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Future of Work Research Paper

Aspirations of rurally disadvantaged Maori youth for their transition from secondary school to further education or training and work

by

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Abstract

*“He tini whetu ki te rangi, ko Ngati Maru ki raro
He tini ika ki te moana, ko Ngati Maru ki uta”*

.(Ngati Maru pepeha)

This research looks at the aspirations of rural Maori youth in terms of their further education or training leading to a meaningful career or work. An assumption made before the research was that rural Maori youth are disadvantaged due to their isolation, and that they have limited opportunities to participate in further education or training in their local communities meaning a shift away from home at some stage. The research was conducted with the permission of four schools in the northern Waikato region of Thames-Coromandel with senior Maori students aged 15 and over. During the research phase a group of students was identified that were not part of the school system. Tertiary providers in the region were sourced from the New Zealand Qualifications Framework database and their programmes and courses were compared to the aspirations identified by the students. The report gives a snapshot view of what a cohort of Maori senior secondary school students in a rural community aspire to.

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 The New Zealand Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007

The Ministry of Education through the Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007 unveiled its priorities for the provision of tertiary education over the next five years. There are six priorities identified in the strategy of which Strategy Two: “Contribute to the achievement of Maori development aspirations”, is the strategy that prompted the research. There are six objectives within Strategy Two, and at least three are relevant to the research:

10. Quality programmes that recognize te ao Maori perspectives and support the revitalization of te reo;
12. Increased participation by Maori in both a broader range of disciplines and in programmes that lead to higher level qualifications;

13. A tertiary education system that makes an active contribution to regional and national Maori/whanau/hapu/iwi development.

(Ministry of Education, 2002b: pp. 30-35)

1.2 Response to the Tertiary Education Strategy – Target 2010

The Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in response to the Tertiary Education Strategy has developed its own internal strategy – Target 2010. This is a “strategic approach to meeting the imperatives of a changing community” (Middleton, S. 2002) Briefly, the Target 2010 project is explained thus:

By the year 2010, 20% of MIT graduates will be Maori, 20% of MIT graduates will be Pasifika and there will have been a 10% increase in the participation of school leavers (other than Maori and Pasifika) in its programmes.

Target 2010 is aimed at MIT’s traditional catchment area of South/East Auckland.

Staff at MIT have been encouraged to develop initiatives that would contribute toward the stated goal. To increase graduation rates, MIT needs to increase its Maori student population through recruitment, retain them and see that they achieve success through graduation. Initiatives to increase the numbers of Maori students at MIT have been developed by both Maori and non-Maori, academic and allied staff members. Successful initiatives are funded internally and approved by the Target 2010 committee.

1.2.1 *Te Tautoko Matauranga Maori – A Target 2010 Proposal*

One of the many initiatives submitted for approval was *Te Tautoko Matauranga Maori* (Supporting Maori Youth in Education) (Steedman S., 2003). This initiative was developed by a Maori staff member who wished to implement a pilot project whereby eight rural Maori youth would be recruited into programmes of their choice and supported through to graduation at certificate, diploma or degree level. Central to that support was the provision of pastoral care and academic support through the provision of accommodation in a whanau environment, utilizing Maori house parents (matua whangai), learning specialists (kaiwhakahaere tikanga ako), Maori mentors, and Maori lecturers. The eight students would move as a cohort through the system until graduation.

As Target 2010 is aimed at MIT’s traditional catchment area of South/East Auckland the Te Tautoko project group was outside the catchment area. The committee felt that although worthy of consideration, evidence was required to support the proposal’s claim that rural Maori youth are disadvantaged by their isolation, and lack opportunities to participate in further education or training leading to a meaningful career or work. It is the researcher’s contention that rural Maori youth are a forgotten group of education stakeholders, and that tertiary providers could improve outcomes for Maori by investigating ways to accommodate rural Maori youth aspirations for their working future.

If successful, a project of this nature would contribute toward the Target 2010 goal, and go toward fulfilling the objectives outlined in the Tertiary Education Strategy as well as meeting social equity obligations for rural Maori.

2. Transition to tertiary or further education programmes available to secondary school students.

It appears that there are many opportunities for students nationwide to prepare themselves for the transition from senior secondary school to further education or training and that those students who are located in the city have many opportunities and advantages to participate in a range of programmes, giving them a variety of choices from which to make their decisions. Through school careers advisers students are introduced to these choices early in their high school education. Most schools have access to polytechnic and university prospectuses outlining programmes and courses on offer. These are available in rural as well as city-based schools. However, it is the researcher's contention that many of these programmes are in reality, not available to rurally isolated Maori youth, and therefore their opportunities to participate are greatly reduced.

2.1 Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR)

The STAR programme was initiated by the government in 1996. The programme aim is to assist secondary school students in finding suitable pathways into tertiary level education or training or employment. The Ministry of Education funded a review of the STAR programme and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) conducted the review for the period 2002-2003.

The overall findings of the project indicated that STAR was a highly regarded and integral part of the senior secondary school programme by both the STAR coordinators and the students. Tertiary institutes also regard STAR as an important recruitment strategy (Vaughan, K. et al: 2004).

One of the key recommendations to come out of the review was:

dealing with the relatively higher costs borne by isolated, rural (and some small) schools as an equity issue and considering making a transport and accommodation grant available.

Although this recommendation came about as a result of research into the STAR programme, the same recommendation can be said to apply to those students who wish to travel out of their community to participate in other forms of tertiary education. The problem of transport and accommodation is a recurring theme in the research and begins when students participate in post-compulsory education programmes.

2.2 Gateway

The Gateway programme – piloted in 2001 – is similar to STAR and is designed to provide senior secondary school students opportunities to experience learning in non-conventional subjects, for example motor mechanics. Whereas STAR is potentially available to all senior secondary school students and pathways into further education or training, Gateway is a programme that integrates structured workplace learning with senior students’ classroom-based learning. Students achieve credits in the workplace which they can use towards qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. The programme staircases young people into employment in many cases, but has also proven effective at staircasing them into further education. Gateway operates successfully in larger cities and towns where there are a number of businesses who align and participate in the programme. This programme is also deemed to be successful in the transition from secondary-to-work but again the success of the programme is dependent on industry participation. The Gateway programme is not currently being run in any of the four schools participating in the research.

2.3 Other Government funded Programmes

In 2002 the NZCER published the first phase of some case study research on “Innovative Pathways from School” (Boyd, S et al: 2002). The comprehensive research looked at pathway programmes for secondary students operating in seven low decile schools nationwide who:

were viewed as being successful in assisting “at risk” students in their transition from school to the workforce or further education and training.

The research identified 36% of its participants as Maori, 31% Pasifika, 22% Pakeha and the remainder a mixture of Asian to part Maori/ Pasifika/ Pakeha (ibid., p. 29).

The programmes are designed to encourage at risk senior secondary students to stay at school and gain qualifications. Most of the programmes were of a vocational nature, in fields such as engineering, tourism, hospitality. The programmes lead students toward gaining credits for Unit Standards on the National Qualifications Framework or a National Certificate (ibid., p. 1).

Apart from the STAR and Gateway programmes there are a number of post-school programmes available to recent school leavers with low qualifications. These include Youth Training and Training Opportunities (TOPS) courses – originally managed by Skill NZ now the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) – and the Modern Apprenticeships programme. These programmes are again vocationally based and in the case of the Youth Training programmes generally cater to 16-18 year olds who need upskilling in ‘the basics’ e.g. timekeeping, writing a CV, preparation for work.

3. Method

Smith (1995) defined kaupapa Maori research as “research over which Maori maintain conceptual, design, methodological and interpretative control.....research by Maori, for Maori, with Maori”. Other leading Maori researchers and educationalists such as Bishop (1996), Johnston (1999) and Durie (1998) have contributed to the development and establishment of a framework by which Maori can conduct research in Maori communities and disseminate the findings. The framework is underpinned by the philosophical beliefs of:

- **Mana**
The research should make a positive contribution to Maori needs, aims and aspirations as defined by Maori.
- **Maramatanga**
Enlightenment through explanation and the enhancement of mana. Maori initiated research in conjunction with Maori communities as research partners. Power of veto or withdrawal of consent and information where the individual or the collective is a risk of physical or mental harm.
- **Mahitahi**
Cooperation and collaboration. Involvement of a range of participants and stakeholders.

Using this framework and the philosophical underpinnings described above, the researcher was committed to undertaking the research within those parameters and with a clear understanding of how the research would be conducted.

The researcher has tribal affiliations to the area through Ngati Porou ki Harataunga ki Mataora, and previously taught at Coromandel Area School in the secondary school in the 1990's. Many of the Maori students attending the school at the time had aspirations for a bright future, but there were barriers facing most of them, and they did not go on to realise their potential. Having close affiliations with the area, it was often heartbreaking to see the potential of some of these students go unrealized. The researcher often returns to the area, to her marae and over the ensuing years has noted that many of the Maori girls she taught at secondary school got pregnant and were on welfare, or working in the local shops and cafes to support themselves and their young families, while many of the boys have either left the town or work on the local forestry, mussel and oyster farms, and seafood processing factory.

3.1 Participants

The research was conducted over a nine month period between August 2003 and April 2004. The participants were drawn from four rural schools in the Northern Waikato district of Thames-Coromandel. The schools were Coromandel Area School (CAS), Mercury Bay Area School (MBAS), Whangamata Area School (WAS), and Thames High School (THS).

Schools were formally requested to participate in the research, and through correspondence by phone, emails and faxes times and dates to conduct the research were established. Several of the schools were pushed for time as many of their senior students were in the process of studying for their NCEA so it was important to conduct the interviews in a timely manner. Because of NCEA and other commitments Thames High school could not fit the time in during 2003 and their students were not interviewed until March 2004.

A formal letter of permission was forwarded to the schools to distribute to the parents of the students along with a brief outline of the research. The schools were asked to put aside between 2-3 hours to interview the students. The researcher proposed that the interviews could be conducted either at school or at a place where the students would feel comfortable. The schools were also asked to respect parents' wishes to perform powhiri and mihi to meet with the researcher to establish connections and intentions. As a result, two formal powhiri were conducted and several parents and community workers were present at the two schools. Parents removed themselves from the interviews without being asked, and this was seen as acceptance of the researcher and the research itself.

A questionnaire was used to collect demographic information including students age, tribal affiliations, living arrangements, qualifications (external and school), and NCEA subjects for the current year.

The sharing of food is an essential part of tikanga Maori (custom) and comes under the umbrella of manaakitanga (hospitality). Therefore it was appropriate for the researcher to provide a meal after the research was conducted at each school. It was a wonderful feeling to talk with and see young people eating and laughing at the end of the interviews, all of the students gave the researcher a warm hug at the end, and at Coromandel Area School the students sang a patere (song) to farewell the researcher which was very humbling.

All interviews were recorded on audio and later transcribed by the researcher. The interviews were structured around generally accepted practices for interviewing focus groups. Apart from the demographic questionnaire, informal questioning around their aspirations for their working future was conducted and general themes and inferences were drawn from their responses.

Table 1. Participants by gender

School	Male	Female	Total
Coromandel Area School	3	10	13
Whangamata Area School	2	6	8
Mercury Bay Area School	0	7	7
Thames High School	7	3	10

*Local Youth programme	2	3	5
TOTAL	14	29	43
Percent	32.5%	67.5%	100%

3.2 *Local youth programme (LYP)

During one of the visits to the schools the researcher was welcomed by a number of parents of students participating in the interview and introduced to a local Maori youth worker. He had heard through the school that the research was being conducted with the senior Maori students and requested a meeting afterward.

The youth worker was running a programme for local Maori youth who had been excluded from the school for one reason or another. These youth were aged from 13-15 and were doing school work by correspondence, the only alternative available to rural youth where there is one high school in the town.. The five young people were too young to go to work and it was made clear to me that they were biding their time until they were 16 and legally allowed to exit the school system. One of them had been given special dispensation by the Ministry of Education to leave school at 15 so she could get a job at the local seafood processing plant. However, this only lasted a couple of weeks before she was laid off. One student said he had been excluded from the high school on what amounted to a technicality. He had been caught smoking marijuana and suspended. Upon his return he was warned that if he were caught smoking again he would be excluded permanently. A short time later he was caught smoking a cigarette and that was enough to have him excluded permanently.

The youth worker then informed the researcher that in this small town, there were approximately 20 or so youth aged 16-20 who merely wandered about the town. Some were getting into trouble, others just doing nothing. He did inform me that among this group of 'lost' youth, there were a number of very good young people. He further explained that some of these youth would benefit greatly from leaving the town and going on to courses at either a polytechnic or PTE – specifically in the trades area. Some options that might be available were discussed, but it was determined that unless they had somewhere to stay, and a benefit or allowance to cover costs, there was no possibility for them to move away. And so they stay in the town, unemployed and aimless. It is unfortunate that there appears to be quite a significant number of youth not participating in anything, no schooling, no further education or training, no job, and not receiving an income.

If this is representative of the Maori youth population in rural areas, then there may well be large numbers of youth around the country doing nothing and not registered on anything. This is an area for future research to be conducted, to find out just how many Maori youth there are in this category.

The research was intended to be conducted with senior Maori students in secondary schools. The data collected from the youth programme was accidental to the research.

Table 2. Age range of participants as at 30 September 2003

	< 15 yrs	15 yrs	16 yrs	17 yrs	18 yrs
CAS		6	6	1	
WAS		4	2	2	
MBAS		2	4	0	1
THS		5	2	3	
LYP	3	2			
TOTAL	3	19	14	6	1

3.3 Tribal Affiliations

The iwi of the Hauraki district are dominated by Ngati Maru (Marutuahu) with 12 other iwi affiliated to the area. Students were asked to state their tribal affiliations in the following manner:

Iwi: _____ *Unsure* *Hapu* _____ *Unsure*

Table 3. Tribal identity by Iwi

Hauraki Iwi	Number	(%)
Ngati Hako	1	
Ngati Maru	8	
Ngati Paoa	1	
Ngati Porou ki Harataunga ki Mataora	2	
Ngati Pukenga ki Waiau	2	
Ngati Tamatera	1	
Ngati Whanaunga	3	
Ngati Pu	1	
TOTAL	19	44.2
Other Iwi		
Ngati Maniapoto	1	
Nga Puhi	6	

Ngati Porou	3	
Ngati Tuwharetoa	3	
Ngati Raukawa	1	
Tuhoe	1	
Te Rarawa	3	
Te Atiawa	1	
TOTAL	19	44.2
Unsure	5	11.6

It is of interest to the researcher that there is an even split of non-affiliated tribal iwi represented in this relatively small region, particularly from the northern iwi of Ngapuhi. However it is of concern that 4:5 of the participants from the youth programme identified themselves as Ngapuhi.

The five students who didn't know their iwi were asked separately by the researcher whether they had any idea, 4:5 had no idea, and one student thought his tribal affiliations were a mixture of several iwi and hapu.

3.4 Living arrangements

Do living conditions impact on the ability of Maori students to succeed? Overcrowding at home has in the past been viewed as a contributing factor in low achievement among Maori due to access to limited resources. However, it is the researcher's belief that an extended whanau is often pivotal in student success and their own self-efficacy. Overcrowding is a social construct originating from the western view of the nuclear family and carries negative connotations whereas the concept of living with extended whanau is part of the fabric that makes up many Maori families both in the city and rurally.

Information about living arrangements was gathered from responses to the question: "*Who do you live with (number of people and their relationship to you)?*"

Discussions of living arrangements explored students' views on the impact of extended whanau, and found it to be positive. The inference drawn from the responses would indicate that a significant number of Maori students live with extended whanau and that it is viewed as a positive cultural norm.

A total of 19:43 (44%) participants lived with extended whanau. Further, there were four participants who noted the number of people living with them (8, 4, 6, 8), but did not identify the relationship. The researcher therefore makes the assumption that these

students resided in an extended whanau environment. The number of participants who indicated they lived with both parents was 27:43 (63%).

There were 10:43 (23%) who noted their grandparents lived with them. One student noted their grandparents were their 'parents'. Several students noted cousins, uncles, and aunts lived with them, and some noted friends lived with them. During informal discussions over kai I asked several students who had indicated extended whanau on their questionnaires what their thoughts were around living arrangements. They responded positively to the concept of extended whanau. Some of their remarks were as follows:

- It's sweet, we do lots of things together, especially sport- there's always someone around.
- I hate being in the house on my own, I get scared, I'm used to having whanau around. If I'm ever at home on my own, I'll ring up my cousins to come over or I go over there.
- They can't help me with my homework, cause none of them finished school, they think I'm brainy.
- My nan is always helping me with my homework, not my mum or dad, they've got no patience.

These responses support the researcher's belief that living with extended whanau is a positive concept in contemporary Maori households in the region and consequently should not be viewed as overcrowding.

3.5 NCEA subjects taken in the current year.

Participants were asked to write down the NCEA subjects they would be taking in the current year. The inclusion of the two 15 year olds from the youth programme have skewed the data analysis as neither of them were taking NCEA subjects in the current year.

Table 4. NCEA Subjects for current year (15 year olds)
Number of respondents: (19)

Subject	No. of students	%
Science	17	89
English	17	89
Math	17	89
Te Reo Maori	6	32
Geography	5	26
Technology (including cooking, fabric, woodwork)	4	21

Computing (including IT/TIM)	4	21
Information Management	3	16
Hospitality & Catering	3	16
Physical Education	2	11
Art	2	11
Graphics	1	5
Music	1	5
Sport Science	1	5
History	1	5
Horticulture	1	5

**Table 5. NCEA Subjects for current year (16 year olds)
Number of respondents: (14)**

Subject	No. of students	%
Science	11	79
English	14	100
Math	11	79
Te Reo Maori	9	64
Art	4	29
Physical Education	4	29
Hospitality & Catering	3	21
Technology	3	21
Computing	2	14
Info Mgmt	2	14
Music	2	14
Tourism	2	14
Horticulture	1	7
Accounting	1	7
Drama	1	7

**Table 6. NCEA Subjects for current year (17 year olds)
Number of respondents: (6)**

Subject	No. of students	%
Science	2	33
English	5	83
Math	5	83
Te Reo Maori	1	17
Technology	1	17
Physical Education	5	83
Music	2	33
Art	3	50

Accounting	1	17
Drama	1	17
Economics	1	17

The 18 year old participant chose the following subjects for the current year: Science, Math and Computing.

Overall the most popular NCEA subject outside core or compulsory subjects was Te Reo Maori (37%) followed by Physical Education, and Technology (covering fabric, food, woodwork, etc.).

3.6 Participation in and completion of external examinations/ tests/ assessments and extra curricular activities.

Students were asked to list any external examinations, tests or assessments they participated in. This question was asked to gauge whether or not the students participated in improving or adding to their skills and knowledge outside school. Some students listed all their sporting activities, others just wrote 'yes'.

The majority of students who completed this section were involved in a variety of sports including rugby, cricket, swimming, netball, athletics etc. (72%)

- 20 students participated in Kapa Haka (47%).
- Five students indicated they were involved in Stage Challenge Production leading to a certificate or award (three of these students wish to pursue a career in performing arts, dancing/singing and training as a cameraman).
- Five students participated in the Kiwi Host/Sport or Leadership programmes leading to a certificate or award.
- Two students had participated in first aid training via volunteer fire training leading to a certificate or award.
- Four students had passed NCEA level 1 Te Reo Maori before Year 11.

4. What students think they will be doing for the next four years.

Students were each given four coloured slips of paper representing the next four years, Year 1 being the current year. They were asked to write the year and their age; for example Year 1, 15, Year 2, 16 etc. They were then asked to write discuss and share with the group what they thought they would be doing or would like to be doing in terms of further education or training or work.

The two 15 year old students from the youth programme are not included in this exercise. The total number of respondents was 38.

Table 7. Age range of students

Age	Number of students
15	17
16	14
17	6
18	1
TOTAL	38

Table 7a Aspirations for the next 4 years – 15 year olds

Year 1 (15 yrs)	Stay at school	17 (100%)
Year 2 (16 yrs)	Stay at school Polytech/University	15 2
Year 3 (17 yrs)	Stay at school Polytech/University Work	9 7 1
Year 4 (18 yrs)	Stay at school Polytech/University Work *Other	1 12 2 2

Some students named specific courses and particular universities or polytechnics where they intended to go, while others just wrote ‘working’ or ‘polytech or uni’. It was interesting to note the certainty in the responses as well as the variety of choices the students understand they have and feel capable of achieving.

*Two students indicated their intention to join the Armed Forces for the purpose of earning whilst studying. They viewed entry into the armed forces as giving them access to trades training and being paid instead of training at a tertiary institute and paying fees.

Interestingly, no students mentioned undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship or Industry Training (which offer workplace learning paid for by the government and employers). This issue was not explored further in this research. However, it would be interesting to know what level of knowledge students have of these programmes.

Sample of responses recorded for Polytechs/Universities

- Living in Papakura, go to Manukau Institute of Technology and do Chefs course at CHATS [Catering and Hospitality Training School]
- Otago University, Vet

- Move to Whakatane and do Maori Studies at Gisborne Polytech
- Move to Queenstown, work, save until May 2004. Move to Christchurch, start my Diploma of Internet Technology at Natcoll.
- Bay of Plenty Polytech, Level 3 Hairdressing
- Go to Palmerston North and Massey University

One student stated:

‘Hopefully not a mum and finish my mahi at kura’

Table 7b. Aspirations for the next 4 years – 16 year olds

Year 1 (16 yrs)	Stay at school	14 (100%)
Year 2 (17 yrs)	Stay at school Polytech/University	11 3
Year 3 (18 yrs)	Stay at school Polytech/University Work	0 11 3
Year 4 (19 yrs)	Stay at school Polytech/University Work Other	0 9 4 1

As with the 15 year olds, this group had a clear idea of what they wanted to do and where they wanted to go in terms of further education or training.

Sample of responses recorded by 16 year olds.

- Waiariki Polytechnic, Rotorua.
- In Otautahi living with my whanau (Dad’s bro) going to tech or join the Air Force.
- Doing a chef course maybe do CHATS course at MIT.
- Rotorua, Waiariki, doing a photography course.
- Waikato Uni, teacher training, Te Timatanga Hau, 3 years
- Going to AUT on a performing arts course to become a dancer/singer
- Going to university in Auckland to study fashion design or hairdressing.

During the course of focus group discussions one 16 year old male student indicated he already earned a modest income from his small business, and wrote that in Year 4 (19) he would be:

Managing and fully owning my own business. Have all my workers working for me while I play sport, rugby and basketball.

Table 7c. Aspirations for the next 4 years – 17 year olds.

Year 1 (17 yrs)	Stay at school	6 (100%)
Year 2 (18 yrs)	Stay at school	1
	Polytech/University	3
	Work	2
Year 3 (19 yrs)	Stay at school	0
	Polytech/University	5
	Work	1
Year 4 (20 yrs)	Stay at school	0
	Polytech/University	0
	Work	4
	Other	2

Sample responses recorded by 17 year olds.

- Waiariki Polytech – Social Work
- Go to South Seas Drama School and train to be a cameraman
- AUT – Acting/Performing Arts
- Training to be in the police force

One female student indicated the following:

- Year 2 (18) Working for six months, then go and be a counselor at USA summer camps for six months.
- Year 3 (19) Working part-time and training to be in the police force
- Year 4 (20) A part of the Police Force. Qualified!!!

The 18 year old participant responded in the following manner:

- Year 2 (19) Go to uni maybe MIT or other Polytech to do Hospitality & Catering
- Year 3 (20) Finish training at Uni or MIT in Hospitality & Catering
- Year 4 (21) Working in the industry, qualified.

5. Providers of further education or training in the Thames-Coromandel region.

An extensive search for accredited unit standard education providers on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework database in the Northern Waikato region of Thames-Coromandel revealed only four providers. Two of these specialized in English for speakers of other languages (Whitianga), one specialized in hypnotherapy (Coromandel), and one specialized in forestry training (Thames).

Comparison of the courses and units offered by local providers to the aspirations of students in the research revealed only one of the providers offered a course that appealed to one student. This was Valley Education & Training Enterprises Limited who offered unit standards in the field of Forestry training.

When asked, none of the students intended staying in their community to undertake further educational studies when they left school.

Students were also asked if they would consider staying in their community if there were providers who offered courses they were intending to take at university or polytech. One student responded thus:

I can't wait to move away from here, I don't think there would be a place opened up around here that would offer the kind of course I want to do. The government wouldn't allow it anyway, it'd cost too much money.

Only one student seemed interested in staying if given the opportunity, and she stated that:

I might stay, it depends. I'd like to stay cause there's only me and mum at home and I know she'll be lonely when I go away.

6. Where will students live while studying?

Information from transcripts and written responses from students indicated they would have to leave home and community in order to undertake further education or training. Many of the students had already decided where they would go and what they would study. Decisions on where to study were often related to what whanau they could go and stay with whilst studying. Generally, students matched polytechnics and universities with their career aspirations.

- One female student had already attended AUT in 2003. She had enrolled in a two year diploma in fashion design. The student stayed with her sister and her sister's boyfriend, however after six months the relationship between sister/boyfriend ended. The student had nowhere to stay and had to move back home. She re-enrolled at school taking the unit standards offered in fashion design. She really wanted to leave school and go back to AUT, but could not afford to do so without financial assistance.
- One student said she would go to Massey University in Palmerston North and stay with her aunty and uncle.
- Two students stated they would go to Waiariki Polytech in Rotorua, both would stay with whanau.

- One student wrote that he would go to Otautahi (Christchurch) and stay with whanau (“Dad’s bro”), and either attend polytech or go into the air force.
- One student said she would go to Whakatane, stay with her sister and attend Gisborne Polytech doing Maori studies.

7. How will students pay for study and living costs?

Students discussed a variety of ways they would pay for their studies. The most popular way of paying fees was via the student loan scheme. Many of the students stated they would get a part-time job to help pay for accommodation and transport. Most knew they would be eligible for the student allowance once they reached 18 years, however the research does not show whether participants understood that eligibility for the student allowance would be means-tested against parental income.

Two students said they would join the Armed Forces instead of going to university or polytech because they understood they could take courses leading to qualifications without having to pay and they would be paid while they were doing them. They reasoned that this would mean they would come out with a trade or qualification and no student loan.

One student said she would not go on to further education or training until she had saved enough money to pay for the course. While studying she would work part-time to pay for accommodation and transport and not make use of the student loans scheme or student allowance. This student’s value of definitely not having a student loan was in stark contrast to the others.

8. Knowledge of Scholarships and Grants.

Students were asked if they knew of any scholarships or grants they could apply for to assist them financially once they were enrolled onto a course at university or polytechnic. Most of them understood they could apply for a grant through Manaaki Tauiira. This information was supplied to them at school by careers counselors. A few named the local Trust Board, although the researcher is unaware of any education grants or scholarships available through the board.

Several students named local iwi service providers and local trusts. A couple of students indicated their whanau had set up education trusts to which they could apply for a grant.

9. Conclusions

This research is a snapshot view of what a group of rural Maori youth perceive and aspire to be in terms of further education or training leading to a meaningful career or work. The majority of students participating in the research were motivated and appeared to know exactly what it was they wanted to be doing over the next four years.

A large proportion of the students were grounded in their Maoritanga, participating in Kapa Haka was seen as integral and positive. Many students have chosen to continue studying Te Reo Maori throughout their high school years. Many students live in an extended whanau environment where grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins play a pivotal role in their lives.

All of the students who were interviewed at the schools were staying on at school for the present year, and the data clearly shows that for many students, they do not intend leaving school until they are at least 17 and have passed NCEA level 2. This would indicate they are committed to their secondary education and view it as important in gaining access into polytechnics or universities. This is in direct contradiction to the actual statistics of Maori students who leave school with no qualifications. The data collected in this research indicates that all of the students aspire to gaining NCEA level 1 or 2 qualifications whereas the statistics for Maori show that only 60% of Maori actually left school with School Certificate in 2000/2001. (Ministry of Education, 2003: p.15).

The 15 year olds did not consider working until they were at least 18 years, and then only 2:17 indicated they would be working at that age. The 16 year olds did not consider working until they were 18 years, and only 2:14 indicated they would be working. Only 1:6 of the 17 year olds indicated they would be working at age 18. They aspired to be attending either a university or polytechnic of their choice.

All of the students who were interviewed at the schools have definite aspirations in terms of their further education or training leading to a career or meaningful work. They were positive in their attitudes and expectations of themselves in this regard.

There appear to be no providers in the region who offer courses that can meet the expectations and aspirations of the youth participating in the research. The young people interviewed understand their only options to be to move to a large town or city to undertake further education or training.

The majority of students chose to undertake further study at polytechnics or universities. Some students have specified specialist education providers in line with their aspirations and some students have indicated they will join the armed forces with a view to working whilst training thereby avoiding a student loan.

There was a wide range of career and trade aspirations identified by the students in this research. This is an indication to the researcher that students are at least contemplating their career or working future by the time they are aged 15 years and the majority of them are already preparing for the transition from secondary to further education or training. This is indicated by them being able to answer questions about where and what they aspire to study, where they will live and how they see themselves paying for their further education.

Most students understood they would require a student loan and student allowance once they reached 18 years to help them through their studies. There was no discussion around whether or not the students interviewed understood that eligibility for entitlement to receive the student allowance would be means-tested against parent income until the age of 25 years.

None of the students indicated a profession as a doctor, lawyer, accountant, nurse, engineering or a career in the field of science. This could have something to do with polytechnics having a greater involvement in aligning themselves with school curriculum and creating pathways students can follow at school that will lead them into entry level for programmes offered at polytech. The researcher hopes this is not an indication that Maori youth are not aspiring to higher social status positions.

Of concern is that although students have considered how they will pay for their accommodation, transport, and fees (as well as food), they did not appear to have any information about government assistance or entitlements. The scope of the research did not cover access or eligibility for government assistance (student loans, student allowances).

The researcher has done some background investigating as to how much it would cost an 18 year old student to live in Auckland, attend Manukau Institute of Technology on a course and stay in the student village. Cost excludes course fees and course related costs.

Rent	\$115.00/wk (student village)
Food	\$ 70.00/wk (\$10.00 per day)
Entertainment	\$ 40.00/wk (movies, sports, transport)
Clothing	<u>\$ 10.00/wk</u>
TOTAL	\$235.00/wk

Student Allowance	<u>\$150.00/wk</u>
Shortfall	\$ 85.00/wk

Current part-time rates paid at supermarkets, fast food outlets = \$6.50/hr (average.)
Assuming a student can get a part-time job, they would have to work 15 hours per week to cover the shortfall and any earnings could impact on their eligibility to receive the student allowance.

It is the researcher's contention that access to information about eligibility for financial assistance, would be beneficial for senior secondary students as part of their career path planning. As the research did not explicitly ask questions around participants knowledge of eligibility to access funds to help pay for their further education, it is difficult to gauge whether or not they were fully cognizant of their eligibility to receive government assistance – specifically what their entitlement would be and when they could access it.

As Vaughan (2003) states: '...Tertiary students are ineligible for most student allowances until they are 25; before that they are seen as the responsibility of parents.'

The school leaving age is currently 16 but the unemployment benefit is not available until the age of 18’.

The tension for rurally disadvantaged Maori youth is that they may not be able to realistically leave home/school to pursue further education until they are 18 and able to access unemployment benefits, or student allowances. The data collected indicates that students view themselves as being able to move to a university or polytechnic of their choice when they are 16, the legal age for entry into most tertiary institutes. They also believe that they will be able to survive financially by staying with whanau, or getting a part-time job to help pay expenses.

There is a gap between the ages of 16 and 18 years where rural Maori youth are ready to leave school, but believe they are unable to move away to undertake further education or training because it will be impossible to do so financially. Many of the students in the research indicated they aspired to be in university or polytech at the age of 16. Their chances of achieving this will depend on a number of factors that are governed by existing regulations around access to student loans and student allowances

Overall, the students participating in this research displayed a positive outlook for their working future. It’s keeping the motivation and positive outlook that will be the challenge.

In view of the research there have been a number of conclusions drawn, however these would need to be investigated further by conducting research into other rural Maori communities to see if the same issues are raised.

Several of the conclusions drawn not only impact on Maori youth, but on rural youth nationally. However, in stating this, statistics show that Maori are still underachieving in relation to their Pakeha peers and therefore the researcher argues in favour of developing strategies and initiatives to support rural Maori youth into further education or training.

1. Access to specialized government funding for rurally disadvantaged Maori students wishing to undertake further education, training or study at an accredited tertiary institute or university of their choice.
2. Access to subsidized accommodation for rurally disadvantaged Maori youth wishing to undertake further education or training.
3. Reducing the age by which rural Maori students can access the student loan and allowance scheme to 16 years of age (the legal age for leaving school and the legal age for access to tertiary education institutes)
4. Reintroduction of government funded schemes such as the Maori Trades Training Scheme whereby students are housed together and learn a trade/profession as a cohort.

5. The research be replicated in other rural areas to see if there is commonality in other rural Maori communities.
6. The research be extended to track the students involved in this research for the next three years.

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