

YOUTH PLAN REFRESH

Engagement Highlights

During April 2023, the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) — Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi heard from over 1,400 young people about the refresh of the Youth Plan.

Young people shared whakaaro and kōrero about youth voice and leadership and what government and others can do to better support both of these forms of youth participation.



1,080
young people responded to an online survey



325
young people attended 20 hui

We heard from young people all across Aotearoa New Zealand. Representation from the Youth Plan's seven priority cohorts was a key focus.

SURVEY RESPONSES:

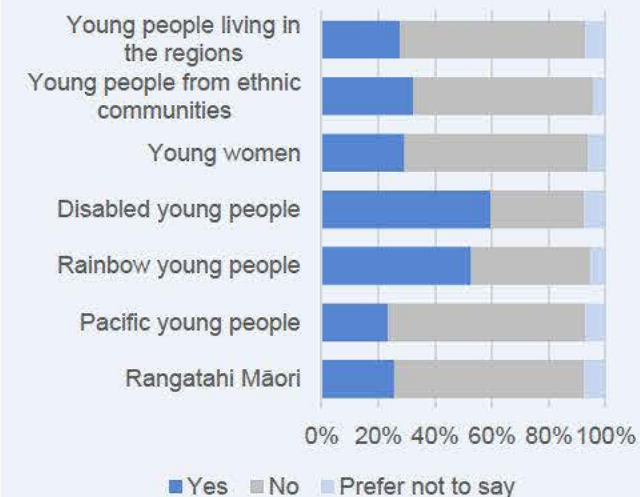
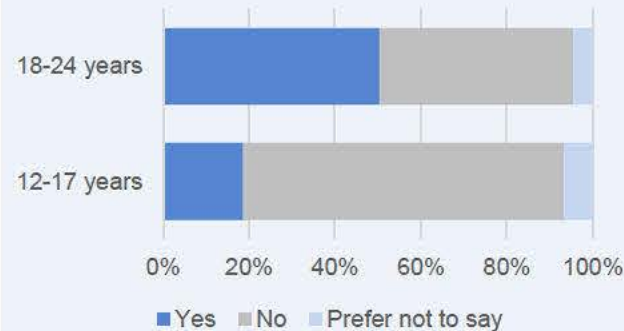
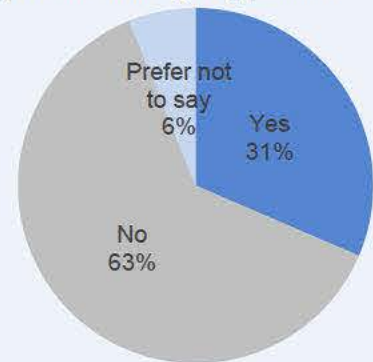
Rangatahi Māori	20%
Pacific young people	14%
Rainbow young people	23%
Disabled young people	8%
Young women	66%
Young people from ethnic communities	17%
Young people living in the regions	8%

VOICE

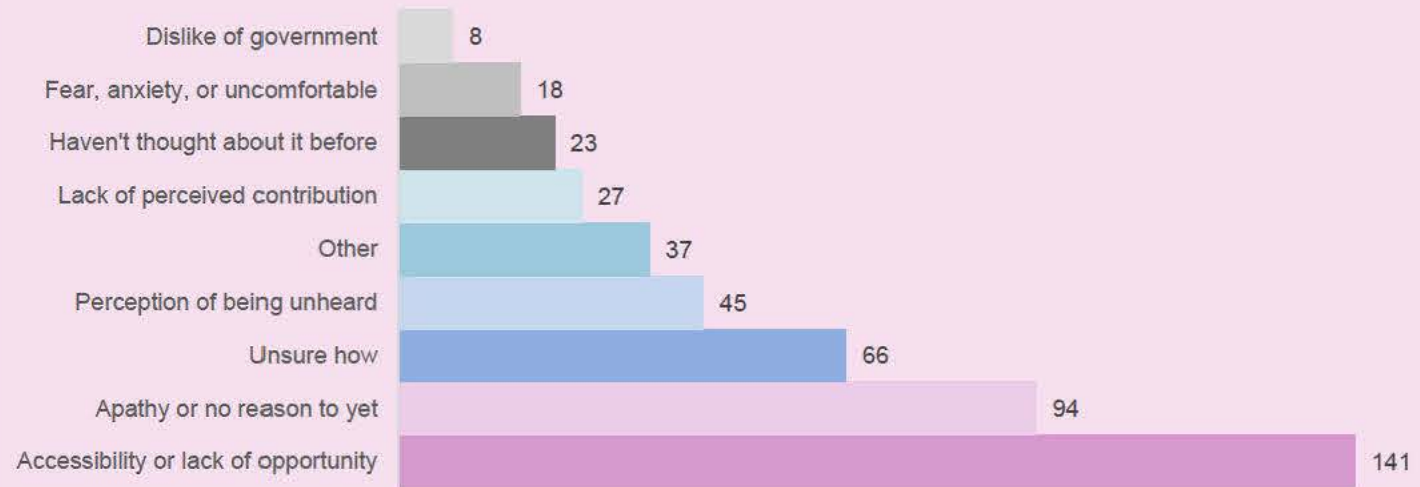
HAVE YOU SHARED YOUR VIEWS, THOUGHTS, OPINIONS OR QUESTIONS WITH GOVERNMENT BEFORE?

Only about a third of survey respondents said they had shared their voice with government before. Many noted that the Youth Plan survey was the first opportunity they had to do so.

Older cohorts of young people were more likely to have shared before than younger counterparts. They were also more likely to have done so through formal democratic processes like voting and submissions to select committees. Other popular ways all young people had shared included attending protests and signing petitions.



WHY HAVEN'T YOU SHARED YOUR VOICE WITH GOVERNMENT BEFORE?



ACCESSIBILITY

Young people want accessible channels that allow them to share their voice. Young people in the priority cohorts are often overlooked or not given equitable opportunities to engage with decision-makers. Part of accessibility is meeting young people where they already are, rather than expecting them to come to formal engagement spaces.

Cultivating safe spaces where they feel comfortable without fear of judgement is an important part of this. Language should also be simple and accessible. This means some 'translation work' may be needed to turn complex or jargony language into easy-to-understand information.

Some young people reported that they hadn't had the need to share their voice with government before, but others said they didn't feel they had anything to share because the language of government is inaccessible.

BEING HEARD AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY

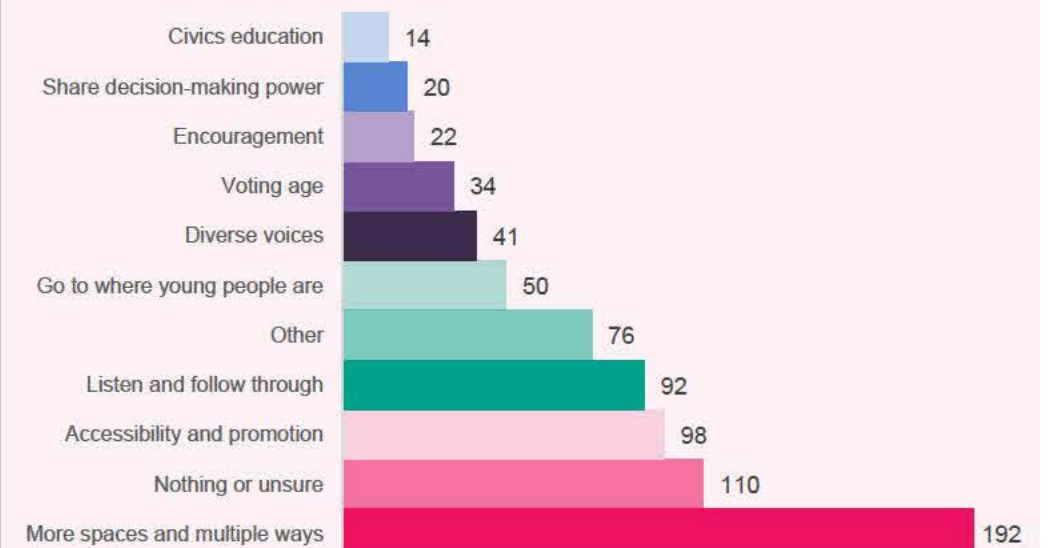
Not only do young people want to have more opportunities and more accessible platforms, they also want assurance that their voice actually matters to decision-makers. Many reported feeling like even if they did engage, their thoughts would not be taken seriously or create any change.

Messaging to young people that decision-makers value their contributions and following through on engagements by information-sharing, closing feedback loops, and taking action demonstrates to young people that their voice matters.

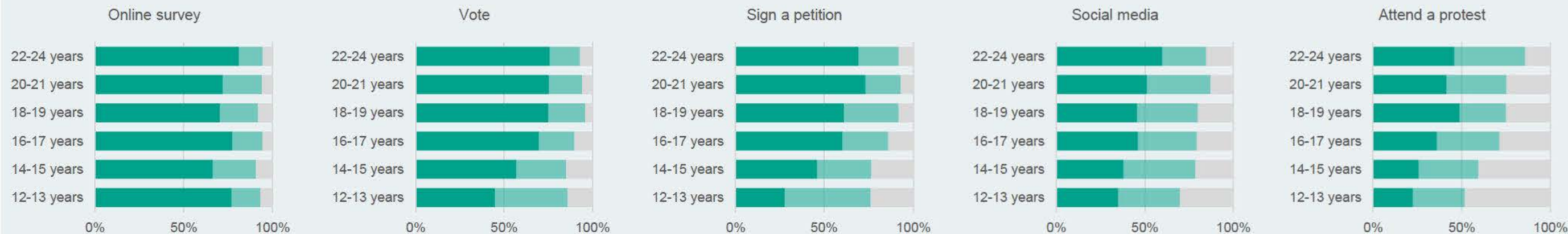
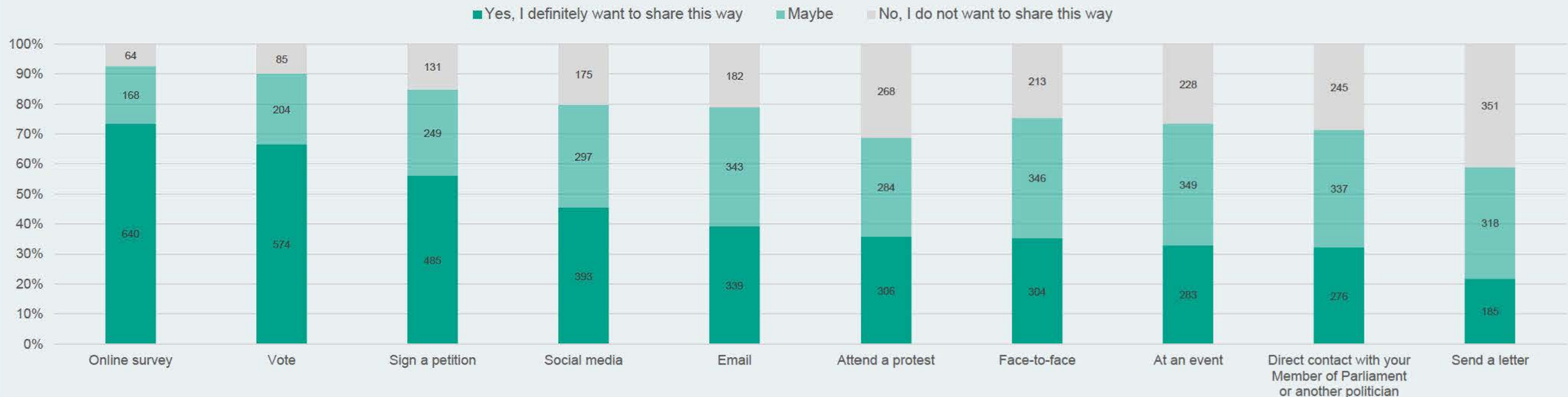
"IF WE WERE SHOWN THAT THE GOVERNMENT GENUINELY VALUES US, WE WOULD FEEL SAFER TO ENGAGE."

-Survey Respondent

WHAT CAN GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP YOU SHARE YOUR VIEWS, THOUGHTS, OPINIONS AND QUESTIONS ON THINGS THAT MATTER MOST TO YOU?



WHAT WAYS WOULD YOU WANT TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS, THOUGHTS, OR QUESTIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST TO YOU?



YOUNG PEOPLE WANT GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITIES AND WAYS FOR THEM TO SHARE

There is no magic, singular way to engage and hear from young people. Young people want to share their voice in a wide variety of ways. Across almost all methods included in the survey, the older a young person was the more likely they were to say they definitely wanted to share that way. **Online surveys** were most popular and were consistently popular across age ranges and priority cohorts. The second most popular method was through **voting**. This included young people under 18 years who said they maybe or definitely wanted to share this way at rates of 80-90%.

EARLY INVOLVEMENT

Young people said they were tired of being consulted on an idea when the decision felt like it had already been made. Young people want opportunities to be involved early in the process so they have a better chance of influencing decisions rather than being engaged in ways that feel like it is merely a 'tick-box' exercise.

“GOVERNMENT IS NOT PROVIDING ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES...THERE NEEDS TO BE A PATHWAY FOR CHILD AND YOUTH VOICE.”

-Survey Respondent

FEEDBACK LOOPS

Regardless of the ways of sharing voice or engaging, young people said hearing back after engagements is an essential way government can demonstrate that it values youth voice. Young people want to see their voice used in meaningful ways, be kept informed throughout the entire process, and helped to understand how their voice is represented in the final product of what they shared their voice on.

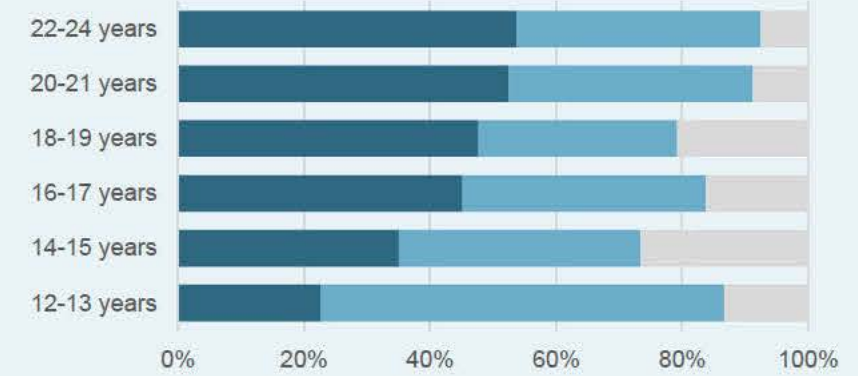
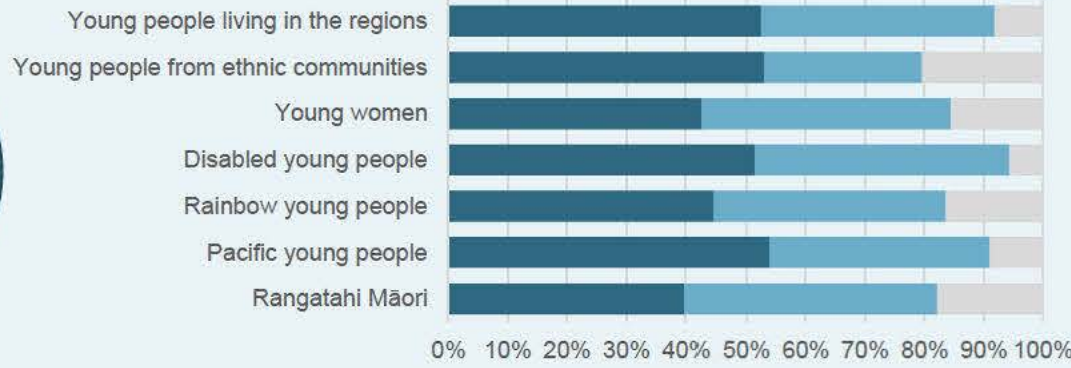
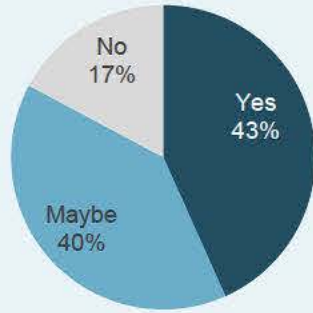
Young people recognised that this is sometimes difficult because their voice may inform work that does not come into action for months or even years. In those instances, sharing information about next steps and timelines is a good first step. Making information easily accessible about progress on work and communicating with young people about where they can go to get updates is another way to better close feedback loops.

LEADERSHIP

DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A LEADER?

Collectively, **83%** of survey respondents maybe or definitely saw themselves as leaders.

Older cohorts of young people were more likely to identify as leaders than younger counterparts.



"UTILISING YOUR MANA TO EMPOWER THOSE AROUND YOU TO ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL."

-Survey Respondent

WHAT DOES BEING A LEADER MEAN TO YOU?

YOUTH LEADERSHIP CANNOT BE DEFINED AS ANY ONE THING

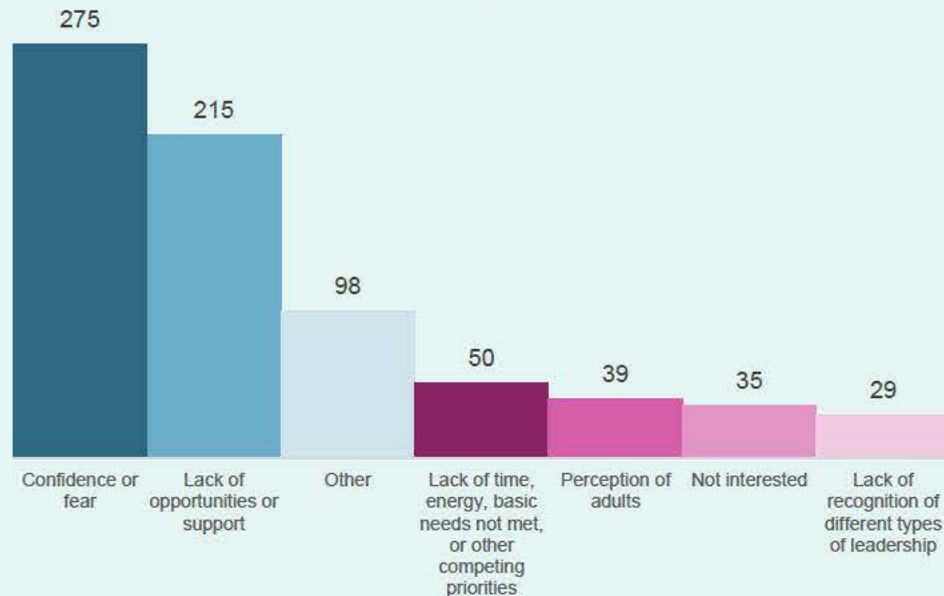
When asked what leadership means to them, young people had diverse ideas and definitions. The most common theme however, was that leadership was about guiding, uniting, inspiring, supporting, or caring for others. Young people told us that youth approaches to leadership cannot be captured in a single definition and that young people should be drivers of defining what it means for them in different contexts.

MANA MOTUHAKA AND COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Lots of kōrero uplifted the idea that all young people can lead if enabled to do so and that leadership meant both leading others but also meant mana motuhake or self-determination. Young people are leaders of their own lives and through a deep sense of self, can serve as role models to others. Many young people talked about how leadership is often understood through a Pākehā worldview that focuses on individual success rather than collective action and wellbeing. Collective leadership that was grounded in empathy, listening, and the uplifting of mana of those around you was a better reflection of the type of leadership many young people identify with.

Mana Creating change **Role model**
Kindness Decision-making **Sense of self**
 Problem solving **Being a voice for the community**
Guiding, uniting, or inspiring Empathy
 Honest Confidence **Responsible** **Stepping up**
Trustworthy **Supporting or caring for others**
 Dependable **Having vision** Authority or control
Taking charge **Listening**

WHAT IS STOPPING YOU OR OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE YOU KNOW FROM BEING A LEADER?



YOUNG PEOPLE WANT MORE MEANINGFUL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Young people told us that opportunities to help them learn and develop leadership skills are currently limited outside of school settings, especially in rural areas. Development opportunities need to be more equitably available – not just catering to young people who are already engaged and shoulder-tapped for opportunities. Young people also said they want to see more funding allocated to support leadership development opportunities.

POWER OF ROLE MODELS AND REPRESENTATION

Many young people talked about the power of representation and how Aotearoa New Zealand needed more visible examples of youth leadership and positive leadership in general. One young person said, "If you can see it, you can believe it; if you believe it, you can be it."

HOW DO YOU THINK MORE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN DEVELOP INTO GREAT LEADERS AND OR ROLE MODELS?

