



Pacific Youth Education Conversation: *Findings Summary*

Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana,
Talofa ni, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sa
bula vinaka, Kia ora.

We want to express our gratitude to all the children and young people who shared their ideas, insights and opinions at our Fono across the country.

We know that you are talented, passionate and ambitious and if we are going to create an education system that values you for who you are, we know we must work together. We will be returning to your communities later in 2019 and to share our response and to the conversation.

Bias & racism

We commonly experience racism. We get hassled about receiving “extra benefits”.

We want education to prepare us to deal with racism by knowing how to talk about it.

We think streaming kids into ‘dumb’ classes is damaging.

“Streaming - most Pacific students are in the bottom classes and it ruins their mind sets.”



Our identity & wellbeing

Family, community and relationships are key to wellbeing. Spending time with family, learning and contributing is really important.

Physical and mental health are core elements of wellbeing. Positive mental health is supported by feeling physically, emotionally and culturally safe.

Being culturally safe means our identity, language and culture is valued so that we can be proud of who we are, knowing where we come from and keeping our roots alive. It means we don’t ever have to “leave our culture at the door”.

“Pacific students have to live in two different worlds, the Pacific and the Palagi world and sometimes you can lose your identity.”

We also need to have our basic needs met, be physically healthy, able to succeed and fail in a safe environment and feel supported to work through our struggles.

“The emotional stress of failing as a Pacific student. We need a safe environment to talk about issues.”

We are worried about the rising rates of depression and bullying and the lack of openness to talk about these issues. Home is not always a safe place for us.

NCEA makes us stressed and we become fixated on credits rather than learning.

“I don't like how NCEA makes us fixated on how we are gaining credits instead of how much knowledge we have gained”

Teaching & learning

We want more engaging and interesting learning opportunities. We want to learn outside the classroom, do field trips, practice collective learning and use technology.

“What makes me excited about learning is trying new things. I've learnt that being afraid of trying new things doesn't help me with my thinking and it doesn't help me with my future.”

The curriculum needs to better reflect the dreams and goals of Pacific young people. It should incorporate Pacific history, stories, language, Pacific authors and poets and movements of diverse Pacific groups.

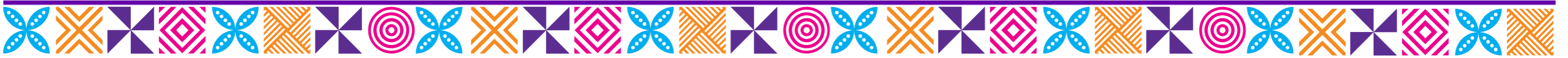
“As Pasifika students we acknowledge our culture as an important theme in our life... if our learning had something to do with our culture, our learning would become important to us.”

We want more Pacific teachers, because they ‘get us’ in a way that is hard for other teachers to do. We want teachers who are enthusiastic, supportive, smart and who give honest feedback.

“When I see a Pacific teacher, I see a role model, someone who made it.”

We want teachers who are prepared to build a relationship with us to create a safe learning environment.

“The Education system shouldn't throw away our culture for academic success.”



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How we define success

Success means we have the ability to support our families and communities and we contribute through voluntary work. We want to give back to our community.

"[Success is] when I cannot only look after my needs but contribute to meeting the needs of others."

Having a faith in God and strong values are also markers of success.

"When you set a good example to others. When the younger generation look up to you it makes you feel proud of who you are."

Individual success is meaningless to us, unless those around us who are important to us are also succeeding.

"I cannot succeed if I am up there alone. I haven't succeeded if my loved ones are in a bad place."

"We all have different strengths, if education looked for those strengths, there would be fewer drop outs."

"If schools felt safe you would see higher attendance. We need to tackle bullying, racism, discrimination."

Access to education

Our families need more support – particularly help paying for school fees, uniforms and food.

We rely on scholarships for further study, so more of these would be good.

"Government needs to make it easy and cheap to access tools and resources that are going to increase our ability to learn."

We are worried about the cost of devices, the lack of access to internet at home and the need to help older generations to gain confidence using technology.

We want equity in access to education, not equality. Equality is where everyone is treated the same but we are not the same and we shouldn't be treated as if we were.

"Equity and equality - know the difference!"

We also want stronger connections between education and work.

The role of my family

We see our parents as strong role models whose sacrifices inspire us to strive to succeed. They are key to supporting our identities.

"My success is my family's success"

While these high expectations inspire us, sometimes they make us feel overwhelmed.

"Sometimes it is hard to talk to your parents, especially when you're failing. Even if you're trying hard, parents blame friends, even when friends help you."

It is hard to balance our roles and responsibilities in our family with our school work. Sometimes we wish we had more time to focus on school and spend with friends.

"First generation NZ children have different values to their parents and parents don't understand that you can't do church stuff all the time."

Important Knowledge & skills

Some of the most important skills to gain in our education are cultural skills – speaking our language, being proud of our heritage, accepting other cultures.

We need more focus on practical life skills:

- ✓ Managing finances
- ✓ Getting a driver's licence
- ✓ IT skills
- ✓ Time management & how to study

"In school we are not taught what we need for our futures. We are taught requirements for University. That's great and all but how many of those skills can we really use in real life? We need these skills to be taught to us somewhere, otherwise we are about to enter the real world with no real knowledge"

We need more focus on critical skills for the 21st century. We need to be resilient, strong communicators, able to analyse problems and grounded in values such as empathy, respect and care.

"Please listen to me, allow me to use my language, allow me to use my culture so I can grow up and prosper."



Pacific Youth Education Conversation: *LGBTQIA+ findings*

LGBTQIA+ safe schools

We are experiencing discrimination. We worry about the suicide rate amongst Pacific LGBTQIA+ and see a desperate need for more counsellors, social workers and community leaders.

We want more inclusion and equal opportunities. This could include:

- ✓ Flexible uniforms
- ✓ Gender neutral toilets
- ✓ Rainbow safe zones in schools
- ✓ Resources to provide information on LGBTQIA+
- ✓ More Pacific research and ethnic specific research on LGBTQIA+ communities

“We don’t need a uniform pass to explain why a blouse instead of a shirt”

We need better access to services such as counselling, emergency healthcare and support services for when you come out.

“[We need a] 24/7 support system that is accessible online for Pasifika LGBTQI students”

We also want to see more LGBTQIA+ friendly spaces online, in homes and in work places.

What we learn

We want the curriculum to be more inclusive and draw on LGBTQIA+ role models.

We want sex education to cover more than heterosexual relationships and we want LGBTQIA+ to be visible, such as having pride days, resources in the library and murals.

We want to develop critical thinking skills that support us to challenge what is perceived as the norm. Self-empowerment and resilience is key.

We want to be accepted and supported to accept ourselves.

“My sexuality is not what casts me out but makes me stand out”

Teaching

We want teachers to be aware of LGBTQIA+ issues, to be advocates and to support us.

“Support all teachers. All teachers need to be LGBTQIA friendly and supportive”

This means they will ask us what pronouns we use and they will try to learn from us so they can better support us.

We also want more LGBTQIA+ teachers who we can relate to because they understand our struggles.

LGBTQIA+ Success

Pacific role models are hugely important for us – from politicians to popstars. We also really value supportive families and friends.

Success to us means having LGBTQIA+ representation in all fields – pilots, doctors, teachers, lawyers and politicians.

We would also like stronger and more respectful representation in the media.

“Seeing successful Pasifika LGBTQI peoples inspires young LGBTQI”

Success would also mean:

- ✓ Not having to worry about public bathrooms,
- ✓ Feeling safe walking in the street with your partner,
- ✓ A lower suicide rate and better mental health
- ✓ More policies that include and highlight rights for LGBTQIA+ communities
- ✓ Having a curriculum that reflects every child
- ✓ Having a new understanding of LGBTQIA+ in religious communities

Keeping up to date with Pacific communities and education

We want to make sure that all of you who participated in the meetings, or who are interested in what Pacific communities have said, are kept up to date.

For more information about the Pacific communities conversation, go to <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/pacific-education/>

