

Te Ahi o Ngā Rangatahi

Funding Report



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What Happened?

BGI facilitated a diverse group of about 20 young people (who named themselves Te Ahi o Ngā Rangatahi (The Fire of Youth)) to identify issues facing young people and develop a youth participatory research project. We met every Wednesday here at BGI to share kai, build relationships and plan and develop our project. After extensive community mapping, the young people decided that mental wellbeing would be the focus of their research project and went about surveying young people all over Wellington to find out what they thought about this issue and how Wellington as a city meets the wellbeing needs of its young people.

The group decided that rather than focussing on the negative side of mental health such as depression and anxiety, their survey would look to identify what coping mechanisms and wellbeing activities young people were taking advantage of on a day to day basis as well as some of the barriers that young people face when trying to access these activities. They surveyed 1243 young Wellingtonians between the ages of 12 and 24 by sharing the survey in the spaces that young people are through schools and universities, online and on the streets.. After a period of data collection the group analysed the findings and wrote a report with recommendations that have influenced BGI's funding and programme strategy and will be used to advocate for more for-youth-by-youth initiatives in Wellington.

Who Participated or Benefitted?

24 young people attended between the ages of 15 and 19 attended our weekly hui here at BGI. Young people came from 11 different Wellington high schools, Victoria University as well as some from the work force or unemployed. Young people came from a range of ethnicities, and backgrounds and were recruited through BGI's existing relationships with young people their friends, and other youth organisations.

"It's been really amazing cos we've been able to meet new people and really engage with people who I wouldn't normally engage with or I hadn't known before I came here."

What was Achieved?

The group developed a survey about young people's mental wellbeing gathered 1243 responses to the survey and produced a report that presented the findings of the research project and identified barriers that young people are experiencing as well as providing recommendations for improving young people's mental wellbeing in Wellington.

"I really think that it's something that will really help to shape Wellington for the next generation"

Recommendations To Improve Wellbeing - Key Themes

- Mental health services – improve access to mental health services
- Provide more and make accessible places for young people to hang out
- Raise awareness (destigmatize) mental wellbeing
- Schools and universities - provide more education around it and decrease stress and pressure
- Establish more groups and programs for youth to join and be a part of

Minor themes (but still prevalent messages)

- Increase resourcing to organisation / initiatives supporting young people's mental wellbeing.
- Basic needs – ensuring youth have access to basic human needs
- Implementation - ensuring young people and Māori are involved in implementation of wellbeing activities.
- Public transport - increase accessibility
- Bullying and social media use

Barriers to Wellbeing - Key Themes

- Cost
- Not enough time or were too busy
- Motivation
- Transport issues or inaccessible venues
- Family not approving or allowing
- Friends not approving
- Mental health or fear of stigma
- Lack of facilities or knowledge of them
- Social (having no one to hang out with for example)

What Other Community Benefits or Outcomes Were Achieved?

The group had a strong whanaungatanga focus in order to encourage authentic perspective sharing through vulnerability and creating a safe space. This allowed the

process to not only gather vital youth perspectives on mental wellbeing but also be hugely beneficial and empowering for the group themselves.

By analysing the data, young people started identifying what their peers recognised as important for their wellbeing. Through this process they realised that many wellbeing indicators for young people were being satisfied by their participation in the group. BGI offered a physical space for young people to come – where being young was celebrated and encouraged; it provided a connection to the community and relationships with their peers and adult youth workers and volunteers; it gave them a space to talk about issues affecting them and an opportunity to do something about it for their friends and it empowered them by illuminating the barriers that young people experience when trying to get their voice heard and created a platform from which they could amplify youth perspectives.

"I found it really empowering as a young person to be able to talk about this kind of thing with other young people"

