



Briefing Note: Summary of themes from five ethnic communities engagement meetings

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cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
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Purpose of paper

Engagement with ethnic communities as part of the Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga has been completed in partnership with the Office of Ethnic Communities (OEC).

This paper provides you with a summary of the themes that have emerged from the five ethnic communities workshops across the country. It includes a double-sided A3 document to be released publicly on the Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga website.

Summary

- Approximately 500 people attended the five ethnic communities workshops. You hosted all of these meetings. Attendees shared with us 2,300 comments and ideas, 170 of which were from young people.
- Eight key themes were discussed at the ethnic community workshops. Communities broadly agreed that:
 - Bias and racism exist
 - Culture and identity must be valued
 - Parent and family involvement in education is important
 - Teaching and learning should respond to learner needs
 - Access to and transitions through the education system could be improved
 - Wellbeing is not adequately supported
 - Better information about future pathways is needed
 - More can be done to support thriving communities (*beyond education*)
- A short report in Annex 2 gives an in depth description of these themes and an A3 based on this information will be shared with the public on the Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga website (provided in Annex 3).

Proactive release

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

Agree / Disagree



Andrea Schöllmann
Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy

__/__/__

Hon Jenny Salesa
Associate Minister of Education

__/__/__

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Background

1. As part of the ongoing Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga, the Ministry has held five ethnic communities events in Auckland (Mount Roskill, Flatbush and Glenfield), Wellington and Christchurch.
2. Attendees sat in groups – one was a youth-focused table while other tables were self-selected. The comments of those who attended were captured by external community facilitators.
3. The data from the ethnic communities events has been entered and analysed and the data collection and analysis processes are outlined in Annex 1.
4. Key themes will be shared within the Ministry to inform the Education Work Programme, as well as being published on the Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga website.
5. We will also be working with regional office staff to ensure this information is fed back to communities.

Key themes from the Ethnic specific conversations

6. Eight key themes were discussed during the ethnic community engagements. At the high level, communities have shared that:
 - a) *Bias and racism exist* – bias and racism exists in the system and affects both learners and their parents. Racism is often linked to bullying for children and young people. Some young people reported being isolated and left out of group work in classes. Some discriminatory views and behaviours might not have been examined but they need to be unlearned. Equal rights and equal opportunities are cited as important.
 - b) *Culture and identity must be valued* – schools and teachers need to be culturally aware and inclusive so learners are supported to know and feel valued in their culture while adapting to a new one. An important part of this is having opportunities to learn their mother tongue. This will support learners' sense of belonging. Communities want the curriculum to include more cultural content, for Initial Teacher Education to have a stronger focus on inclusion and diversity and for qualified people from overseas to be able to teach, particularly in their own language.
 - c) *Parent and family involvement in education is important* – Parents and families want to be more involved in their child's learning. They want more meaningful information on their child's progress and want to share their culture and language with the school community. They want to be consulted regarding what they want from the school. Some want to be more directive of their children's learning while others prefer to play a support role.
 - d) *Teaching and learning should respond to learner needs* – communities want passionate teachers and value strong literacy and numeracy. Some want to see more rote learning while others think this is not helpful. Many want more practical learning experiences and more technology in classrooms. They want teachers who know and understand their children and not to assume they don't need help if they are not 'causing trouble'. They also want to see more focus on languages, including mother tongues and for learning to include financial literacy. Young people in particular valued quality English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support and many reported positive experiences with caring teachers and students and want to see the value of good teachers recognised.

- e) *Access to and transitions through the system could be improved* – many families are worried about being locked out of preferred schools due to enrolment zones. There is a common perception that high decile and private schools offer the best quality education and some are worried about the standard of education compared to their home country. They want better transitions and recognition of the high costs associated with education. They see the Ministry playing a bigger role in supporting diverse cultures through resources, curriculum and supporting connections between schools and their communities.
 - f) *Wellbeing is not adequately supported* – families are very worried about the stress and anxiety their children and young people face and identify bullying and suicide as critical issues. They want schools to better support students to manage stress. An important contributor to wellbeing is feeling accepted as Kiwis, rather than always being viewed as immigrants. In saying this, it is important that their unique identities can be recognised, for example being Kiwi Chinese. Some young people expressed concern that mental health education was limited to pamphlets being handed out at school, which is not effective.
 - g) *Better information about future pathways is needed* – children and young people and their families see a need for better careers advice. Some families are focused on 'top careers' such as medicine and engineering whilst others want better access to and information on a broader range of pathways. Similarly, some see success in terms of academic grades and competitive assessment, whereas others value each young person identifying their own strengths and goals and building these throughout their education.
 - h) *More can be done to support thriving communities (beyond education)* – community-based organisations have a lot of expertise and are doing excellent work with families. Families want to see more support and funding for these organisations and to see stronger connections with schools to draw on this knowledge. Communities value meaningful employment as key to a healthy society and want to see less conflict and more support for physical and mental health. The Government is seen as having a role in supporting community languages and tackling poverty.
7. A more detailed report on each of these themes is provided in Annex 2 and a summary, which will be shared on the Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga page, is provided as a double-sided A3 in Annex 3.

Next Steps

8. We will publish the findings summary in Annex 3 to the Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga website and share this with regional office staff.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Data collection and analysis process
Annex 2: Report on respondent feedback
Annex 3: Summary A3

Annex 1: Data collection and analysis process

Data collection

1. Eight starter questions were used for the meetings. These include:
 - a) What will successful learning look like for learners from diverse cultures?
 - b) What ways of learning work for you?
 - c) What new and different things do we want teachers to know and to be able to do to teach our culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people successfully?
 - d) What will make a great teacher for your children?
 - e) How do you see your language, culture and identity supported and maintained in the way children learn in the future?
 - f) Which skills/learning that will be essential tomorrow for the next generation are not being taught today?
 - g) How should cultural diversity of New Zealand's population be reflected in our education system?
 - h) What role should education play in sustaining your identity, language, and culture?
2. From the five meetings, there were 2,300 comments and ideas recorded. Of these comments approximately 7% were from children and young people under 24 and approximately 93% were from adults. This information is outlined in Annex 1.

Data analysis

3. The data has been coded using the following categories:
 - 1 Connections and relationships
 - 2 Student outcomes and future pathways
 - 3 Pedagogy and learning
 - 4 Education systems and structures
 - 5 Quality of teaching
 - 6 Curriculum and assessment
 - 7 Equity
 - 8 Wellbeing
 - 9 Identity Diversity and Culture
4. Each of the categories has around 5-8 sub-categories and organising and coding the data in this way has enabled us to draw out the key themes from the conversations.

ETHNIC COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENT – REPORT ON RESPONDENT FEEDBACK

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 500 people attended the five ethnic communities engagement meetings held in 2018. The purpose was to discuss the education system in its widest sense. The meetings were held in Auckland (Mount Roskill, Flatbush and Glenfield), Wellington and Christchurch. Participants shared over 2,300 comments and ideas, with approximately 7% of these being from young people under 24.

The comments were coded to the following broad categories:

- Connections and relationships
- Student outcomes and future pathways
- Pedagogy and learning
- Education systems and structures
- Quality of teaching
- Curriculum and assessment
- Equity
- Wellbeing
- Identity Diversity and Culture

This paper sets out a summary of the comments and ideas expressed at the five engagement meetings, organised into eight key themes.

The information has been summarised into a double-sided A3 document, which will be uploaded to the Kōrero Mātauranga website.

A BIAS AND RACISM EXIST

Respondents were concerned about discrimination and racism in and beyond school, and the need to remove bias so that students did not get negatively impacted by this. They noted that discriminatory views and behaviours could be unconscious but needed to be unlearned. One attendee called for people not to “judge children on their cultural background... racism exists!”

These problems affected not just learners but also parents. For learners racism and bias was connected to bullying. Racism was seen as a problem that is not acknowledged and therefore does not get corrected, “racism is rife – don’t put it under the table, address it, set an example, you need to act.”

Equal rights (e.g. language policies) and equal opportunities (to resources, teachers and devices) were both cited as important.

A small number of respondents referred to socioeconomic inequality. They noted the role of socioeconomic inequality in student outcomes. They also felt that poverty and inequality needed to be addressed.

B CULTURE AND IDENTITY MUST BE VALUED

Many respondents emphasised the need for learners to respect different cultures and to understand diversity and the cultures of others. Most respondents cited the importance of values, in particular values that are shared across cultures. The most discussed value was

respect, with tolerance, positivity and, “right and wrong” also mentioned.

Respondents felt strongly that society and schools needed to be culturally aware, and learners needed to know and value their culture and other cultures. The importance of knowing multiple cultures was a common theme. Learners and people more generally want their culture to be acknowledged and respected, including by teachers. Several stated that learners who are aware of their culture will feel confident. Others stated that knowing or learning their language was important to a learner’s level of comfort with their culture. The importance of retaining one’s own culture while also adapting to a new culture was mentioned by some. There are positive spinoffs such as “cultural knowledge builds emotional intelligence.” Some noted that New Zealand is seen as a bicultural country when in the last 20 years it has become a multicultural one. Alongside this there has been increasing media reflection of cultures and cultural awareness.

A key message was that identity is critical – both in terms of ethnic/cultural identity, and being happy with who you are. These are key ambitions parents have for their children. Learning their “mother tongue” language is seen as an important way to promote individuals’ cultural identity. Some respondents were clear that their child should choose their own identity: “help my children to develop the tools to choose their identity and how they see themselves.” Some made the connection between a child having a cultural identity and their self-confidence. “People need to find themselves and know themselves to be successful.” A few noted that children and young people may not want to be different from the mainstream (“white”), but “losing culture can lead to problems.” There was some articulation of the likelihood of children developing more than one identity, e.g. “Korean and Kiwi.”

Having a sense of belonging came up frequently with respondents as an important aspect of being comfortable and succeeding in the education context (and more generally). Inclusiveness was also raised several times. Overall respondents see it as “important to be treated as a kiwi”. Migrants and refugees in particular wanted to “feel like they belong” and not be treated as “immigrants”. Teachers and other learners were considered to be key to promoting a sense of belonging at school. Celebrating different languages and cultural events was seen as a way to improve belonging among different communities. One respondent said “they must feel accepted”. Another respondent pointed out that even some older generations may struggle with not belonging.

Respondents stressed the importance of understanding and respecting different cultures and the related ability to embrace one’s own identity, language and culture.

C TEACHING AND LEARNING SHOULD RESPOND TO LEARNER NEEDS

Respondents wanted to see more culturally aware and responsive teachers. “A good teacher is an inclusive teacher who understands and knows values and incorporates culture and family.” Inclusiveness was felt to mean including “all the ethnicities in the room.” Exposing children to other cultures was seen as valuable. Culture weeks were seen as a positive though limited way of introducing children to other cultures. The importance of learning the “mother tongue” language was raised by many. Young people want to see teachers more consistently valuing them as unique individuals and believe more resources are needed to support this to happen.

Respondents together had a long list of desirable qualities in relation to teacher attitude; passionate being the most common. Others were: loves to teach, inclusive, forgiving of mistakes, respected but not feared, inspiring and motivating, friendly, treating everyone equally, firm and fair, caring, willing to listen, professional, goes the extra mile, respectful, open-minded, has high expectations for all students regardless of ethnicity or English ability, and approachable. A few respondents added that the teacher should communicate well with parents.

The most commonly-named desirable teacher capability was that the teacher have the ability to teach diverse learners. Many other capabilities were raised, including the ability to: use different teaching strategies, know the subject they teach to a high level, help students to learn as opposed to teaching per se, stimulate interest and curiosity, develop learners at what they are not good at, understand progress, engage with the learner and guide them, communicate well, be accommodating, draw from their experience, set reasonable rules and discipline appropriately, bring out the best in students, work effectively with parents, teach cultural awareness, and develop students' confidence and resilience.

There were two strands to the responses on teacher training. One was the importance of teachers being trained to be culturally aware/competent and responsive. The second was the importance of allowing qualified overseas people to teach in New Zealand schools, that is, with reference to the entry barriers to teaching including the English language test.

Many of the respondents addressed teaching working conditions. This covered teacher pay (inadequate) teacher student ratios (too high) and support for teachers in the classroom given diverse needs (insufficient). Some mentioned that teachers were required to do too much paperwork. Young people felt strongly about better working conditions for teachers. Others stated that teachers should be more diverse ethnically.

Respondents were concerned that children get literacy (including ESOL) and numeracy skills. Although less of an emphasis, financial literacy and knowledge were also cited as important for learners.

Respondents emphasised the importance of students wanting to learn. Associated with that was the need for teachers to use diverse methods of teaching and an engaging style so that students enjoy learning. Some respondents felt that teachers should teach to a broad community-driven view of intelligence, including for example emotional intelligence, curiosity and understanding of different cultures. Parents want kids to be "excited about learning, when learning is like a discovery, with a level of curiosity."

Respondents felt that learning (or teaching practices/strategies) needed to be individualised for the benefit of the learner, or at least, to be different for different categories of student (such as different ethnic groups). Many thought that using different modes of learning should be the norm (for example, visual/reading vs listening vs hands-on activities). In addition, teaching styles should take into account learners' strengths and weaknesses in order to get the best results - "encourage students' potential." It was noted that in some cases immigrant learners were not able to join the classroom of other children of the same age, but this should be allowed for the sake of improving the child's language ability.

While some thought rote learning should take a greater place in schools, others thought rote learning was not helpful and preferred different means of assessment.

Respondents predominantly felt that learning environments need to be safe and friendly. Other terms used were positive, caring, receptive and supportive. A few stated that they did not favour modern learning environments as their child was not performing well in them.

Respondents were almost unanimous that practical learning was desirable and helped students to learn, complementing book-based or digital learning. In their view practical learning included learning through play, making things, and experiences.

While the majority of respondents favoured the same level of or more technology in the classroom, a small group wanted less technology at school, for example, for reasons of child stress or perceived wastage of time. Those who favoured technology-based learning suggested more use of computers, laptops and devices; favoured some learning-based software programmes (such as Prodigy and Khan Academy); and generally wanted to see technology integrated into school lessons, reflecting changes in society and the world of work.

Respondents felt that NCEA had problems and needed to be reviewed or at least simplified. NCEA was perceived as inferior to Cambridge or International Baccalaureate, and as too easy and having an overly high pass rate.

Several respondents wanted more cultural content and more languages to be part of the curriculum – “school curriculum that reflects the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country.” A culturally appropriate curriculum would include for example a Pacific novel rather than a Shakespeare play.

Views on homework differed – some parents wanted more homework while others thought less homework would benefit children.

Respondents felt that learners should understand opportunities that were open to them, including identifying their talents and interests and using these to springboard their education. In addition mistakes or failures were linked to opportunities to learn and do better. Other respondents felt strongly that there needed to be equal opportunities offered to all learners.

The more frequently proposed subjects were extended language classes covering more languages including the mother tongue of learners. The second most mentioned was financial education to promote financial literacy. Other subjects that respondents wanted to see offered were: technology education, values/religious education, learning about other cultures (e.g. through social studies), mindfulness education, civic education, physical education, and business education.

D PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT

The main theme of responses was parents seeking to better understand the New Zealand education system and what their children are learning. The secondary theme was a desire to see parents and family members more involved in sharing and teaching their culture and/or language at school.

Respondents thought that parents needed to take an active role in ensuring their child learns – for example by keeping them from “being lazy”, encouraging them, setting expectations and values, handing down the work ethic, helping them with homework, and teaching their children their language and culture. There were two strands – directive parenting and supportive parenting.

Respondents agreed that the connection between teacher and parent is very important. Parents would like to see teachers put more effort into communication and getting on side with parents. One felt that schools needed to alert parents when children were not attending classes.

Respondents wanted closer ties between education and the family. For example, one respondent suggested projects with a focus on family research and background, while others wanted schools to emphasise the importance of family.

Most respondents wanted parents and families to be more involved in schools and education, including coming into school to learn, teach, and volunteer. Several felt that parents needed to be more connected with what the students were learning and their homework, and that the schools/teachers needed to explain to parents how the school system works.

Teacher communication and engagement with parents, driven by the teacher, was seen as important by most of those who responded on this topic.

The key message from respondents about community was that communities should be more involved in schooling. Purposes given included: teaching students about their culture and/or

language, create broader partnerships aimed at enhancing education, and learning about community expectations by consulting them on what they want from the school.

Respondents support mentoring in schools, including peer support mentoring. One respondent suggested that teachers and careers advisers should be more like mentors or coaches, helping the learner to progress.

One respondent felt that there should be a better communal network involving educators, employers and parents. Another thought that all ethnicities needed to connect with each other.

Respondents referred to the need to support students and families. Examples included vulnerable students, expelled students, international students, children with high needs and/or ESOL needs. A few respondents noted that early childhood education was markedly better at providing support than later parts of the education system. A few noted that there are supports available to students under certain circumstances, including interpreters, counsellors and social workers attached to schools.

Respondents cited the struggles for learners when the messages from home (e.g. strictness, career expectations, the preeminent position of the home in learning) conflicted with the school environment.

Respondents noted the importance of a personal teacher-learner relationship. They also noted that a poor teacher-learner relationship could lead to problems such as hating the subject taught, absence of connection with teachers particularly at the secondary level, and students feeling that they are not listened to.

Respondents felt that some services should be more available to learners, most commonly cultural/ethnic co-ordinators to support learners from ethnic communities. Also access to service provided outside the education system was seen as important by several respondents – for example several respondents mentioned support agencies outside schools, “helping community agencies.” Other services that respondents wanted to see were interpreters, homework support centres, help/mentoring from university students.

Respondents’ most common request was for teachers to know and understand the learner as an individual. Other practices raised were developing a trusting relationship, increasing the chance of good grades, better understanding the learner’s culture, finding their talents, finding out their needs, developing a unique learning path, improving learner confidence. A few respondents noted that teachers easily assume that ethnic community learners don’t need their attention when they are not causing any trouble – however often these learners need to be valued and engaged with.

The message here was that peer interactions could contribute positively to learning and complement teaching.

E WELLBEING IS NOT ADEQUATELY SUPPORTED

Respondents were concerned about negative experiences and events facing students, including bullying, anxiety, stress, mental health problems and suicide. Schools were seen as needing to find ways to prevent and manage stress. Transition points within schooling were cited as examples of high-stress reactions. Some respondents were concerned that teachers were not doing enough to provide support and look after wellbeing, and in some cases were not aware of problems or did not care. Others noted that there should be more emphasis on providing learners with education that helps them manage stress.

F ACCESS TO AND TRANSITIONS THROUGH THE SYSTEM COULD BE IMPROVED

There was some concern about enrolment zones and inability to go to a “top school” without being in an expensive area. Parents consider private schools but these can be prohibitively expensive. Respondents wanted a smoother and more genuine transition through ECE to primary and then secondary. There was concern about the need for learners to be taught skills that can help them with the workforce of the future with technology having a greater role. There was also concern about learners losing their culture in a New Zealand school: “there’s a difference between education and assimilation.” Overall the “student should be in the centre.”

Points raised were: dissatisfaction with enrolment zones, a sense that schools cannot be relied on to support or promote culture, a need for school boards to be aware of culture and ethnicity, school as a strength-based system, that primary age children should have shorter hours at school.

Parents noted that costs came along with schooling. Respondents also noted that add-ons popular with ethnic communities such as after-school tutoring, computer education and sports, were very expensive.

Parents and learners feel strongly that ethnic communities’ languages need to have more of a place in both early childhood education and schools. Some pointed out that bilingual schools could cater for ethnic community languages. Parents regret that they see their children lose both their language and culture, and become assimilated through the schooling system. They want to see a more inclusive environment and more presence of ethnic representation – including cultural events, days and performances, celebration of language weeks and employing more ethnic staff. Teachers are seen by some as lacking in responsiveness to multiple cultures. There could be stronger input from family and community in order to improve inclusiveness. There was also a concern about tokenism rather than true inclusiveness. Asians and Middle Eastern parents in particular felt their children were left out of cultural celebrations.

The main comment was that low decile schools were stigmatised and learners felt marginalised and unconfident, and as if they came from a ‘dumb school’.

Many respondents felt that the Ministry should increase its role in relation to diverse cultures. Some said the Ministry/Minister should offer more funding. Some stated that the Ministry should add material on ethnic community cultures and more languages into the curriculum. Others wanted the Ministry to engage more proactively with communities and parents, e.g. run workshops to facilitate community/school connections, and to increase the capacity of ethnic communities to work closely with schools and the Ministry.

Respondents generally saw a need for more resources, whether in general, or allocated to teaching equipment, technology or cultural learning/languages.

After equity between diverse cultures, equity of opportunities, and the importance of meeting student needs, equity of access to devices was also noted as a priority.

In several cases respondents stated that parents are concerned that the school is not offering teaching to the standard they would expect from their overseas experience. “Open curriculum of New Zealand, doesn’t match up with their own country’s way of delivering education (syllabus) and don’t have visibility over children’s learning in same way.” Same person: “New migrants would tell other people not to bring child to New Zealand to become an academic genius.”

G BETTER INFORMATION ABOUT FUTURE PATHWAYS IS NEEDED

A high proportion of respondents commented on careers. Many of them thought the quality of careers advice needed improvement. Some felt careers advice should begin earlier, such as in primary school. Others had suggestions for improving learners' knowledge about careers, including: more careers speakers at school as part of increasing students to employers, learning practical work skills, work/job experience, ensuring that careers advice takes into account technological change including new jobs, and the role of teachers in guiding students into careers. Young people commented that motivation to attend school was difficult without a sense of what future success in life might look like. The importance of lifelong learning in relation to career pathways was mentioned.

Two strands came from this subtheme. One was the importance of valuing lifelong learning and encouraging learners to understand that they would be learning throughout life, often independently. The second was the importance of bridging students into pathways somewhat outside the expected ones – for example, Gateway, apprenticeships, NZQF courses below university level, and vocational pathways generally, and bringing parents along with the decision for their children to take these pathways.

A large number of respondents commented on desirable knowledge, skills and competencies. Key strands of the feedback were (a) working with a student's natural talents/abilities to encourage their learning and (b) building confidence. In terms of particular subjects, respondents wanted to see the following as most important: English, other languages, numeracy, communication skills, technology; and less academic skills such as life skills, social/interpersonal skills, creativity, cooperation, leadership, self-belief, and critical thinking.

Giving students the ability to pursue their own interests and dreams was a frequent comment under this subtheme. "Schools should give opportunities for young people to learn what they are interested in." The value of student voice, empowerment of students and freedom of choice were also raised several times. It was noted that these things lead to successful learning but also challenge students to make good decisions.

The responses on student goals and success showed a clear split on how respondents defined success. Many saw success in terms of academic grades, competitive forms of assessment and striving for excellence, while many others viewed success as the learner identifying their own interests, strengths and goals, and building on those through the education system.

H MORE CAN BE DONE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES BEYOND EDUCATION

A number of respondents discussed themes related but not directly under the umbrella of Education. One of these was the importance of community-based organisations that are doing excellent work in communities. These include services such as Youth Line, Community Education providers and Saturday Schools. These organisations are seen as having expertise that could be utilised by schools to help them better respond to and value children and young people and their unique cultures. A number of people also wanted to highlight the valuable volunteer work that many people do in their communities.

Meaningful employment is seen as an important part of a thriving society. One attendee shared 'People like to know their value in society... If everyone had a job, society would be in harmony'. Others highlighted the need for equal access to all job opportunities for people from all cultures and one person highlighted the need to 'create more supportive environments and minimise barriers for diverse people to train in 'caring' occupations such as health professions. A diverse community will need carers – there is a gap'.

Good physical and mental health, which is strongly linked to education, is also a priority, however some community members are concerned about the wait time for the health system and the shortage of doctors. There is also concern regarding high suicide rates and mental

health issues, the prevalence of junk food and the lack of education about healthy eating, the accessibility of drugs and the lack of system coherence in dealing with all these issues. In dealing with mental health, one attendee urged us all to 'be aware of the heart and be kind'.

Many see an opportunity to grow our understanding of diverse cultures, including languages, practices and religions. They want better understanding of the diversity of our ethnic communities. One attendee shared that 'cultural knowledge builds emotional intelligence'. An important part of this is to have this knowledge valued and taught in schools but others also brought up the need for culturally competent politicians, the support of the Minister of Ethnic Communities and valuing of community-based organisations already doing this work.

CONCLUSION

The engagement meetings sparked lively discussion about what was important for learners to get the most out of their education. There was some praise for schools, but in many cases respondents argued for improvement. In terms of the ultimate goal of schools, success, there was division among respondents to what success meant – whether self-directed learning and career choices, or aiming for the high-paid, high-status professions.

A good summary of respondent attitudes was the following quote: "New Zealand is good, that's why we come here, but we want it to be better."

Released Under the Official Information Act 1982

Ethnic Communities Education Conversation: Findings Summary

Ni Hao, Namaste, Iska
Warran, Salaam Alaikum,
Xin Chao, Ming-gah-lah-barh,
здравствуйте, Namaska,
Hujambo, Mabuhay,
Konnnichiwa, Anyoung
Haseyo.

We want to express our gratitude to all the parents, young people and communities who shared their ideas and opinions at our ethnic community meetings across the country.

We heard from around 500 people on a wide range of issues and opportunities in education and beyond. We hosted five education engagement meetings in Auckland (3), Wellington and Christchurch.

We received over 2,300 comments from participants. A team is working to bring out all the key themes and messages you have shared. A final report will then be published.



Culture & identity

Schools and teachers need to be culturally aware and inclusive. Learners need to know their culture while adapting to a new one. We want our children to have a cultural identity and to be happy and confident with who they are. We want them to learn their mother tongue. A sense of belonging will help them thrive.

"There's a difference between education and assimilation."

We feel that the curriculum should include more cultural content. Teachers should have the ability to teach diverse learners and be culturally responsive, and these competencies should be taught in teacher training. Qualified people from overseas should be allowed to teach in New Zealand schools, particularly in their own language.

"Went to my daughters intermediate open day and their vision was cultural intelligence. We need to understand other people's culture and how to get along. We live in a multicultural society and we need to do this."

Bias & racism

Bias and racism exist throughout the system, affecting both learners and parents.

Discriminatory views and behaviours might be unconscious but they need to be unlearned. Equal rights (e.g. language policies) and equal opportunities (for resources, teachers) were cited as important. Racism is linked to bullying.

"Don't judge children on their cultural background... racism exists!"

Parents & families

We want to be more involved in education – as parents, families and communities.

As parents and families, we want to better understand the New Zealand education system and what our children are learning.

Teachers should communicate well with us so that we understand what is going on in the classroom. We also want to share and teach our culture and language at school.

"Liked primary education – but the teacher didn't communicate with the parents. Also the feedback isn't great. Foreigners need real feedback (not just you're doing well) – real feedback that supports them would be good."

As ethnic communities, we also want to be more involved. We think we have a lot to offer and can partner with schools to enhance education. We want to be consulted about what we want from the school.

Some of us think that the parent's role in relation to their child is to be directive – set high expectations and hand down the work ethic; while others of us think that offering support is the priority. Sometimes messages from home conflict with the school environment, which isn't helpful.

"Education is beyond schools – it's the whole community. Schools can't support every culture because there are so many – but if we broaden into the community and beyond schools, it's possible."

Teaching & learning

We want to see teachers who are passionate. We want our children to get literacy and numeracy skills. Some of us think there should be more role learning while others think role learning is not helpful.

We want learning environments to be safe and friendly. We would like to see more practical learning (e.g. making things, experiences) to complement book-based and digital learning. We want technology in the classroom because it is driving changes in society and work.

We want teachers to understand our children as individuals. This will help them with finding their talents and getting good grades. Sometimes teachers assume our kids don't need attention because they are not causing trouble – but our kids still need to be engaged with.

Some of us think there should be more homework while others think there should be less.

We want our children to learn more languages, including their mother tongue, and to get financial education to promote their financial literacy.

"We want a 'school curriculum that reflects the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country'"

"We want our kids to be 'excited about learning, when learning is like a discovery, with a level of curiosity'"

Ethnic Communities Education Conversation: Findings summary

Education systems

We are concerned about being locked out of certain schools by enrolment zones and the price of private education. Low decile schools are stigmatised and perceived as lower quality. Schooling carries costs, as do after-school education activities.

We want a smoother more genuine transition from early childhood education to primary to secondary. We don't want our kids to lose their culture in school – schools need to be better at promoting culture. We want to see more inclusive ethnic representation, such as celebration of cultural days, including Middle Eastern and Asian.

"Enrolment zones make some people not able to go to a school due to it being expensive. Private school is not affordable."

We want to see the Ministry of Education increasing its role in relation to diverse cultures, through resources, curriculum and proactively improving the connections between communities and schools.

We need to support students and families, especially when a student is struggling in some way. There should be more services available to students, in particular cultural co-ordinators to support those from ethnic communities. In some cases support services will come from outside schools, e.g. community agencies, interpreters.

Some of us are concerned that New Zealand schools are not delivering education to the standard that we expect from our overseas experience.

"The student should be in the centre."

Beyond education

We really value our community-based organisations that are doing excellent work with our families. We want to see more support and funding for these and more connection with schools to draw on their expertise.

"Many organisations doing great work that people could tap into, but they need to get funding, i.e. youth line."

"[We need to] Develop and nurture a network of helping community agencies [mutually beneficial]."

We value meaningful employment as key to a healthy society and we want to see less conflict and better support for good physical and mental health. An important part of this is that we are treated like kīwis and we feel like we belong. Alongside this we also need to address poverty.

"As a country some people are worried about accessing technology but other parts are worried about having food on the table."

"[We need to] Learn about other cultures to reduce conflicts in society."

Many of us believe the Government has an important role to play in supporting our languages. We know that this is ultimately the community's responsibility but support is needed.

"Government should empower community to foster, protect and expose language. Community based language school with their own curriculum and credits. Use community as a resource."

Wellbeing

We are very worried about the stresses and anxiety that our kids face, and about bullying at school. Suicide is a real concern.

"Schools are not responsive to children's anxiety and stress"

Schools need to find ways to prevent and manage students' stress. Transition points can be very challenging. Teachers need to do more to provide support. Schools could educate learners to manage stress.

"If the stresses, pressures, worries and self expectations could be taken out of their control THEN our education system would work. Education would be their main focus."

Being accepted as kīwis and not seen as immigrants is very important for our wellbeing but so too is the recognition of our unique cultures (i.e. as kīwi Chinese).

"New Zealand is thus a multicultural society. The recognition and preservation of one's culture is essential to the sense of self-worth."

Future Pathways

We want better careers advice for our kids. We want to see our students working with their natural talents and we want them to build confidence. Some of us are focused on 'top careers' for our kids such as medicine and engineering, while others want better access to other pathways. Some see NCEA as too easy.

"New migrants would tell other people not to bring child to New Zealand to become an academic genius."

Some of us see success in terms of academic grades and competitive forms of assessment, while others of us view success as the learner identifying their own interests, strengths and goals, and building on those through the education system.

"Hard for teachers to prepare students for working life. Schools should encourage employees to come to show practical things they do, not just talk, take students to their companies."

Keeping up to date with ethnic communities and education

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

For more information about the ethnic communities conversation, go to <https://conversation.education.govt.nz>