *New Zealand Secondary Education System*, the young people talk about the need for education to focus on the talents of the students. The alternative education students did not feel supported by the Government to make the most of their education experiences. At the time of the group meeting the Government announced the possibility that funding would be redirected from alternative education providers and activity centres into mainstream schooling. It would still be focused on these students but on keeping them in school rather than waiting until they left.

In this story, the young people ask for a voice in decisions made about their schooling. They noted that everyone learns differently and that giving young people a 'hand to help us grow' allows young people to find their own pathway and 'make the right decisions'. This story is a reminder of how young people feel when decisions are made without their input. It also shows that some children and

HEAR OUR VOICES



young people understand their own responsibilities when it comes to education. Including them in decisions around education gives them a voice and ownership over their own outcomes.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Youth Support*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAk2Su-ljgs>

Bullying

Children said that bullying often starts at school. The message from the group of under sixes is very clear – it is important that children treat each other nicely. In their story, *Treat People Nicely*, this group of children drew their own pictures about what is it like to treat others nicely and show how they feel when they are not. They start with the giving of presents. Giving a present was important because the person getting the gift was leaving school. The present let the departing student know that they were loved. The young storyteller shared how this taught him to give when others are sad.

The video also has stories about what it was like to be treated nicely in the playground and in the family. All the children had experienced not being treated nicely and as the last picture on the video shows – the effects of this was feeling sad. The pictures and stories show that being treated nicely is an important value or principle to have in the playground. The stories are not about learning and sharing scissors in the classroom where there are set rules but about what happens at morning tea and lunch breaks. Being treated nicely is a matter of respect, a right of the child and a responsibility or expectation for children.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Treat People Nicely*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTNqIVSsQI4>

In the story *No Bullying*, a group of young people explore the impact bullying has on children and young people. The story involves speaking from victim's point of view: 'No. Help! Help! Stop it, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, please help me. No. I didn't mean...' This video highlights the psychological and emotional effects of bullying 'pain, sorrow, loneliness'.

The video *No Bullying* was created by a group of young people who had experienced bullying at school. Each participant was and is coping with their own mental health illness or disability. They had amazing personalities that were often seen as different by other children and young people. One group member shared the experience of being put down. This simply stopped the young person from wanting to connect with others and from being themselves in front of other people. The story was successfully used in other focus groups to challenge young people and encourage them to address their prejudices against people that are different.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *No Bullying*.

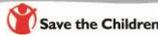
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vU00YYdFH08>

Young Mothers in New Zealand

The story *Young Mothers in New Zealand* echoes the other stories of discrimination. In this video, a group of young mothers who are currently finishing their education at a teen parent centre reflect on the difficulties of being a young mum enrolled in education. The young mums shared how much they loved their school. The centre treated them as responsible adults, gave them hope and opportunity and saw promise in them and their children. This was evident in the roll of honour on the wall.

The young mothers talked about the labelling that has happened to them. They feel 'labelled as failures' and 'singled out because we're pregnant and young'. Coming together at this particular

HEAR OUR VOICES



school helped the young mothers to find support amongst their peers. They are able to motivate each other to succeed and to make a better future for themselves and their children. Their story advocates for ‘smashing stereotypes’ and challenges the tendency of some adults to judge young people by the way they look. The story is one of thankfulness to the education opportunities they have at this school and in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is a promise for a better future: ‘When we succeed ... our children succeed.’

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Young Mums in New Zealand*.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krID_BI_IBo

Leisure

Every child and young person felt that Aotearoa/New Zealand offered lots of opportunities for fun and leisure. They talked about green outdoors and adventures in the wilderness. Children and young people all felt they could meet up with friends and enjoy life outside of school and home.

One group of rangatahi wanted visitors to come to Aotearoa/ New Zealand and enjoy the sights for themselves. Their story tells us that Aotearoa/New Zealand is connected to the world in ways that coming here will not separate the visitors from their home: ‘you can still keep in touch with your family’ (a key right when someone has to leave their home). The participants say that public transport in urban and provincial centres allows people to get around and enjoy Aotearoa/New Zealand. They talk about the safety of the outdoors. Dangerous animals are in amusement parks and adventure sports have safety guides. In this place of opportunities they say: ‘Never be scared at doing something you wanna do ... and have fun!’

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *What you can do in Aotearoa*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6QR0H3RkB0>

In *We are the River Rats. This is Our School*; another group of primary students share their experiences of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Despite being in an isolated rural community with no public transport they enjoy being able to connect with young people in cities and other countries through dance and sport. They also love the opportunity of going out into the bush to get their food – it is much more fun than going to the supermarket.

The researchers experienced some of the leisure activities the children did after school. The children and young people showed off their community, played games and enjoyed a break dance session. It was fantastic to be accepted by the children and the community and to see that Aotearoa/New Zealand still has places where young people can connect with the outdoors and feel safe.

However, things were not perfect in this community. A child said ‘I don’t like to get burnt. I don’t like to get punched in the nose and I don’t like to get punched.’ There are communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand where things might look good to an outsider but when you ask a few questions, there is a lot of hurt and, at times, violence.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *We are the River Rats. This is Our School*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkg-Cj86jHM>

Recommendations

- Talk to children and young people when making changes to education.
- Address bullying by teaching others how to accept everyone despite their differences.

Special Protection Measures (Articles 22, 37(b-d), 32-36, 38, 39, 40).

Young people and the police

Three groups of young people decided to use their story to talk about their own relationship with the New Zealand Police. Most young people in these groups had experiences with front-line police. They felt that when it came to youth justice it was how the police treated them that is of concern rather than the whole youth experience of the justice system. One group shared their anger and frustration with the police in their community. They talked about how life changed for them when they turned 12. A young person said that at this moment they were seen by the police as a criminal and were picked up because of their last name (their family was known to the police). Another young person shared the experience of being hit over the head with a soft but heavy book because they would not do what they police wanted.

The historical relationship their families had with the police meant that the young people saw the police as being against them, taking the law into their own hands and being hypocritical. It is easy to think that these young people react to the police in negative ways and treat them with attitude. However, the police are one of the first contacts a young person has with the justice system. The contact should be supportive and directed to making a difference. The young people do not have easy backgrounds and New Zealand has a responsibility to support them to succeed.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *New Zealand Police*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDLEyFzigC4>

In their story *Police and Law*, children and young people talk about how the Police have made them scared and reactive. A young girl in the group shared how the police had questioned her for a significant time without an adult present. What scared her in this situation was the fact that she was questioned by two male officers. She was scared that they would hurt her: 'I feel trapped when he looks at me that way.' Others in this group told stories about friends that had been in physical fights with the police. They all felt that the police were against them. They finish by asking for some respect so that, they can also respect the Police.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Police and Law*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5U0fwhoaSE>

The third story about experiences with the police comes from a group of young people that personally knew police officers. One person had an experience with a youth-aid officer who took time to ask what was wrong, what was happening at home and at school. As a whole, the group felt that the police see young people as problematic and particular groups of young people (especially ethnic and transgender) as worse than others. They felt that there were times when the police picked up young people because of their reputation or because they looked suspicious.

Despite this, the group agreed that the police have a role to play in society and that they try to do their job well. They also felt that when police cared, they made a difference. It was clear in the story of the young person and the youth-aid officer that the police officer in question had made a positive impact in the life of the young person.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Police Injustice*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6s9lfDDf4o>

Child Employment

An interesting story regarding child and youth employment came from a group of rangatahi. Their story *Rights to Employment* is a reflection on how easy it is to get a job and how everyone has a right to basic conditions of employment. A young person in the group got a job and after having been employed for quite some time asked the employer when he was going to be paid. The young person was told that because he did not have a formal contract, he did not have to be paid. This story is quite disturbing. It is incredibly unfair for any young person to work without pay.

The rangatahi in this group also shared their experiences of racism and unemployment. It was their opinion that Māori were unfairly discriminated against by employers. They felt that after a job interview, a Pakeha would get the job over a Māori person. This forces young people into welfare dependence at a young age. As long as young people can be employed in Aotearoa/New Zealand there is a need to ensure that 'anyone from any race has the right to be employed' and to have 'the right to a contract.'

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *Rights to Employment*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYkFSidBVQo>

New Zealand's Nuclear Policy

The final story is one from a group of young people who wanted to acknowledge to the UN their appreciation for the New Zealand Government's position on nuclear warfare weapons and energy. In their story, *NZ Bomb Free*, the young people talk about the freedom they have knowing that they live without the threat of nuclear warfare or even war on their doorstep. It's a story that shows that Aotearoa/New Zealand does care about its citizens.

Watch on DVD or click this link to view *NZ Bomb Free*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLAzREsFbjE>

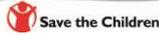
New Zealand has a long way to go to address the health and wellbeing of children and young people. However, as the country is able to make big decisions around issues such as nuclear warfare there is hope that in the near future the challenges of discrimination, bullying, child abuse, children and young people's voices and opinions will be sufficiently addressed. Addressing bullying can also extend to the role of Government and agents of State such as the Police. How young people feel treated by State services can influence the way they, themselves, interact with others.

Recommendations

- Investigate the relationship between front-line police and young people and focus on encouraging police to prevent young people from becoming criminals.

Ensure that young people have rights in the workplace which protect them from discrimination.

HEAR OUR VOICES



Conclusions

Save the Children New Zealand is taking up the wero or challenge laid down by the children and young people in this report by:

- Continuing its advocacy role. In collaboration with the UNCRC Advisory Group and key children's rights organizations Save the Children New Zealand will engage with government on the issues raised and the recommendations made the by children and young people (on pages 6-8 of this report.)
- Launching the report at Parliament.
- Disseminating the findings through our website and linking the report and digital stories to relevant websites.
- Providing downloadable material such as:
 - the Literature Review;
 - Executive summary and full report of *Hear our voices we entreat*.
 - An educational resource for teachers, students and NGOs to promote the awareness on the Convention.
 - The digital stories are also available for local and international viewing on YouTube.
- In one of the digital stories the children said "*Our country, our problem, our solution*". Save the Children New Zealand will partner with children and young people towards implementation of the recommendations made in this report. The digital stories will be used as indicators of gaps for New Zealand children and will be used to stimulate child led solutions through the Save the Children New Zealand leadership and community service programme.

In the spirit of Eglantyne Jebb the founder of Save the Children and the originator of what is now known as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, let us rise to the challenge to,

"claim certain rights for children... for their universal recognition"

(Eglantyne Jebb, 1923).

Appendices: Transcripts to digital stories

Limited Rights? Limited Knowledge?

We have rights to things we don't know about.

Limited Rights? Limited Knowledge?

Because of the limited knowledge of our rights, we have less opportunity for now and the future.

Limited Rights? Limited Knowledge?

It's there, but it's like something in-between and you can't get it.

We need to be told about our rights.

Limited Rights? Limited Knowledge?

What are our rights? We should have the right to know what rights we have.

Limited Rights? Limited Knowledge?

Racism in New Zealand

I see a leader, an activist for Maori rights.

His rights were abused.

We are human!

We are human, but they treat us like rats.

Government, let us be heard!

We feel, see, hear racism around us.

We have a right to express ourselves.

We don't want War.

We don't want War.

We want to be heard.

Let us be heard!!

Climate Change

Climate Change

I believe climate change is real.

There's more than enough proof.

Just take a look.

I believe climate change is real.

It's not just affecting humans.

Look what we are doing.

Where are our rights?

Where's my rights?

Think about it!

Gang Affiliation

I have family members that are gang affiliated.

I can't talk to them.

There are young people who are born into gangs.

Even though they are gang affiliated, I still talk to them.

I still respect them.

I still respect them!

I learned gang fighting can lead to death.

I had a friend killed over gang rivalries.

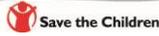
Sometimes gangs aren't a safe choice they can cause trouble.

Hanging with gangs may make me want to join.

Gangs come out of poverty and racism.

Is there a way through it?

HEAR OUR VOICES



Fighting is !h!!

What's the point of fighting?

What's the point of fighting?

All because you wear a different colour.

All because you wear a different colour!

So from the one ounce (fight), the loser gets his gang and the other loser gets his gang and the violence just gets bigger and bigger.

Fighting doesn't solve anything!

Fighting is bad because you can't walk down the street without someone starting shh with you.

Trying to solve something leads to abuse.

NZ's All GoodBut.....

I image racism. I hate racism.

I feel racism. I see racism.

I see abuse. I hear abuse.

I hate abuse. I know abuse.

I think that stereotypes are disrespectful.

They put people down and make people feel unequal.

I believe that text bullying can be as bad as someone abusing you.

It's just as bad.

These are some of the things we need to improve on.....

Discrimination Against People with a Mental Illness....

When you treat me like an outsider, this is how I feel.

The rest of this story is 40 seconds long.

The rest of this story is 40 seconds long.

Whose class are you in?

Mine or the world?

I am all alone.

Feeling frustrations in my head.

Battling voices that want me dead.

Will you be there for me, in sickness and in health?

Why have I ended up here?

Has my forever come to an end?

40 SECONDS IS UP!! Have you saved somebody from themself?

Prams on Buses

-Public Transport-

We depend on transport to get to school with our children.

The buses pass us by.

No one likes to be left behind!

If we're late for school, our babies suffer.

WE NEED to get to school!

They don't believe our student lds and make us pay adult fares.

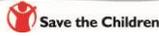
You make us stand and give us dirty looks.

No one helps us on the bus.

Don't discriminate against us because we have prams.

Young mums deserve respect and rights to an education.

HEAR OUR VOICES



Opportunities for Kids

I believe everyone has the right to an education.
In New Zealand we are very grateful to have opportunities to be educated.
I know kids view these opportunities as the chance to have fun.
Kids must be able to enjoy themselves.
I feel the government should provide us with these opportunities.
It is a government's responsibility to ensure our rights are protected.
I dream of a world where children are not forced to work.
All kids have the right to opportunities and choices.

Gangs and Violence

Violence isn't good for people in the 'hood.
Violence to innocent babies.
Violence to innocent babies I know what it's like.
Drugs can be deadly.
Marked for life.
Tattoos and scars for people behind the bars.
Violence is not the answer.

Drugs and Alcohol

Too many people are buying alcohol for underage people.
Alcohol causes violence in our society.
Half of my family have been affected by alcohol.
More and more people are starting to take drugs.
People as young as 12 are becoming addicted to drugs.
Which leads to future problems like wagging.
And it destroys people's brains.
It's destroying people's brains.

The Government Don't Listen

They don't respect us.
They only do what's right for them.
They ignore us.
They do not listen.
We have no voice.
They only hear us when they want our votes.

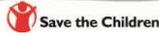
Our Choice. Our Future

We deserve to be told.
We need to be told when tertiary education is going to change.
Let us have our say.
Survey teenagers about how tertiary education will affect them.
We deserve to create our own future.
By restricting tertiary courses, you also restricting job opportunities.
We lose money when you change the grades.
GIVE US A VOICE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION!

Decisions Get Made Without Our Opinions

I believe I have a voice.
I know more than you think.
I hate it when they don't ask for my opinion.

HEAR OUR VOICES



I miss the trees.
It was easier to get around before.
I hear then asking but they don't ask me.
We have an opinion, too.
You could just ask.
We should have a say.
It's now or gone.
And without my voice.
And it's affecting us, too.

New Zealand's Secondary Education System

How does our appearance affect our education.
Hair dyes and nose rings don't mean anything. Don't diss people because they're different.
Give us the freedom of self-expression and individuality.
It's good to have something to secure your future.
The leaving age gives you basic knowledge.
Having support makes a difference.
It helps you make the right decisions.
We need support and encouragement to point us in the right direction.
You can open the doors, but don't push us through them.
Inspire us, motivate us, enable us.
Leave our pathways for us to choose.

Where are our Queer Rights??

I can be safe here, but why can't I at home?
We have the RIGHT to be who we are and be safe.
Why are my expressions hidden?
Queer issues are NOT raised in Mainstream Media.
Why can't I get it like everywhere else?
Segregation of Queer Literature.
We are taught to be different, but not too different.
Lack of education around Sexuality.
We deserve rights.

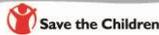
It's Fancy Living in AotearoaBecause...

We like swimming in Lake Taupo because swimming's fun.
We love to have fun.
We go shopping.
We are lucky to go shopping. Some people don't go get to go shopping.
We are lucky to live in Aotearoa.
I like making my brother laugh.
I like playing with my brother. I love my little brother.
I like my brother.
I like watching my sister crawl. It's cute when she laughs
I really love my sister.
Aotearoa

Inspiring Kids of the River

It would be nice if people were kind.
Bullying is not the answer.
It's not fair when Aunty Missy has to clean up our mess.

HEAR OUR VOICES



Aunt Missy didn't make the mess, we did.
Before Dad went to jail, I like hunting in the night with him.
I like hunting with my dad.
It feels mean jumping off the cliff.
It's so deep you can't touch the ground.
We love our river.

OUR country, OUR problem, OUR solution!

Our country is a safe place to live. It is full of opportunities.
But there are still young people surrounded by drugs, violence, and youth gangs.
And it is hard to find a solution.
Our parents don't see New Zealand to be safe because of media and their past experiences.
Their fears become our insecurities.
We need to find a solution instead of fearing it.
Our country is a safe place to live. It is full of opportunities.
And it's trying to find a solution.
A solution can be found.

Domestic Violence.. It's Not Okay

Some children in New Zealand don't have as many rights as others because of domestic violence.
It affects the whole community.
Seeing it is as bad as having it done to you.
Violence has different faces.
There are different levels of violence.
From being shouted at to being shot.
It affects your social life.
It can lead to more violence.
Domestic violence it's not okay.
Domestic violence ..it's not okay.

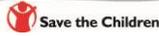
How Were You Raised?

Gangs affect your right to choose.
Did this happen to you?
How were you raised?
Try me once, I'll let you go.
Try me twice and I'll own your soul.
It's not worth it aye.
How you were raised affects what you become.
How will you raise your kids?

New Zealand Gangz!!

Gang patches can intimidate people.
But they can also encourage people to join gangs.
Gang patches are bad influences on people.
You have to follow what the gang says
Or else you will get beaten up.
Be a leader for yourself.
Gang members bully girls into prostitution.
They beat them up so they will prostitute for them. Girls should not be involved in gang life!!
Respect yourself! When your family chooses to be in gangs, it ruins your future.
Always put your family first!!

HEAR OUR VOICES



Our Rights in New Zealand

We taste them and they are nice.
Some people can't afford strawberries.
There are people poorer than us.
We hear cool sounds from the game.
It's cool that we can play.
Video games are fun to play.
We jump off of a rock.
We swim with our families.
Adults protect us when we swim.
We work for pocket money. We spend it on fun stuff.
We love it in New Zealand.

We Like Our Country. We Love Education.

Back home, we do different things. If you are poor, we can't get into university.
Here, people sponsor you to go to uni and do well at school. We believe we are supported here.
We believe we are supported here.
Back home, we do different things. If we are poor, you have to sell your livestock to buy stationery.
Here when we started school, they gave us stationery. We know we are supported here.
We know we are supported here.
Back home, we do different things. If you don't have, if you don't have a shower, teachers smack you
and kids make fun of you.
Here we don't get smacked. You get detention or rubbish. We love that we are safer.
We know that we are safer.
Back home, we do different things.
Here we have more experiences like camp or EOTC [Education Outside The Classroom] and trips.
But, there are bullies at school. Thank you.
We think education is good.

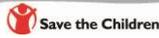
Misused Education

Education is affordable for everyone.
Our society is influenced by our peers.
With better education comes better opportunities.
Are students making the most of education?

Youth Support

The youth needs government support.
C'mon, John Key.
Government stop making our decisions let us speak.
Find your own pathway.
Make the right decisions.
Get support for our decisions as it's our right.
Give us a say on what we want to learn.
We learn our own way.
Do NOT underestimate us!!!
Give us a hand to help us grow.
Let us have fun. We only live once.
Give us a chance.

HEAR OUR VOICES



Treat People Nicely

I gave my cousin a present so I know what want to do and because it is really important.
Friends are good to play you because they are fun and they can care about you and when you are sad friends care about you.

Darrel's cousin is so nice to him so he is nice to him. Thank you for being nice.

I am walking on the road with my cousin and I like him.

I like it when people are nice to me.

Treat people nicely.

No Bullying

Listen don't go looking for trouble.

No, no. Help! Help! Stop it, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, please help me, no, I didn't mean...

Don't hurt others.

People are hurt from bullying.

Pain, sorrow, loneliness, upset. Don't hurt people.

Be Kind.

Saying this can be mean, too.

So listen don't talk badly.

Don't talk badly.

Restraint. Restraint, keep saying that. Everywhere should be a bully free zone. Always.

Being kind is important. Being kind's important, important, important...

Being kind is important.

Young Mums in New Zealand

We're labelled as failures.

We're singled out because we're pregnant and young.

We are smashing stereotypes.

We've become closer as friends because we're in the same situation.

Motivate us. We'll succeed.

With support, the sky's the limit.

Education is the key.

Our children are our future.

Education is important to us, as well as our children.

When we succeed...

... our children succeed.

We are working towards a better future for ourselves and our children.

What Can You Do in Aotearoa

It won't cost you heaps to come to Aotearoa and you can still keep in touch with your family.

There are heaps of opportunities.

You can get easy to access public transport to do cool things.

And it won't cost your life.

You can go to the amusement park to interact with different kinds of animals.

And they won't bite.

You can have loads of fun in the air, but hold on tight.

Never be scared at doing something you wanna do. And have fun!

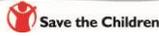
We are the River Rats. This is Our school.

Food is yummy...

Different food is good.

We love hunting and fishing.

HEAR OUR VOICES



You can listen to krumping, shuffling,
songs, and it makes you feel good.
We can krump and shuffle.
I don't like to get burnt.
I don't like to get punched in the nose and I don't like to get punched.
I don't like to get punched.
Martial arts is fun.
It makes you learn to control yourself so so you don't have to hit.
Aotearoa is great for you can go to lots of places.

New Zealand Police

They treat us like rubbish when we are on the road.
We see them eating on the job.
I hate it when the cops act like they're tough.
They think they are hard.
They take law into their own hands.

Police and Law

They ruin our lives.
They're cruel.
They don't care who they hurt.
They don't do their jobs properly!
I feel trapped when he looks at me that way.
This is how we see them.....
They can be scary.
We don't like the way they treat us.
Respect us and we will respect you!

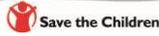
Police Injustice!!!

Being beaten down and degraded by a cop.
Police don't abide by their own laws.
Police abuse their power.
They blanket stereotyped people.
Don't judge a book by its cover.
Don't arrest us for being ourselves!!!
Police don't want to know our side of the story.
They always think they're right.
All compliance no opinion!!!
They do catch criminals.
Sometimes they listen. And sometimes they care.
But sometimes they care.

Rights to Employment

We all have rights to be employed.
Not enough jobs for everyone.
Too much unemployment.
Getting ripped off.
We have the right to a contract.
Racism.
Anyone from any race has the right to be employed.
Fair employment for youth.

HEAR OUR VOICES



NZ Bomb Free

New Zealand is a safe place to live.

If we had bombs in our country people would be frightened of stepping out of their front doors.
If we had bombs in New Zealand people would be frightened of stepping out of their front doors.

Because we won't die. We don't want to die.

Because we won't die.

New Zealand is a safe place to live because we're not at war with any other countries.

We don't want to die.

Kia tau

Ki a tataoukatoa

Teatawhai o to tatouAriki

AlhuKaraiti

Me tewhiwhingatahitanga

Ke te wairua tapu

Ake, ake, ake

Amine

Let us be still

In the support of our Lord

In Jesus Christ that draws us together as one

In the Holy Spirit

Ever and ever

Amen.

(Cultural Prayer)

Contact details:

Save the Children New Zealand, P.O. Box 6584 Marion Square, Wellington 6141. New Zealand.

Telephone +64-4-385 6847.

Fax: +64-4-385 6793.

info@savethechildren.org.nz

Website: [Http://www.savethechildren.org.nz](http://www.savethechildren.org.nz)