

# Ngā Tau Tuangahuru



## INVESTING IN PACIFIC SUCCESS

Guidance for Funders in Aotearoa New Zealand

**This guidance for funders is informed by Ngā Tau Tuangahuru research findings, related research and contributions from a 2021 Philanthropy New Zealand Summit session on better supporting Pacific aspirations. Facilitated by Foundation North, this session involved a panel of Pacific leaders - Sita Selupe, Tanya Wendt-Samu, Renee Mose and Kramer Hoeflich.**

## UNDERSTANDING PACIFIC VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS

*Understanding what supports Pacific success helps embed Pacific values and aspirations into processes, policies and systems. Individual success for Pacific students is nested in the wellbeing of family, friends, and wider community.*

### Background



Ngā Tau Tuangahuru ('looking beyond for ten more years'), is a longitudinal study exploring Māori and Pacific educational and family success. Funded by Foundation North<sup>see Endnote 1</sup>, the study was developed with five educational institutions that were part of the 2009-2014 Māori and Pacific Educational Initiative (MPEI). Sixty-nine Māori and Pacific families were involved in the first round of study interviews in 2017. Forty-three families self-identified as Pacific<sup>2</sup>, with between one and seven participants at each interview. Many of these families were interviewed again for round two in 2018/19, plus 78 Pacific students from Years 1 to Year 13<sup>3</sup>. Families and students were asked what success looks like for them, and what supports and hinders that success. They also responded to questions about culture, family life, schooling and their future.



Ngā Tau Tuangahuru research found that most families (81%) strongly agreed or agreed that as a family they feel strongly connected to their culture(s). Most Year 7-13 youth (87%) strongly agreed or agreed that they feel strongly connected to their culture(s). Language plays an important role in cultural connectedness for Pacific youth. Other important sources of connection were aiga/family, church, community, cultural events and gatherings.

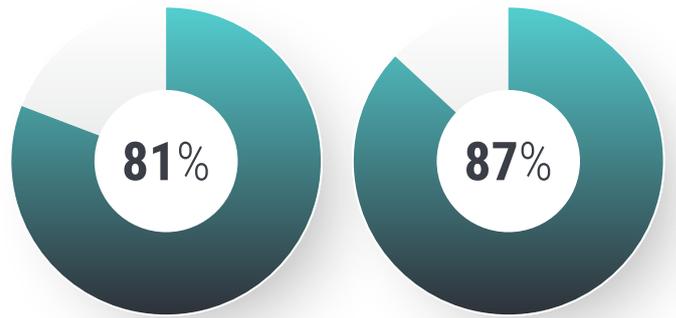
Nearly all families (98%) and youth (95%) strongly agreed or agreed that **maintaining cultural connectedness** was important. For these families and youth, maintaining cultural connectedness is a source of personal identity, pride and belonging. Culture sustains connections to family and community. Families and youth spoke about the importance of specific cultural values such as respect, and the need to pass cultural values on to future generations.

**Adapting and embracing a mix of cultures** was a theme for some families and youth (both 19%). Some expressed a desire to be more connected to their culture(s) than they currently are (both families and youth 19%).

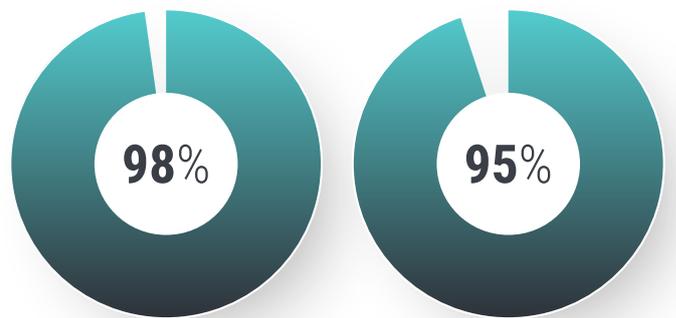
While almost two thirds of families (63%) said they **feel comfortable or very comfortable in solely Palagi situations**, nearly a third (30%) said they felt slightly uncomfortable to very uncomfortable. Some families (9%) said they feel discriminated against at times. For those who felt uncomfortable in Palagi situations, there were discussions about the need to conform to the ways of Palagi people:

**“It [Palagi situations/gatherings] feels different. Have to follow the Palagi way. Not always sure what to do.”**

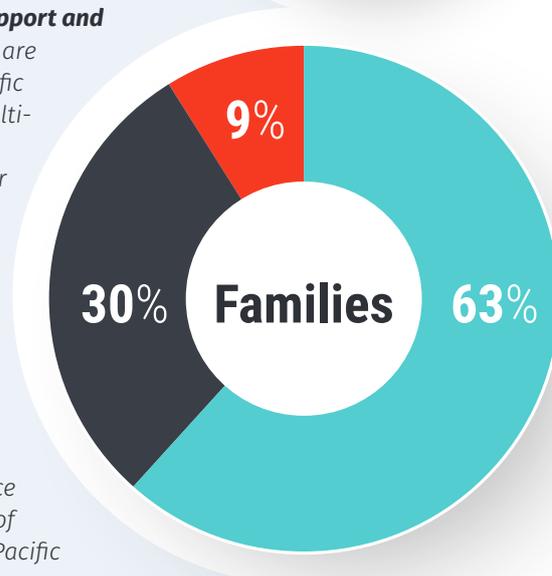
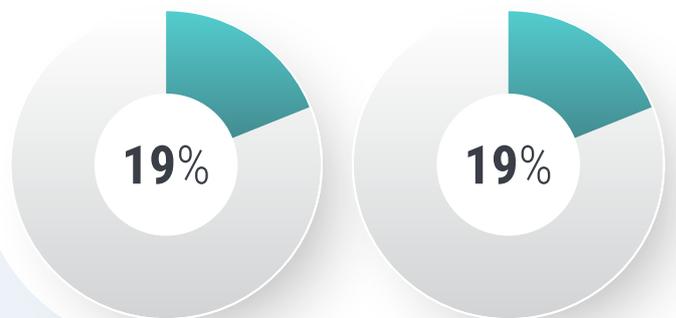
Families **Connected to culture** Youth



Families **Maintaining cultural connectedness** Youth



Families **Embracing mix of cultures** Youth



- Feel comfortable or very comfortable in solely Palagi situations
- Feel slightly uncomfortable to very uncomfortable
- Feel discriminated against at times

### SUPPORTING CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS IN PACIFIC FAMILIES

**The importance of maintaining and strengthening cultural connectedness** is well documented elsewhere<sup>4</sup> and reinforced here.

**Effective initiatives for Pacific young people support and reinforce cultural legitimacy and identity.** They are community driven, responsive and flexible. Pacific peoples are diverse, increasingly identify as multi-ethnic and seek to maintain their own cultural norms whilst adapting and evolving within their own lived context.<sup>5</sup>

**Racism and discrimination affect Pacific communities in multiple and complex ways.** Initiatives should actively promote positive identity and confidence and increase knowledge in ways that are transformative and disruptive. For example, Manuela and Anae (2017)<sup>6</sup> seek a shift beyond programmes that focus on Pacific culture, languages, music, dance etc., to programmes that focus on the impacts of colonialism, Christianity and neoliberalism on Pacific peoples and nations.



Pacific families spoke broadly about what success looks like for them in the Ngā Tau Tuangahuru research. Most common aspects of success mentioned by at least three quarters of families are: being happy, having a plan for the future, a good education, strong family relationships, being healthy, knowing your identity, having adequate resources and living by faith and/or family values.

Asked to choose from a list of categories their three most important aspects of family success, over half the families said living by faith was an important indicator of success (55%). Having strong family relationships was a top aspect for many (47%), followed by being healthy (32%). Other priority aspects were being happy (26%), having a plan for the future/goals (21%) and living by values (21%).

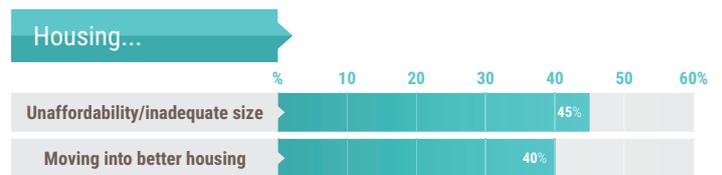
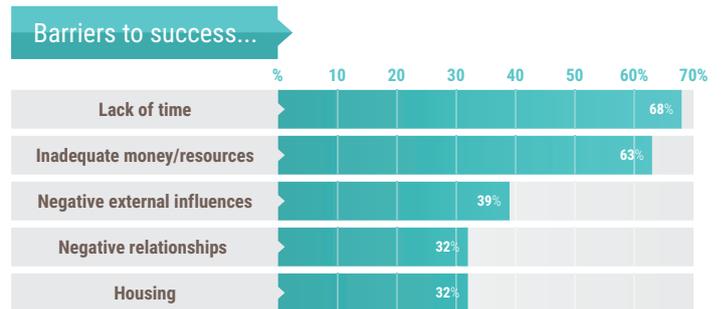
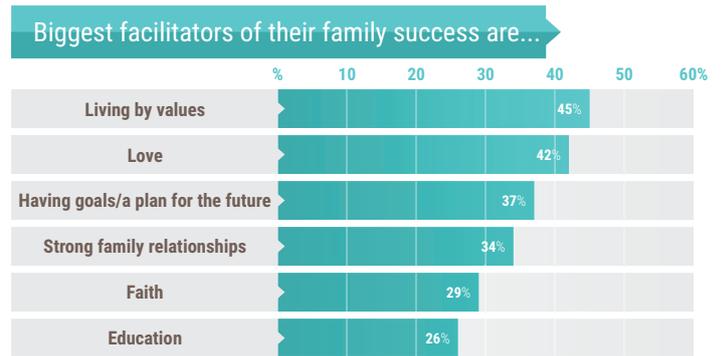
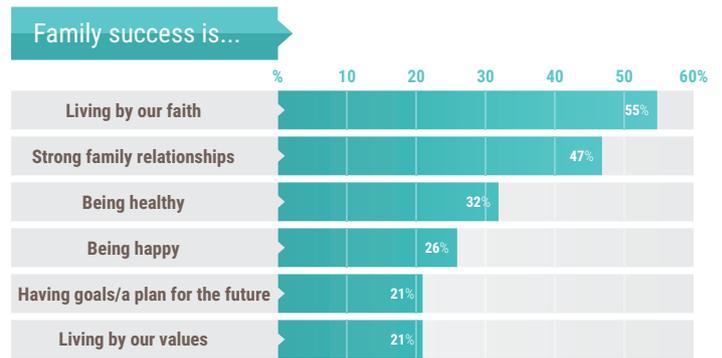
Asked to choose from a list what the biggest facilitators of their family success are, living by values (i.e., service, respect) was a top facilitator for nearly half the families (45%), followed by love (42%) and having a plan for the future/goals (37%). Other important facilitators of family success included strong family relationships (34%), faith (29%) and education (26%).

Lack of time (68%) and inadequate money/resources (63%) were chosen as the top two barriers to success for around two thirds of the families. Being time poor is often an outcome of work hours and/or community/cultural obligations, with affected families reporting they struggle to have quality time together or to have time to look after their own needs. Lack of money/resources leads to stress and sometimes means doing without, or making difficult choices:

**“Lack of it [money] causes stress and means that we need to prioritise daily”.**

Negative external influences (39%) (e.g. social media, negative peer relationships), poor health (37%), negative relationships (32%) (e.g. dependencies, tall poppy syndrome) and housing (32%) were also chosen as key barriers to family success.

Housing is an issue for 45% of the families, due to lack of affordability and/or inadequate size. Purchasing their own home or moving into housing that better meets their needs is an aspiration for 40% of families interviewed.



## SUPPORTING PACIFIC FAMILY SUCCESS

**Families know best what supports and hinders their self-defined success, and community leaders are well placed to know what works to support their community.**

**Organisations and programmes should reflect the aspirations of the Pacific communities they serve, and Pacific cultural and faith-based principles and values.** Faith and cultural/family values are heavily intertwined and are of great importance to many Pacific families.

**Strong family relationships are a core strength of Pacific aiga and communities.** Investing in wraparound support for families and aiga programmes that increase aiga capacity - resilience, safety, knowledge and skills - will positively impact the educational success of their young people.

**Material wellbeing is an important factor underpinning family success.** Structural issues (such as benefits being too low, inadequate or unaffordable housing) produce inequality and can have multiple destabilizing effects for Pacific families. Structural inequalities restrict the ability of families and organisations to support their young people, obstruct equal access to opportunity and to resources and hinder community engagement and social connection. There are many ways funders can help address structural impediments to success, including funding ‘by Pacific for Pacific’ services, connecting appropriate services to communities, and funding advocacy for system change.



Pacific families have high educational aspirations for their young people. Most families (84%) in the Ngā Tau Tuangahuru research said a good education is an important facilitator for future success, security and happiness. Most families (81%) want their students to achieve to Level 3 NCEA. Nearly half (44%) want their young person to attend university after completing high school, nearly a quarter (23%) want their young person to both work and study, and some (14%) want their young person to do an apprenticeship.

Most intermediate/high school students (Y7-13) said they want to achieve to Level 3 NCEA (83%). Around a third (33%) said they want to attend university upon completion of high school. Nearly a third (31%) want to do an apprenticeship, and some (10%) said they wanted to work and study.

For families and all students (Y1-13), educational success is defined broadly - it means not only doing well academically, but having positive social relationships and good friends, engaging in extra-curricular activities, living by values such as respect and faith, being role models, and following their own goals and dreams.

Most students (87%) said family support (i.e. encouragement, help with homework, being involved with their schooling) was the most important thing that supports their educational success. Families said the main ways they support their student(s) educational success are by having routines, being involved at their school, and being engaged/interested in their learning.

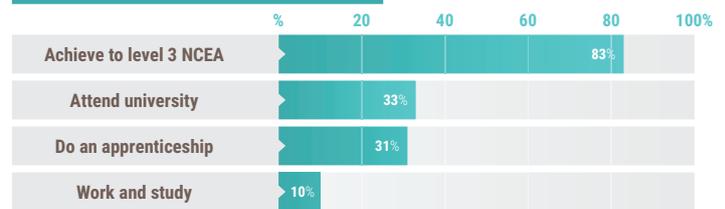
Around two thirds of students (65%) said feeling safe and secure at school – emotionally, socially and/or physically - supported their educational success.

***“Feeling safe and secure is important to my mental health: a place to stay, a comfortable learning environment, helps you to work well and be successful - for example, if you are bullied you won’t do well, especially if teachers don’t support or help you. When teachers are giving their best then I will too.”***

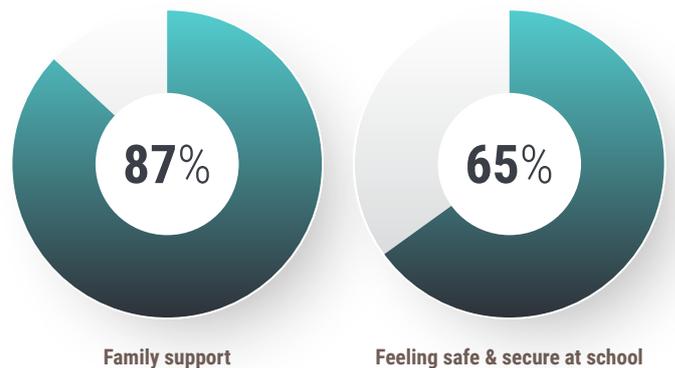
Families on educational success...



Youth on educational success...



What supports students educational success



**SUPPORTING PACIFIC FAMILY SUCCESS**

**Pacific families have high educational aspirations for their young people.**

**Success for Pacific students differs to institutional measures of success<sup>7</sup>.** Identifying and tracking Pacific-led measures of success by locality would better serve Pacific peoples.

**Family involvement in their children’s education is a key facilitator of educational success** and home-school partnerships are of paramount importance to this. Initiatives that strengthen the relationship between families and schools can be of significant benefit, particularly those that take account of material barriers to family’s engagement with their student(s) schooling<sup>8</sup>.

**Alignment of values between school and home** is beneficial to the educational success of Pacific students.

- 1 For further background to the MPEI initiative and the current study, see Trotman, R., Cram, F., Samu, T., Becroft, M., Theodore, R., and Trinick, T. (2018). Investing in “success” as Māori and Pacific: The collaborative development of Ngā Tau Tuangahuru, a longitudinal evaluation study. Evaluation Matters—He Take Tō Te Aromatawai, 4, 87-110. Available at: [https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/journals/evaluation-matters/downloads/EM2018\\_087.pdf](https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/journals/evaluation-matters/downloads/EM2018_087.pdf).
- 2 This included nine families that self-identified as both Māori and Pacific.
- 3 This included twelve students that self-identified as both Māori and Pacific.
- 4 See for example Manuela S. and M Anae. Pacific youth acculturation, and identity: The relationship between ethnic identity and well-being- new directions for research. In Pacific Dynamics, Vol 1, No 1, July 2017.
- 5 A Pacific Perspective on the Living Standards Framework and Well-being Thomsen et al, NZ Treasury Discussion Paper 18/09, August 2018.
- 6 See endnote 4 above.
- 7 Chu, C., Abella, I. S., and Paurini, S. (2013). Educational practices that benefit Pacific learners in tertiary education. Wellington, New Zealand: AKO Aotearoa.
- 8 See for example [https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika\\_education/5907](https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika_education/5907).