Rātā Foundation

EDUCATION SECTOR SCAN

May 2021 | Prepared for Rātā Foundation

EMPOWERED TO THRIVE

By D&G Consulting

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

This Education Sector Scan has been developed to provide the Rātā Foundation with an insight into where their organisation sits within the sector, what the current and future issues in the sector are, and potential areas that they can support through their Learn Funding Area.

This report looks at:

- The theory of change that informs Rātā Foundation's Learn Funding are and how Rātā's funding current Learn priorities align with the Ministry of Education's goals for the sector
- The issues, drivers, and trends in the education sector
- Areas that the Rātā Foundation could strengthen to make their Learn Funding Area more
- equitable and address current needs
- An evaluation of the efficacy of different programmes and interventions that the Rātā Foundation may encounter in its applications.

The priorities of the Rātā Foundation's Learn Funding Area broadly align with the Ministry of Education's priorities for the sector. For example, there are shared values of seeking a barrier-free education sector with learners at the heart of learning and with connections to whānau and the wider community.

There were seven key issues identified by the stakeholders that currently affect the sector: inequality, digital inclusion, mental health, COVID-19, achievement rates and curriculum issues, attendance and engagement and resourcing. Stakeholders also provided insights on the key education sectors of early learning, transitions to schools, compulsory schooling, transitions to work, alternative education and NEET(Not in Employment, Education or Training).

From the synthesis of stakeholder interviews, and an analysis of a wide array of peer-reviewed literature, government reports, and other academic sources, including of best practice, ten recommendations are made addressing the current priorities, engagement with applicants, collaboration with stakeholders and use of evidence and best practice based on the literature review and stakeholder insights. These recommendations have a strong focus on making the Learn Funding Area more equitable and more responsive to Māori needs.

Recommendations

The ten recommendations are grouped below. Section 4 provides the justification for each recommendation.

Current priorities

Recommendation 1 - Enabling access to quality Early Childhood Education.

Rātā Foundation should consider ways to reduce barriers to accessing quality culturally responsive or whānau –centred early childhood education based on need.

Recommendation 2 - Enabling people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence throughout their lives, particularly people who may face barriers.

Rātā Foundation should continue to fund this priority. Particular thought should be given to careers advice for Māori focusing on in-schools partnerships.

Recommendation 3 - Enabling the lifting of educational outcomes of Māori and Pasifika children, those with learning needs and those coming from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Rātā Foundation should continue its focus on children and young people who are Māori, Pasifika, or who have learning needs and come from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Recommendation 4 - Connecting families/whānau and communities to children's learning and schools.

Rātā Foundation should continue its focus on connecting whānau/family and their community to children and young people's learning and schools, as part of their wider effort to create positive intergenerational change.

Engagement

Recommendation 5 - Continue to engage, and deepen relationships, with the Māori-medium sector.

Rātā Foundation should deepen its relationship with Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa and Māori-medium schools to ensure equitable access to funding. Rātā Foundation should continue to build deeper relationships with hapū, Iwi, and Māori organisations.

Recommendation 6 - Continue to strengthen relationships with potential applicants to address equity.

Rātā Foundation should ensure there is a range of proactive and responsive supports available to inform and support potential applicants.

Collaborative partnerships

Recommendation 7- Proactively partner with organisations who are addressing digital inclusion.

Rātā Foundation should work proactively with organisations in the sector seeking to increase digital inclusion.

Recommendation 8 - Develop strategic partnerships for systemic change.

Rātā Foundation should continue to work in a collaborative way with other providers in the sector, and further develop strategic partnerships for systemic change.

Evidence and best practice

Recommendation 9 – Exercise caution when investing in pilot programmes.

Rātā Foundation should only fund academic and behavioural intervention pilots when there is exceptional evidence of need, innovation, and scale-up ability (where applicable).

Recommendation 10 - continue use of evidence and best practice.

Rātā Foundation should continue to fund behavioural and academic achievement interventions where there is need, taking an evidence and best practice approach.

Lastly, this report synthesises an array of literature of what constitutes best practice for interventions on the areas that were raised as issues by stakeholders and other areas which the Rātā Foundation funds. This includes interventions for lifting achievement rates, barriers to attendance and engagement, and digital inclusion strategies.

1. Introduction

The Rātā Foundation's purpose is to invest in communities in its regions Canterbury, Nelson, Marlborough, and the Chatham Islands, to support positive intergenerational change. This change is created by supporting people to be more involved in their local communities, supporting individuals and whānau/family in their lifelong education journeys, supporting collaboration between not-for-profits, and supporting communities and organisations to be environmentally and socially sustainable.

The Rātā Foundation has five key areas they fund to facilitate their wider purpose: Learn, Support, Connect, Participate and Sustain.

The Rātā Foundation reviews its five key funding areas every three years to ensure that they are fit for purpose. This sector scan is a review of the current issues, drivers, and trends within the education sector with relation to the Learn Funding Area.

Method

Both primary and secondary research was undertaken in this sector scan. Fifteen interviews with stakeholders in the education sector were undertaken. These stakeholders are from a variety of organisations: from early childhood education providers, the compulsory school sector, kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa, philanthropic organisations, and representatives from the Ministry of Education across Canterbury, Marlborough and Nelson. These interviews were done in a mixture of one-on-one interviews, and group interviews.

Participants were given blanket confidentiality to protect them from harm and to ensure high-quality answers. This method is consistent with the literature on undertaking qualitative research of this kind (see, for example, the American Psychological Association's principles of research ethics: Smith D., 2003). In line with the informed-consent principles underpinning this research, participants were given an opportunity to see their contributions to the report and amend them if necessary.

Secondary research for this report comes from an analysis of a wide array of peer-reviewed literature, government reports, and other academic sources.

2. The Rātā Foundation's Learn Funding Area

The Rātā Foundation's purpose is to invest in the communities of Canterbury, Nelson (including Tasman), Marlborough, and the Chatham Islands, to support positive intergenerational change. The Rātā Foundation has five key areas they fund to facilitate their wider purpose: Learn, Support, Connect, Participate and Sustain.

This report is focused on the Learn Funding Area which has a particular focus on the education of those aged younger than 25. The Rātā Foundation has this focus because of the importance of the early years in building the foundation for a child's future success as a learner and the importance of post-school learning as the pathway to participation in a skilled workforce. In turn, this leads to employment opportunities, improved earning capacity, and better individual, family/whānau and community outcomes. Furthermore, the Learn Funding Area has an additional focus on a lifelong learning approach because of the changing, and potentially unknown, future of work.

- The current priorities of the Learn Funding Area are as follows:
- Connecting families/whānau and communities to children's learning and schools
- Enabling the lifting of educational outcomes of Māori and Pasifika children, those with learning needs and those coming from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Enabling access to quality Early Childhood Education
- Enabling people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence throughout their lives particularly people who may face barriers.

The Rātā Foundation administers its funding to community organisations (including schools, and other not-for-profits) through its responsive small and large grants programmes. It also supports large capital projects through its building projects programme and community loans.

This funding can be applied for in any of the five key areas of Learn, Support, Connect, Participate and Sustain. The small grants funding stream is for applications of $20,000 or less. The large grants funding stream is for applications greater than $20,000. Small grants are for grassroots initiatives in the community, including organisational running costs, whilst large grants are for organisations that form part of the fabric of the communities and projects which provide wider community benefit.

Rātā does not fund core-curriculum delivery in schools or the resourcing and acquisition that is associated with this, amongst other requirements.

The building projects programme is for building projects which foster community connections, increase community participation, or are of regional significance. The community loans can be used to either purchase an asset, to create an asset for community use, to purchase an asset that will replace an expense or cost, or improve an asset to save costs.

In addition to the funding Rātā Foundation offers, they have opportunities for community organisations to upskill, become more connected, and innovate through mentoring programmes, workshops, networking programmes, and training events. In some cases, long-term multi-year funding agreements can be offered. They also have strategic partnerships. Current project partnerships supporting the Learn Funding Area are:

- Partnerships with University of Canterbury Better Start and CORE Education, working alongside the Ministry of Education on transitions to school from the early years sector and Year 1 of school.
- CORE Education early years sector capability building, with a particular focus on leadership development.
- Impact Lab partnership to enhance evaluation capability of the early years sector.
- Ruia partnership with Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and Ministry for Youth Development. This partnership supports rangatahi-led initiatives to achieve wellbeing and leadership in Te Ao Māori.
- Tokona te Raki - social innovation hub developing solutions to systemic inequity of outcomes for Maori in education, employment and income.
- Whitiora Centre Regional Skills Hub - to improve career pathways for Māori and Pasifika.
- Springboard Trust - Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme.

Underpinning all Rātā Foundation's funding programmes is their Māori Strategy. This strategy has been created after a period of māramatanga between the Rātā Foundation and iwi, hapū, whānau, and stakeholders across the rohe of the Rātā Foundation. This strategy includes providing increased kanohi ki te kanohi support for applicants, funding a capability-building programme to invest in human capital in the Māori community, providing cultural capability training for the staff at the Rātā Foundation, and investigating collaborative long-term partnerships.

2.1. Theory of Change and Justification for the Learn Funding Area

Education is a key component of the Rātā Foundation's goal of creating positive intergenerational change. The Rātā Foundation states:

> "Through our funding we support individuals, families/whānau to learn throughout their lives. We place importance on the great start in life provided by quality education, post school learning and the need to support people as they move through the different stages of life. We recognise learning as a pathway for individuals, families/whānau to reach their potential."

This relationship between the ability to reach the full potential of an individual and their community through educational achievement is supported by the wider literature. In regards to intergenerational mobility (the relationship between a person's outcomes and their childhood family circumstances), evidence from two New Zealand studies shows education achievement rates can considerably improve the likelihood of an individual's upward economic mobility (Gibbons, 2011).

Education achievement levels have also been found to impact an individual's physical wellbeing. Researchers from the Ministry of Education found that the higher a person's education level, in particular their literacy and numeracy skills, the better they rated their physical wellbeing (Lawes & Schagen, 2008). This was particularly true for Māori: Māori consistently scored lower than other ethnic groups on physical well-being and literacy, but if the low literacy skills are controlled for, then their physical well-being scores are on par with the wider population.

International evidence also suggests that the higher the rates of educational achievement, the higher people rank their own happiness, and that education improves their career paths, and increases their ability to create meaningful relationships (Brighouse, 2006; Layard, Clark, Cornaglia, Vernoit, & Powdthavee, 2013; Michalos, 2008).

Therefore, the Learn Funding Area and the theory of change that underpins it, its goals of increasing educational achievement, removing barriers to education, and drawing whānau/family, communities, and schools closer together, is a core part of the Rātā Foundation's goal of creating positive intergenerational social change.

2.2. The evolution of the Learn Funding Area and the education landscape

The Learn Funding Area has evolved substantially over time: data from the 2013-2014 period shows the Canterbury Community Trust and their Education Sector grants (as it was known then) had no specific funding priorities in the sector. The majority of the funding in this period went to schools in the compulsory schooling sector: with most grants relating to ICT, sports equipment (including uniforms), playground equipment and music equipment.

In 2015, a workshop was conducted with key stakeholders in the education sector comprising Ministry of Education representatives, principals, policymakers, academics, Māori medium and alternative education representatives. This workshop resulted in some core principles being generated, including a focus on strategic funding, liaison assistance, and a focus on student retention and engagement. These principles have translated into the current Learn Funding Area policy.

Since the new Learn Funding Area policy has come into effect, the education landscape has changed drastically, both legislatively and socio-culturally. Many of these changes will be addressed throughout this report, but there are two key things to touch on from the outset to assist in the framing of this report: the Education and Training Act 2020 and the impact of COVID-19.

The Education and Training Act 2020 significantly changed the education system, with the Ministry of Education describing it as the biggest change to the education system in decades (Ministry of Education, 2019). Some of these changes include broader incorporation of the Treaty of Waitangi into the governance structures in the compulsory schooling sector, new early education licensing requirements, increased Education Review Office powers (including the ability to inspect private homes that are used for early education schooling), amongst other changes (for the full list, see: Ministry of Education, 2020a). Another substantive change to the legislative education landscape is the creation of Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology - a conglomeration of the previous sixteen institutes of technology and polytechnics.

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on the education sector. This is addressed in depth throughout this report as the literature and stakeholders have indicated that it is a prominent issue. The issues range from highlighting inequalities to teaching strategies, community preparedness, and the ability for community organisations and philanthropic organisation to be responsive to new and pressing issues with relative speed.

2.3. The Learn Funding Area in relation to the Ministry of Education

The Rātā Foundation's Learn Funding Area sits broadly within the Ministry of Education's goals for the sector. The Ministry of Education's stated goal for the education sector is:

...Helping children and young people to attain their educational potential; preparing young people for participation in civic and community life and for work, and promoting resilience, determination, confidence, creative and critical thinking, good social skills and the ability to form good relationships; and helping children and young people to appreciate diversity, inclusion and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Ministry of Education, 2020b).

The Ministry of Education is actioning this goal through the Statement on National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP). The NELP is the most high-level strategic document that the Ministry of Education has, and lays out its intentions and expectations for the wider education sector. There are five expectations: learners at the centre, barrier-free access, quality teaching and leadership, future of learning and work, and world-class inclusive public education. These are summarised below:

1. **Learners at the centre. Learners with their whānau are at the centre of education:**

    a. Ensure places of learning are safe, inclusive, free from racism, discrimination, and bullying.
    b. Have high aspirations for every learner/ākonga, and support these by partnering with their whānau and communities to design and deliver education that responds to their needs, and sustains their identities, languages and cultures.

2. **Barrier-free access. Great education opportunities and outcomes are within reach for every learner:**
    a. Reduce barriers to education for all, including for Māori and Pasifika learners/ākonga, disabled learners/ākonga and those with learning support needs.
    b. Ensure every learner/ākonga gains sound foundation skills, including language, literacy and numeracy.

3. **Quality teaching and leadership. Quality teaching and leadership make the difference for learners and their whānau:**
    a. Meaningfully incorporate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the everyday life of the place of learning.
    b. Develop staff to strengthen teaching, leadership and learner support capability across the education workforce.

4. **Future of learning and work. Learning that is relevant to the lives of New Zealanders today and throughout their lives:**
    a. Collaborate with industries and employers to ensure learners/ākonga have the skills, knowledge and pathways to succeed in work.

5. **World-class inclusive public education. New Zealand education is trusted and sustainable:**
    a. Enhance the contribution of research and Mātauranga Māori in addressing local and global challenges (for Tertiary Education Services only).

The Rātā Foundation's Learn Funding Area matches closely with the Ministry of Education's NELP guidelines. This is illustrated in Table One, below, which shows that every Learn priority matches with at least one of the NELP priorities.

Table 1. Rātā Funding Priorities compared to NELP Priorities

Rātā Funding Priorities	NELP Priorities				
	Learners at the centre	Barrier-free access	Quality teaching and leadership	Future of learning and work.	World-class inclusive public education
Connecting families/whānau and communities to children's learning and schools					
Enabling the lifting of educational outcomes of Māori and Pasifika children, those with learning needs and those coming from low socio-economic backgrounds					
Enabling access to quality Early Childhood Education					
Enabling people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence throughout their lives particularly people who may face barriers					

 : matches

 : does not match

3. Education Issues, Drivers, and Trends

Through an analysis of the literature and interviews with stakeholders, a range of issues and trends within the sector emerged. These varied from income inequality affecting the performance of students, lack of resources, to the impact that COVID-19 has had on different stakeholders. The results of this analysis are presented in two sections: first at a broad national level, then at a sector level. This section serves as a guide for the Rātā Foundation as to what is happening across the education sector.

There is a range of key educational issues, drivers, and trends that Rātā should be aware of. Through analysis of the literature and interviews with stakeholders, seven key areas of interest have been identified. These are: inequality, the digital divide, mental health, COVID-19, achievement rates and curriculum issues, resourcing, and attendance and engagement. It is important to note that whilst these were the themes that stood out, they cannot be considered as standalone issues, but rather are multifaceted and inextricably linked.

3.1. Inequality

The literature and the interviews with stakeholders showed that inequality runs deep through the education system. This not just income inequality, but also inequalities that exist for Māori and Pasifika students.

Income inequality consistently rates as one of the biggest issues in the education sector, garnering substantial media and non-governmental organisation attention. For example, a 2018 UNICEF report found that the New Zealand education system was one of the most unequal in the developed world, with significant socio-economic barriers to educational achievement (Chzhen, Gromada, Rees, Cuesta, & Bruckauf, 2018). Some of these barriers that are created by income inequality include the relationship between high deprivation households and high-stress home environments, an inability to access high-quality expensive early childhood education, and the lack of parent involvement in education because of workloads. The impact of income inequality on the education of young people has been widely noted in the New Zealand context, including its relationship with attendance, engagement, and achievement rates (Thrupp, 2008; Wylie, 2013).

The link between income inequality and poor educational outputs has been widely documented in academic studies, both domestic and international. In many instances, income inequality can lead to learning deficits, or leave students lagging behind wealthier families (BERL, 2020; Thorson & Gearhart, 2018). This is echoed in other literature, with most suggesting that early childhood investment is the best way to minimise the impact that income inequality has on learning achievement (Garcia & Weiss, 2017).

Evidence shows links between income inequality and the other issues discussed throughout this review: for example, there are links between income inequality and mental health (Patel, et al., 2018), between income inequality and attendance and engagement (Klein, Sosu, & Dare, 2020), and as previously discussed, between income inequality and learning achievement rates.

The Post-Primary Teachers Association has published papers that link income inequality to the poorer educational outcomes that occur for many students in Aotearoa New Zealand (Gordon, 2013), which is echoed by statements made by NZEI (see: New Zealand Educational Institute, 2018).

Many stakeholders interviewed for this report mentioned their concern about the growing gap of haves and have-nots and its impact on educational outcomes. Stakeholders said that good learning could not occur when students were going to school hungry or without shoes or uniform.

Stakeholders also expressed concern about the link between income and health inequality, and the subsequent impacts it has on education in their respective areas. For example, two stakeholders expressed concern about health disparities, notably dental health. One stakeholder in the early childhood education sector identified that oral health is becoming an increasing issue. Another stakeholder commented on the difficulties rural students accessing dental care and the significant time off school required to travel long distances to access proper care.

For Māori students, there are additional structural barriers that exist alongside the inequalities discussed above. For example, the practice of streaming students by perceived level of academic ability has a detrimental impact on young Māori students education. Research conducted in 2019 showed that bias by educators often led to Māori students being streamed down into classes below their ability (BERL, 2019). This has led to a lower number of Māori graduating with NCEA, which in turn has led to a lower number of Māori students getting tertiary level qualifications, high-paying jobs, and contributes to the 20% income gap between Māori and non-Māori (BERL, 2019). These structural inequalities have only been made worse by COVID-19, which is explored later in this report.

One stakeholder praised the work that Ngāi Tahu Māori Futures Academy/Tokona te Raki do, such as contributing to the above BERL research. They said this research has informed a lot of the discussion that they are having about educational issues, particularly around the streaming of Māori and Pasifika students. Another stakeholder said that the Canterbury earthquakes had presented an opportunity through the Grow Waitaha partnership for Ngāi Tahu to input more heavily in the education rebuild, and to secure more resources to do so. This has allowed them to act more strategically within the sector, through Mātauraka Mahaanui. This network enables Mātauraka Mahaanui mana whenua facilitators to advise on how local Māori stories and

knowledge are woven into cultural narratives, physical spaces and curriculum content for education providers (Mātauraka Mahaanui, 2020).

It was also noted by a stakeholder for Ngāi Tahu that their demographical makeup means there will be an increasing number of Ngāi Tahu students going through the education system in the upcoming years, and the education system needs to respond to that. The stakeholder suggests that this increased responsiveness can be met by increased professional development for staff that focuses on te ao Māori and te reo Māori.

Difficulties in finding adequately trained teachers for kura kaupapa Māori, kōhanga reo, and other Māori-medium provision within the Canterbury region was identified by stakeholders as an issue. This issue stems from the limited number of bilingual education teacher training programmes available nationally, and the small numbers of students who pass through them making them financially difficult to run without subsidies. The lack of property available for education sites for Māori-medium providers to expand and grow their roll was identified by multiple stakeholders.

3.2. The Digital Divide

The digital divide is "..the gap between those who have the infrastructure, resources and skills to participate fully in the digital era and those who do not. This may be due to differences in socioeconomic status, gender, life stage, urban and rural living, and geographical remoteness. The digital divide has an impact on how people access and use information, and experience social, economic and educational equality" (Day, 2018, p. 1). The evidence of the digital divide in New Zealand is stark: the 2018 census found that 211,722 households did not have regular access to the internet, and there were over 25,000 devices loaned to students during the COVID-19 lockdowns (Department of Internal Affairs, 2019a; Ministry of Education, 2020d).

The Chatham Islands experience a unique set of conditions that make them a community that experience the digital divide to a degree that is almost unseen around the rest of the country. The geographic isolation of the Chatham Islands from the rest of New Zealand, the spatial isolation of the population on the islands, the high costs of purchasing internet, and limited/unreliable reception illustrates the barriers that those who live on the Chatham Islands face in relation to the digital divide (Day, 2018). However, Day's (2018) research also showed that these factors that contribute to the digital divide have also contributed to their digital resiliency and that the residents have developed their own skill sets, largely independent of any formal ICT training.

The digital divide was raised by many stakeholders as being made more apparent because of COVID-19 and also forcing those in the education space to reconsider the way they think about digital technologies as an education medium. For example, one stakeholder said that COVID-19 showed that it was not necessarily just the lower-income, Pasifika, or Māori families that did not

have sufficient access to digital technologies, but also some high-income families. This may not necessarily be due to a lack of resources, but because of a lack of understanding of the importance of these technologies in the education process.

In the wake of COVID-19, discussions of the digital divide posing a barrier to equitable access and engagement within the education sector have become even more urgent. Whilst there are government-initiated solutions to the problem, such as the supplying of devices to students during the lockdown, many still believe there is a role for philanthropic organisations to play in closing the gap between the haves and have nots. This is an area where philanthropic organisations could potentially invest in buying devices for those who would otherwise not have access, but this may not be consistent with the value for money principle that influences philanthropic grant making.

Internationally, there has been a significant push by organisations within the philanthropic sector to bridge the digital divide in their respective countries because of COVID-19. In the United Kingdom, Nominet launched its Reboot programme which acquired 130,000 devices that were destined for the landfill and distributed them to students who would not ordinarily have access to such devices (Amar, 2020). In the United States, there were buses sent to neighbourhoods that were fitted with WIFI functionality, so students in the neighbourhood could access the internet (Francies, 2020). However, most philanthropic organisations have acknowledged that these sorts of emergency responses are not financially sustainable, and instead are focusing on digital inclusion.

Digital inclusion moves beyond just supplying devices and WIFI by developing skills for students (and teachers) to ensure they have the necessary competencies for a more digital world. Successful interventions aimed at digital inclusion focus on the four elements of digital inclusion: motivation (desire to access digital technologies, and knowledge of how they work), access, skills, and trust (Department of Internal Affairs, 2019a). Beyond that, there is little literature or evidence on interventions aimed at developing digital inclusion skills, which the Department of Internal Affairs has noted as a significant barrier to new initiatives (Department of Internal Affairs, 2019b). In Section Five of this report, what literature exists on what constitutes a successful program to target digital inclusion is discussed.

3.3. Mental Health

Mental health is often seen as one of the biggest issues in the education sector and has received considerable coverage. New Zealand has found itself in the middle of a mental health crisis: high rates of depression and anxiety have been reported, and most metrics indicate that the mental health system is overwhelmed and underfunded (Flett, Lucas, Kingstone, & Stevenson, 2020; Ministry of Health, 2021).

This has been documented in international reports of the New Zealand education system. One UNICEF report found that out of 38 developed countries, New Zealand is ranked 35th for mental health, physical health, and academic skills of children. Whilst New Zealand ranks highly when only measuring academic skills (23rd), New Zealand ranked 33rd in physical health, and 38th (last) in the mental health of school-aged children (Gromada, Rees, & Chzhen, 2020).

The link between poor mental health and negative educational achievement has been well established. A Swedish study found that those in secondary school who experience depression were less likely to complete their formal education, and if they did, they got worse grades when compared to their peers who did not experience depression (Brannlund, Strandh, & Nilsson, 2017). These results have been replicated in New Zealand, where one study found there are strong links between mental health and negative academic performance (Johns, 2017).

The impact of mental health on the education system was observed by stakeholders in the early childhood, primary, secondary, and alternative education sectors. One stakeholder in the secondary school sector noted that they are finding a significant and increasing number of students experiencing mental health problems, whilst another in the early childhood field noted that it was not just their students suffering from poor mental health, but their parents and staff too. One stakeholder noted that many of their students felt a level of COVID-19-related anxiety.

Within Canterbury, there are unique mental health needs considering the trauma experienced with Canterbury Earthquake Sequence, the Kaikōura earthquake and the 15 March Terror Attacks. The effects these have had on children, their whānau/families, and the wider community have been widely reported on (for example Freeman, Nairn, & Gollop, 2015; Kerdemelidis & Reid, 2019). These events have had a significant impact on the wider education sector from increased mental health needs (Shirlaw, 2014) and lower NCEA achievement rates (Connolly, 2013). The impact is still being felt today, largely through an increased number of young people presenting with complex mental health needs (Dobson, 2017). Young people within the Kaikōura area are showing similar complex mental health needs and associated trauma-related injuries because of the 2016 earthquake (Gluckman, 2016).

The stakeholders interviewed in this project agreed with the literature discussed above and discussed specific experiences or challenges such as additional mental health needs for students (and their families) of all ages in the region, which have manifested in learning and behavioural challenges. Some stakeholders noted that children who were born post-quake are presenting with additional difficulties and may have received less parental attention or involvement due to the parents' challenges with finances, property or similar.

3.4. COVID-19

COVID-19 has significantly impacted the education landscape. There is limited literature on this because of the process that academic literature takes in the peer-review process and the delay in reporting some of the effects. This sub-section of the report is uniquely stakeholder-led as the participants are reporting what they saw during the lockdowns and subsequent period after.

There were a variety of responses from stakeholders about the impact that COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, on the education sector. Most stakeholders interviewed recognised that COVID-19 has drastically impacted the education sector, but that there are both positive and negative impacts.

Stakeholders said that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the mental health of their students, whilst another noted that COVID-19 has increased or exacerbated income inequality in their communities. One stakeholder in the early childhood education sector noted that attendance rates had decreased since the Level Four lockdown. Others noted the high number of students and families who did not have adequate internet or personal computers. Ultimately, COVID-19 appears to have made the education sector more unequal (see, for example, Franks' (2020) dialogue with stakeholders in the sector).

Whilst many stakeholders expressed concern about the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the education sector, one stakeholder stated that COVID-19 has led to an increase in connectivity between schools, students, and their communities. Another stakeholder in the secondary education sector said that COVID-19 has changed the national conversation around the links between education and employment. They believe that before the pandemic, immigration was often seen as a stopgap for labour shortages in the economy, but now COVID-19 has forced those in the education sector to think about the role of education in creating a pipeline of workers for industries that have or will have labour shortages.

One stakeholder from the Ministry of Education believed that the Canterbury region had received more support, proportionally, than other main centres during COVID-19. This was particularly important after all of the challenges of the past ten years. One noted that when other regions have a firm base that they can rely on if a crisis occurs. However, Canterbury's has been eroded with every crisis and therefore needs more support when one happens.

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Māori students across the board. For example, in the last school term of 2020 attendance rates for Māori students, and students in Māori medium education, had not returned to pre-pandemic levels (Webber, 2020). At a tertiary level, Māori university students experienced significant levels of stress because of COVID-19, suffered

financial hardship and were more anxious about the future (Akuhata-Huntington, 2020; James, 2020).

COVID-19 has also significantly impacted many of the career pathways that many young Māori pursue. For example, "entry level jobs in sectors severely impacted by COVID-19 such as retail, accommodation and forestry, are unlikely to be available for rangatahi entering the job market," and "73% of rangatahi workers working in affected industries will be negatively affected by the response to COVID-19" (Schulze & Hurren, 2020, p. 3). This impact on prospective and existing career pathways highlights the need for adaptive, engaging, life-long learning systems so Māori can reach their full potential (Tokona te Raki, 2020).

The role of philanthropy has also changed in the wake of COVID-19. Whilst the role of philanthropy in the education sector will be addressed in the subsequent sections of this report, there are some links that fit more closely into the COVID-19 category. One stakeholder said that COVID-19 had made the philanthropic sector and the government work more closely, as demonstrated by the Memorandum of Understanding between the government and Philanthropy New Zealand.

COVID-19 has also caused some stakeholders to reflect on their funding arrangements with philanthropic organisations. One stakeholder raised the role that philanthropy may have in assisting to bridge the digital divide made evident by COVID-19. On this note, the OECD published a paper in 2020 which noted that students and their families and teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand were better prepared to move to online learning and had better support from families and the government than many OECD counterparts (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).

COVID-19 led to some funding avenues being paused. Stakeholders suggested partnerships that are more long-term and sustainable are a priority for them, as some current funding arrangements meant that organisations have an inability to plan for the long-term. For example, grants from Class 4 gaming trusts may reduce over time, especially as more local governments are reducing the number of electronic gaming sites. As a result, organisations may spend a considerable amount of time applying for future funding instead of their core business of educating young people.

Another stakeholder noted that the border closures have caused financial pressure for some schools which have traditionally had large international student programmes, meaning there is an increasing exploration of other avenues such as philanthropic funding to assist them financially while this situation persists. The Rātā Foundation might see more grant applications from secondary schools being submitted, as they seek more funding for extracurricular activities ordinarily subsidised by the fees from the international students, especially as the Urgent Response Fund (which has been supplementing some of these deficits) becomes depleted.

3.5. Achievement Rates and Curriculum Issues

The decrease in educational achievement of New Zealand students has been widely documented over the past four years (Redmond & Moir, 2017; Mitchell, 2018; RNZ, 2019; Gerritsen, 2020). Whilst New Zealand still ranks higher than comparable countries, and the Ministry of Education has said that this decline is not statistically significant, this is still an important issue for many in the sector (Nichols, 2019; Redmond & Moir, 2017).

The literature suggests that whilst there has been a decrease in educational achievements across the board, there has been a greater impact on Māori and Pasifika learners, and those in lower socioeconomic environments (BERL, 2019; Berryman, Kerr, Macfarlane, Penetito, & Smith, 2016; Bolton, 2018). For example, Bolton (2018, p. 7) writes that "..the results for Māori and Pasifika students fall among the lowest performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. There are also gaps in the National Certificate of Educational Attainment (NCEA) levels attained by Māori and Pasifika learners, as well as a lower rate of these students meeting National Standards." The 2019 BERL report states that systemic biases in the education system and structural racism in society contribute to disparity in NCEA achievement in Māori and non-Māori students. Māori students are also more likely to leave school with no qualifications than non-Māori, with approximately one fifth of Māori students leaving school with no qualifications (Green and Schulze 2019).

However, stakeholders interviewed for this report from the Māori education sector said that they felt that they were bucking these trends by focusing on discovery learning, incorporating kaupapa Māori values into their school system, and having a holistic focus on whānau and relationship building.

There is no clear cause or solution to this falling rate across the sector. Some experts believe that it being caused by a systems-wide failure: from a lack of Ministry of Education support to schools, a lack of funding, and socio-economic conditions (Thorson & Gearhart, 2018). It is important to note that in February 2021, the Ministry of Education enlisted the Royal Society of New Zealand to investigate how this backslide of educational achievement rates can be stopped.

In discussions with stakeholders, they proposed several reasons behind the falling achievement rates, and the apparent inability to stop the backslide. For example, one stakeholder interviewed said that it was the internal Ministry of Education bureaucracy that was frustrating attempts to improve literacy and numeracy. However, the Education Review Office has said that the teaching method used can impact achievement rates, but the same report detailed how in some cases the teaching method also produced a significant gap in achievement rates (Education Review Office, 2017). Other stakeholders had hoped the repeal of National Standards in 2017 would stop the downward trend. However, this has not eventuated.

A different stakeholder said that one component of the falling achievement rate could be explained by the national curriculum, both in primary and secondary schools. There was some concern expressed that the curriculum does not adequately prioritise STEM subjects, indigenous values, and is not culturally responsive. One stakeholder said that there has been some success in the professional development of teachers to be more culturally responsive and that it is having an impact on their ability to lift achievement.

Another stakeholder analogised the national curriculum as two trains barrelling down the tracks towards each other: one train is an open, free, model, wanting more freedom, and the other is a more prescriptive model, wanting more detailed specifics. This stakeholder said that they will have to meet sometime, and there will be changes to the curriculum as a result. This same stakeholder suggested that it would need a coalition of private businesses, unions, teachers' councils, and philanthropic organisations to come together and propose solutions to the under-performance of students in core curriculum areas.

The integration of the curriculum into employability standards was another issue raised by stakeholders. One said that there was not enough focus on workplace skills within the curriculum, and another said that the year thirteen curriculum and learning environment should more closely mirror the university or workplace structure.

One stakeholder said that it is likely there will be greater integration of kaupapa Māori and te reo Māori into the wider curriculum. This is evidenced, in part, by the integration of New Zealand history into the history NCEA curriculum (Ball, 2020). Another hoped that there would be more Māori voices in the development of the education sector, in particular, a renewed focus on partnership between Māori and the Crown. A curriculum where te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā can co-exist.

3.6. Attendance and Engagement

Attendance and engagement of students is another key issue in the sector, as identified by both the Ministry of Education and stakeholders. Data from the Ministry of Education shows that across the compulsory school sector regular attendance has been decreasing since 2011. In 2020, regular attendance (which is described as the proportion of students who go to school at least 90 per cent of the time) was sitting at 63.5% (Ministry of Education, 2020e). The rate of regular attendance was significantly lower for those in decile one (42.4%), decile two (46.8%) and decile three (54.4%), and for Māori and Pasifika students (Ministry of Education, 2020e). The areas that the Rātā Foundation funds have regular attendance rates that are largely in line with national trends, with Nelson at 63.7% regular attendance and Marlborough at 63.3%, but the regular attendance rate for Canterbury is above the national average at 68.4%. In the early childhood

education sector, the amount of young people enrolled in early childhood education centres is 93-96.6% in New Zealand, compared to 100% enrolment for comparable countries (Gromada, Rees, & Chzhen, 2020).

Regular attendance is an important marker for academic success: research shows that every half-day missed represents a consistent reduction in the number of NCEA credits achieved (Ministry of Education, 2020e). Further, those that regularly do not attend school experience worse outcomes in regards to "schoolwork-related anxiety, sense of belonging, bullying, racism and motivation" (Ibid). International evidence suggests that regular non-attendance can have significant consequences for young people later in life: these include increased violence, aggression, a higher rate of aggressive and non-aggressive crime, and higher unemployment (Rocque, Jennings, Piquero, Ozkan, & Farrington, 2017).

The evidence on drivers of absenteeism suggests that programmes that are successful at reducing rates of absenteeism will have a dual focus: both on the families and on the individual.

To stop the falling achievement rates, discussed earlier in this report, one stakeholder said that there needed to be a bigger focus on attendance and engagement. Similarly, another stakeholder noted that there is no single cause of non-attendance, and it is a combination of many of the other areas discussed above. They mention many factors which influence the attendance rate of an individual student: bullying, lack of parental interest in education, income inequality, domestic violence - "Kids don't like going to school if they have a black eye, bruises, or a ratty old uniform because mum can't buy a new one. They won't go to school if they don't have shoes on." Therefore, when considering attendance and engagement issues, it is important to consider the potential that they are by-products of other issues in this report, and in turn makes worse other issues.

3.7. Resourcing

Resourcing of the education sector has been a perennial problem, with principals' organisations (Te Tai Tokerau Principals Association, 2021), unions (New Zealand Educational Institute, 2021), and political parties (Collins, 2020) all claiming that the sector is under-resourced. This perceived lack of resourcing encompasses a vast array of issues: the wages of teaching and support staff, insufficient training of teachers and principals, an inability to hire experienced teachers, a lack of suitable buildings, and insufficient support for students with learning support needs.

The lack of resources to enable counselling in-school was identified by one stakeholder as an issue in the primary sector. There is a great need, as evidenced in the above sections, for support for students who experience anxiety, depression, or other associated mental illnesses. This

stakeholder identified the need for counselling as the most pressing resource that they need to address such issues.

Within the Māori-medium sphere, all stakeholders interviewed expressed a lack of resourcing and felt that they were always at the bottom of the list for funding. This was particularly felt in the context that they saw other English-medium organisations obtaining funding, but they were not able to achieve similar levels of funding. This, some stakeholders noted, was not in the spirit of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. One stakeholder in the kura kaupapa said that it was particularly difficult to find trained staff who can teach specialist curriculum subjects in te reo Māori.

3.8. Early Childhood Education

The early childhood education sector faces a range of issues and drivers, including the complex needs of children, funding shortfalls, and changes in parental attitudes toward early childhood education.

The quality of early childhood education, and the early intervention in the academic performance of young children, is widely recognised as one of the best ways to lift academic performance across the board (Bakken, Brown, & Downing, 2017; Smith, 2014). These interventions in early childhood education can reduce education disparities across socio-economic and ethnic lines (Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2009).

Globally, there is a mixed data consensus about the increase in the prevalence of complex needs in the early childhood education system. This mixed consensus is born out of a lack of studies conducted with young people who have mental illnesses/complex needs, and what studies do exist do not take a longitudinal approach so there is an inability to make comparisons over time. In New Zealand, the only contemporary research on the prevalence of complex mental health needs in under five-year-olds estimated the number as being between 16-18% (Ministry of Health, 2011). One stakeholder on the ground said that in their experience, the number of children and their parents/guardians that are presenting to early childhood centres with complex needs and challenging behaviours is increasing. They also said that they are increasingly dealing with more complex family make-ups and home situations.

Stakeholders also said that they feel early childhood education services, kōhanga reo and playcentres do not get as much funding as the compulsory-schooling sector, despite the importance of early childhood education being widely recognised. They said that they cannot afford their daily expenses, let alone adequately upskill their volunteers, which is important for volunteer-based services. Some stakeholders cited deficits for day-to-day expenses and that they are increasingly dependent on grants to fund their training. As their overall funding from the

government is dependent on how many of their volunteers are qualified for volunteer-based services, this is a self-perpetuating cycle.

The different funding arrangements between early childhood education providers, kōhanga reo, and play centres, has presented additional difficulties to those within the play centre sector. Many early childhood education providers provide free services to children and families. However, play centres require an in kind cost of time from parents/caregivers, which may have contributed to the decrease in numbers attending. This is despite the role of play being so fundamental to the development of young people (Ginsburg, 2007), and the role that play centres have in engaging parents in children's learning and in building social capital for parents (Powell, Cullen, Adams, Duncan, & Marshall, 2005).

Some stakeholders who work in the kōhanga reo sector said that the biggest issue they face is the significant historical and contemporary lack of funding. The historical basis of these claims is illustrated by the 2013 Waitangi Tribunal report that found that kōhanga reo had "suffered significant prejudice" from the Crown in their funding and policy decisions, which has impacted on a decrease in numbers of students and the financial hardship of the kōhanga reo, which forced many to close (Waitangi Tribunal, 2013, p. xvii). In the more contemporary context, the stakeholders said that funding does not match other early childhood services, and many of their staff are still paid on the minimum wage. An increase in funding would allow kōhanga to take on more staff, and pay them more. The flow-on effect would be more employment opportunities for whānau who are involved within the kōhanga.

These stakeholders also said that many of the buildings for the kōhanga reo needed substantial investment, not just to increase the quality of the buildings, but so that they can increase their capacity. There are considerable wait times to enrol in some kōhanga reo, so an increase in funding for staff and property would allow this wait time to be removed and assist in the wider goal of te reo and tikanga Māori revitalisation. In addition to the refurbished buildings these stakeholders identified as a need, they said that many of their outdoor play areas were sub-standard, and they need significant investment to bring them up scratch. The stakeholders emphasise both the role of play in education and developing motor skills through exercise and activities.

In terms of future trends within the more broad early childhood education sector, one stakeholder identified three different trends: (1) Whilst some in the early childhood education sector have known the importance of play as a learning medium, this stakeholder suggested that this will be adopted more widely by education providers, (2) the increasing competition by early childhood providers for students because of the financial incentive means that there is little room for strategic collaboration, and (3) teaching climate change and climate/nature responsibility was an increasing part of the early childhood education remit. This stakeholder was liaising with specialists in the

sector to come in and teach the young people about climate change, and how to be responsible eco-citizens.

Another noted that they are seeing more parents keep their children at home until they reach a compulsory-school age, then sending them to school. This stakeholder said that this had contributed to a decreasing roll, and means that when the child reaches school age they may find it more difficult to adjust to the structured environment of a school/kura. One reason offered is that post-quake, and now post-lockdown, there was a stronger desire from parents to spend more time with their children within the home context.

Within the kindergarten sector, there is a collective concern that the kindergartens may be squeezed out of the early childhood education market as private providers continue to grow, as costs to run kindergartens increases, and as funding remains static/reduces over time (Collins, 2017). The Child Poverty Action Group notes that there has been a general decrease in the numbers of free kindergartens, and this means that accessing quality early childhood education for low-income families is increasingly more difficult (Neuwelt-Kearns & Ritchie, 2020).

Many stakeholders within the early childhood education sector commented on how crowded the sector was, with one noting the increasing competition by early childhood providers for students because of the financial incentive means that there is little room for strategic collaboration. Strengthening the Early Years Sector report also found that collaboration was difficult for the sector because of costs and workloads (Leonard, et al., 2019).

Over the past forty years, there has been a national trend in fewer volunteers within the play centre sector as the economy has developed more towards having both parents in full-time employment. Thus, the numbers of children and parents in play centres has steadily decreased. However, one stakeholder observed that in Canterbury a successful campaign three years ago led to a 16% increase in numbers. Despite this, the play centres in Canterbury and the South Island more broadly face different challenges than their North Island, more urban, counterparts. This low density of some of the regions means that it is harder to make some of the play centres sustainable, compared to other early childhood education providers.

Stakeholders in these areas expressed numerous concerns/areas of potential engagement in their Nelson and Marlborough rohe. Stakeholders noted attendance at early childhood education centres has decreased post-COVID-19. One stakeholder said that there is also a struggle to find culturally appropriate environments within early childhood centres, particularly for Māori, Pasifika, and students from various ethnic minorities.

3.9. Transition to School

Regarding the transition element of the sector, there are reports that primary schools and the wider education system, in general, is embracing the concept of play as a standard practice of learning, which has assisted in successful transitions (Blaikie & Arthur, 2019). Further, some in the field see an increase in whānau and family joining the young person in their transition between early childhood education and primary school, which is good for the wider education systems (Ibid).

One of the stakeholders interviewed for this report said that there could be a better alignment between the curriculum of the early childhood education sector and the primary school sector.

Another stakeholder said that there was a feeling amongst those in the early childhood sector that those in the compulsory sector did not understand what happens in their sector, and that this negatively feeds into the transition process for new-entrance students.

Compulsory Schooling

The Tomorrow's Schools Review captures many of the issues within the compulsory school sector. The below list is a summary of the eight issues, taken from the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce's (2019) summary of issues:

1. The Board of Trustees self-governing model is not working consistently well across the country
2. The nature, type, provision, and accessibility of meaningful schooling for all New Zealanders is inadequate, and is characterised by (amongst other things), the poor provision for Kaupapa Māori schooling and the inefficient management of the network of schooling in an area
3. Unhealthy competition between schools has significantly increased as a result of the self-governing school model. It has also impacted on the ability of some students and whānau to exercise choice
4. Students with learning support requirements should have the same access to schooling as other students and it is clear that currently they do not
5. The quality of teaching is the major 'in school' influence on student success but our teacher workforce strategies lack the necessary support, coherence and coordination
6. Leadership is central to school improvement and yet we have few formal and planned structures to develop and sustain school leaders
7. The overall resourcing for the compulsory schooling sector is currently inadequate to meet the needs of many learners/ ākonga and those who work in it
8. A number of significant structural issues and policy settings make it difficult for the agencies to be as effective as they might be.

The 2018 New Zealand Council of Educational Research Secondary School Report found that from a principal and Board of Trustees perspective, the biggest concerns were finding adequately skilled teachers and providing mental health and emotional support for the students (Bonne & MacDonald, 2019).

Fatigue was described as a pressing issue within the primary school sector. One stakeholder said there were a variety of behavioural issues within the schools, and there was a lack of support from external agencies and from the Ministry of Education. The stakeholder said that it was not just a lack of resources from outside organisations, but also a lack of access to professionals who are more equipped at dealing with children's concerns and problems, such as Oranga Tamariki and Ministry of Health.

Within the secondary school sector, the issues identified earlier in the report were reinforced, such as mental health, inequality, the impact of COVID-19. However, one stakeholder also thought that there could be a change in how learning is done for year thirteens in the light of our learnings post COVID-19. COVID-19 showed that a more flexible approach to learning can occur, and this could be continued so that secondary education more closely aligns with the tertiary sector and modern workplaces.

3.10. Transition to Work – Careers Advice

The need for better access to careers advice was mentioned by many stakeholders, and the literature supports the important role this plays in facilitating a successful transition between high school and the next stage of students' life, be it a trade, university, or an apprenticeship (Elkin & Sutton, 2000; Haynes, McCrone, & Wade, 2013).

In 2015, the Ministry of Education reported to the Minister of Education and to Cabinet that careers advice in New Zealand was not meeting its full potential, as information was often fragmented, the website was inaccessible, and face-to-face advice has been devolved to local schools and tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education, 2015). Since then, the website has had considerable improvements, but there is still a devolved structure of careers advice which means that coverage could be patchy. There are limited contemporary studies within the New Zealand context or otherwise that are aimed explicitly at young people receiving careers advice. However, literature suggests interpersonal careers advice is most effective.

There is potential for intervention within the secondary school sector around careers advice. A stakeholder said that a significant number of students never came into contact with a career's adviser, which they believed led to the disconnect between school-leavers and careers or higher education. This could be one way of potentially reducing the number of young people who fall into NEET category.

Another stakeholder identified the role that careers advisers play in educational and career outcomes for Māori. Traditionally, many Māori are given careers advice to become teachers, or go into arts or sports, but yet there has been no pipeline generated for teachers in the kura kaupapa sector. This stakeholder believed that this lack of advice creates systemic bias as minority students may select subjects that do not have a pathway to their preferred careers. There was a suggestion that careers advice should start earlier, in year seven and year eight, before they have to make the big decisions about what subjects they will have to take at the NCEA level. This is supported by research in this field (Schulze & Hurren, 2020).

3.11. Alternative Education

There is little recent published literature to draw upon to inform this report's view on future issues, drivers, or trends. For example, the two most comprehensive reports on the sector are from 2001 and 2011, and much of the sector has changed since then. The Ministry of Education reports that the number of primary and secondary-aged school children in alternative education peaked at 1,500 young people in 2011 (up from 442 in 2000) and in 2020 the number was at 1,249 (Ministry of Education, 2020c).

One of the stakeholders suggested that the funding currently invested in alternative education could instead be used to invest in programmes and support delivered within mainstream schools, so that students can continue to attend and be engaged with their enrolling schools rather than move into other alternative models. Another stakeholder said that whilst there is a focus on alternative education in central Nelson there are long wait times and not great educational outcomes for many students in the sector.

3.12. Not in Education, Employment, or Training - NEET

Nationally, the 2021 Salvation Army State of the Nation report has estimated that 19.4% of all Māori young people (15-24) are NEET, whilst 11% of non-Māori are NEET (Barber, Tanielu, & Ika, 2021, p. 84). This is the highest rate since 2012. The areas that the Rātā Foundation funds have slightly slower than the national average of young people in the NEET category: data from the last quarter of 2020 showed that 10.2% and 9.5% of young people in the Canterbury/Nelson and Marlborough regions, respectively, were in the NEET category (Stats NZ, 2021).

The Maxim Institute 2020's research on NEETS in New Zealand suggests that if the economic fallout of COVID-19 is similar to the Global Financial Crisis, we can expect to see a substantial increase in the number of young people in the NEET category (Light, 2020). The Global Financial Crisis also resulted in a disproportionate number of Pasifika and Māori young people in this category, which current data suggests is occurring because of COVID-19 (Light, 2020). Whilst

current economic indicators point towards a rapid recovery after the level four lockdown, it is likely that young people will not benefit from this, and opportunities will be slow to return (Light, 2020).

COVID-19 may present an opportunity for the government, the education sector, and the philanthropic sector to reconsider the Māori pathways to education, employment, and training. Whilst historically many Māori were trained and expected to enter into the blue-collar workforce, some believe that there is an "opportunity to change the narrative to 'see' the opportunities for our rangatahi and shift our mind-set and approach to support them to be the future leaders we know they are" (Tarena, as cited in Schulze & Hurren, 2020, p. 7).

A stakeholder said that COVID-19 has impacted NEETs in the Canterbury region and that they have seen an increase in the number of young people in this category. The stakeholder also said that the isolation of Kaikōura makes it especially hard for NEETs to access social services which might enable them to enter into employment, education, or training.

One stakeholder said while most of the education system operates vertically (i.e., the student goes from early childhood, then to primary, then secondary, then tertiary/skills education), there has been an attempt recently to treat the student journey more horizontally. One example that the stakeholder gives is the building academy located at Massey High School in Tamaki Makaurau. The students learn carpentry, building, and trade skills by building houses on-site that Kāinga Ora then move offsite for public housing (Kāinga Ora, 2020).

The stakeholder says that these kinds of programmes are more intensive for students (both in terms of learning and engagement) than Gateway, as they are school-based and have the advantages of the wrap-around services that schools can offer. By getting potential school-leavers into this kind of training, the stakeholder thinks that they are less likely to enter into the NEET category. The stakeholder said that they are hopeful that they will be able to offer Level Four qualifications through these programmes.

The evidence around what works for NEETS suggests programmes taking a holistic approach, are community-based and community-led, involve the family, and prepare young people for the future of work with in-class and in-workplace skill-building are most successful.

3.13. Stakeholder Views on the Role of Philanthropy in the Education

In 2017, the charitable education sector in New Zealand is the largest of any of the charitable sectors (such as arts, culture, health, etc.) in terms of income, assets, and employees (McLeod, 2017, p. 28). This has resulted in a charitable sector where there are many competing views and perspectives on what philanthropy should and should not do. When asked what role the stakeholders think philanthropy has, or should have in the education sector, how it is changing, and where they perceive the gaps to be they gave a variety of responses: competing views on pilot programmes, the importance of a broader evidence base to inform future funding by philanthropic organisations, concerns of an overcrowded provider field, and the relationship between government and philanthropic organisations were mentioned as key issues.

One stakeholder believed that philanthropy should allow innovation to occur: "to support start-up concepts, boutique things, that maybe do not fit within current Ministry of Education funding guidelines." There was some frustration, however, that where philanthropy funds pilot studies, these are often not picked up for central government funding. While pilots are often seen as a magic bullet, but through the scale-up up process by the Ministry of Education, they lose their essence and may no longer be as effective as their pilots. Furthermore, one stakeholder mentioned that pilots for Māori education are often under-funded, over-scrutinised, and over-evaluated.

The literature on the funding of the pilot projects suggests that whilst pilot programmes may play an important part in the charitable process, there is a "graveyard" of pilot programmes across the charitable sector that were never scaled up (Spicer, et al., 2018). The failure to scale up pilots is particularly problematic when communities buy into them or receive the benefits of them, and then they are suddenly discontinued because the funding dries up (Barrett, 2019). There does not appear to be any evidence of the scale-up rate of education pilots in New Zealand, however, stakeholders interviewed feel that this scale-up is limited, and when they are done, the effects are not as good as in the pilots.

Regarding the pilots, one stakeholder observed that often pilots that are funded by the philanthropic sector are for programmatic and intervention style programmes, which only seek to fix the expression of the wider systemic problem. Whilst these programmes are necessary in many instances, the literature suggests that only system-wide changes will improve the sector, and in turn, reduce the number of interventions needed in the sector (Hood & Mayo, 2018). Hood and Mayo (2018) suggest that the continued strengthening of the Communities of Learning between the schools and the communities will result in better long-term outcomes for young people, and a decrease in the overall need for interventions. These calls for system-wide changes that embrace

their communities and are preventative in nature have been echoed by other education analysts, particularly Sinnema, Daly, Liou, & Rodway (2020) and Askew, et al. (2017).

This was echoed by stakeholders interviewed for this report. Many discussed the need for the Rātā Foundation to move toward a model where they are focussing on the "overarching education system" itself by funding initiatives that promote barrier-free access, the future of work and learning, and systems that place the student in the centre.

One stakeholder noted that within the philanthropic sector there is a need for a greater role of evidence in identifying solutions, from both the Ministry of Education and from organisations who receive funding. In turn, the stakeholder believes there needs to be a greater generation of data from successful interventions to inform future decision making. Another stakeholder noted that the data generated from evaluating programmes should be democratised and made more accessible so that the sector can work more collaboratively.

4. Direction of the Learn Funding Area

This section of the sector scan examines opportunities for the Rātā Foundation on how the Learn Funding Area can be strengthened, particularly to be more responsive to equity and Māori concerns. Ten recommendations are made addressing the current priorities, engagement with applicants, collaboration with stakeholders and use of evidence and best practice. These recommendations are based on the literature review and stakeholder insights throughout the report.

4.1. Recommendations

4.1.1. Current Priorities

Recommendation 1 - Enabling access to quality Early Childhood Education.

Rātā Foundation should consider ways to reduce barriers to accessing quality whānau–centred or culturally responsive early childhood education based on need.

Justification

Within the wider context of philanthropic funding in the education sector, the evidence points towards the best investment, in terms of value-for-money for the Rātā Foundation, as being an increased level of funding to the early childhood sector. Investment in the early childhood sector increases outcomes for students and young people across the board (Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008).

The literature is clear on the importance of a quality early childhood education: it can negate the effects of growing up in high deprivation (Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2009), build social skills that will stay with the young person throughout their whole life (Lynch & Simpson, 2010), and can bring the whole whānau/family into the education system at an earlier age (Melhuish, 2010).

Rātā should consider taking an equity approach to ensure the gap in attendance rates is closed and opportunities are equitable. Rātā foundation should consider wider community-based outcomes of its funding of the not-for-profit early learning sector.

This increased in spending in the early childhood education sector has the potential to save money for the Rātā Foundation in the long term. By working with communities in the early childhood education sector, it will positively feed into many of the funding priorities that the Rātā Foundation has, such as bringing families/whānau into the education communities and lifting engagement and achievement.

Recommendation 2 - Enabling people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence throughout their lives, particularly people who may face barriers.

Rātā Foundation should continue to fund this priority. Particular thought should be given to careers advice for Māori focusing on in-schools partnerships.

Justification

Programmes and interventions which assist young people in developing better career and academic pathways creates inter-generational socio-cultural benefits, as more people realise their potential and the earning potential also increases. This also has the potential to increase upward class/social mobility. Rātā Foundation's investment in Whitiora – Māori Skills Centre is a good example of a strategic partnership in this area. Rātā could look for other secondary schools-based partnerships.

Recommendation 3 - Enabling the lifting of educational outcomes of Māori and Pasifika children, those with learning needs and those coming from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Rātā Foundation should continue its focus on children and young people who are Māori, Pasifika, or who have learning needs, or come from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Justification

This group of young people are consistently in the lowest performing cohort of students in the education system, because of the systematic and socio-cultural barriers they face. Further, these groups are also the most disadvantaged in society once they leave the education system. By continuing to focus on these children and young people, Rātā will be able to make a positive difference in their educational experiences and outcomes, and improve their life-long outcomes.

Recommendation 4 - Connecting whānau/family and communities to children's learning and schools.

Rātā Foundation should continue its focus on connecting whānau/family and their community to children and young people's learning and schools, as part of their wider effort to create positive intergenerational change.

Justification

The literature is overwhelming in its consensus that when whānau/family and communities are connected with their children's education and school that there are increased rates of achievement and positive development of social and emotional skills (Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu, & Yuan, 2016; Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, Lloyd, & Leung, 2013). Further, there is evidence that shows that

interventions are the most effective when they have the support and involvement of the whānau/family and community.

4.1.2. Engagement

Recommendation 5 - Continue to engage, and deepen relationships, with the Māori-medium sector.

Rātā Foundation should deepen its relationship with Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa and Māori-medium schools to ensure equitable access to funding. Rātā Foundation should continue to build deeper relationships with hapū, Iwi, and Māori organisations.

Justification

A commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and building relationships with hapū, Iwi, and Māori organisations is an ongoing process.

There is considerable room for partnership between philanthropic organisations and the Māori education sector, as it is significantly underfunded by the Crown (Appleby, 2002; McLachlan, 2018a, 2018b; Parahi, 2018; Proctor, 2020).

Stakeholders within the kōhanga reo sector identified some gaps in their funding, which the Rātā Foundation or another charitable foundation could fill. One need is that whilst they have vans to transport tauira, they do not have sufficiently trained volunteers to drive the vans. Assisting the volunteers linked to the kōhanga with obtaining their driver licenses would not only help the kōhanga reo in transporting students but also would have positive impacts on their ability to get employment. Another need expressed by those in the sector is their inability to apply for grants because of a lack of administrative/institutional knowledge to do so. A different stakeholder said that they preferred to go to philanthropic organisations for funding over government agencies, as they are inherently sceptical of government intervention because of historical breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and underfunding of the Māori sector.

There was concern expressed by one stakeholder that the Rātā Foundation is not funding enough Māori organisations. The stakeholder expressed that there are probably many reasons for this but that more often than not, commissioning and investment systems developed by funders are not co-designed with Māori and so are inherently monocultural which contributes to bias and inequity.

Recommendation 6 - Continue to strengthen relationships with potential applicants to address equity.

Rātā Foundation should ensure there are a range of proactive and responsive supports available to inform and support potential applicants.

Justification

While work is already being done by the Rātā Foundation to strengthen relationships with potential applications, including implementing their Māori Strategy, some stakeholder/applicants expressed their inability to apply for grants because of their lack of understanding/ability to apply for grants.

4.1.3. Collaborative Partnerships

Recommendation 7 - Proactively partner with organisations who are addressing digital inclusion.

Rātā Foundation should work proactively with organisations in the sector seeking to increase digital inclusion.

Justification

As digital inclusion strategies shape up across Aotearoa, there is a potential role for the Rātā Foundation to assist in bridging the digital divide in rural New Zealand, and for Māori whānau, Pasifika families, and for the poor and working poor.

As demonstrated above, there is a significant need to close this gap. This fits both within the NELP strategy, and the Rātā Foundation's goal of barrier-free access. Funding to reduce the digital divide should be strategic, and as one stakeholder said, "should be addressed through targeted resourcing, and is made available through conversations with the schools who experience [the digital divide]."

As there are specialist organisations that are already working on bridging the digital divide, there could be continued collaboration in these spaces to integrate the philanthropic response to an important issue. However, it would not constitute good value-for-money for the organisation to orient itself into this space alone as it is potentially expensive, and other organisations are already doing it.

Recommendation 8 - Develop strategic partnerships for systemic change.

Rātā Foundation should continue to work in a collaborative way with other providers in the sector, and further develop strategic partnerships for systemic change.

Justification

The Rātā Foundation already works collaboratively, so continuing to do so and identifying new areas of collaboration will strengthen the organisation's capabilities.

One example of this strategic style of funding that is working is the Early Years funding, that the Rātā Foundation funds. By working across the early childhood and transition to school sectors, and engaging multiple actors, organisations, and the family unit, this is the model which the evidence points towards as best practice.

One stakeholder suggested that philanthropic providers and those in the education sector work more collaboratively, as there is currently an over-crowded education sector of those who need the funding and too few funding partners. A more coherent strategy to approach the funding of these sectors would be beneficial, the stakeholder thinks. This was echoed by other stakeholders who said that whilst the Rātā Foundation had gone some way in recent years, there needed to be a greater strategic partnering between philanthropic organisations, even if that means moving away from areas that they have traditionally funded.

4.1.4. Evidence and Best Practice

Recommendation 9 – Exercise caution when investing in pilot programmes.

Rātā Foundation should only fund academic and behavioural intervention pilots when there is exceptional evidence of need, innovation, and scale-up ability (where applicable).

Justification

There are a plethora of pilot programmes that exist, with many that are discontinued because of an inability to scale up. The continual funding of pilots by the philanthropic sector does not consistently constitute good value-for-money and could be doing harm to those communities who have become reliant on a pilot that ends when the funding dries up.

Recommendation 10 - Continued use of evidence and best practice principles.

Rātā Foundation should continue to fund behavioural and academic achievement interventions where there is need. Rātā should continue to take an evidence and best practice approach. This may include strengthening its commitment to whole-of-community and whole-of-school preventative programmes.

Justification

Evidence shows funding whole-of-community and preventative programmes has the potential to reduce the need for behavioural and academic interventions in the future. This constitutes good value-for-money for the Rātā Foundation. Whilst the Rātā Foundation does already take this view, as evidenced by the funding priorities, it could be useful to reaffirm this through strengthening in wording.

5. Evaluation of Efficacy of Education Interventions

This section of the report informs the funding decisions that the Rātā Foundation makes by analysing the literature of what works for programmes that they may get funding applications for. By evaluating the evidence of what works in the different issues facing the education sectors, as identified by the interviews with stakeholders, this should inform future decisions that are being made. This section starts with a broad overview of what works for interventions across the board, then more specific subsets of issues.

The literature has identified three barriers to the philanthropic sector making evidence-based decisions when it comes to assessing evidence-based applications. These are (1) inadequate knowledge transfer and difficulties accessing evidence, (2) challenges in understanding the evidence and (3) insufficient resources (Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020). This report is aiming to assist the Rātā Foundation in the first two categories of difficulties accessing evidence and challenges in understanding the evidence. Therefore, at the end of this section, there is a summary document that can be used to assess the quality of interventions. This is adapted from a report prepared for the Rātā Foundation by D&G Consulting in 2020 and covers the basics of successful interventions, but also includes specifics relating to this report.

5.1. Educational Interventions

Educational interventions are best described as programmes that "...provide students with the support needed to acquire the skills being taught by the educational system and should address functional skills, academic, cognitive, behavioural, and social skills that directly affect the child's ability access an education" (Lestrud, 2013, p. 1061).

There are a specific set of conditions that must be met in order for interventions in education to be successful. If applicants are seeking grants for educational interventions they should incorporate the six steps in their programmes (for a full list, see Adey & Shayer, 1994).

They are:

1. Duration and density. Interventions have to be long and intense enough to make a difference in education and cognition levels. The literature suggests that the minimum length should be two years for any intervention, with regular sessions on it throughout this time period (Adey & Shayer, 1994).

2. Concrete Preparation. The young people in the interventions should have sufficient preparation for the topic. Interventions work best when they are on a subject the student is already familiar with, or, they have the cognitive tools to interpret and understand the subject.

3. Cognitive Conflict. Interventions work best when students experience cognitive conflict. Cognitive conflict is best described as an experience when students find events or observations puzzling and cannot explain them through their current cognitive understanding. This conflict leads to better learning.

4. Construction Zone. Immediately following the cognitive conflict described above, the construction zone is where the teacher or instructor provides the teaching to assist the student in making sense of the conflict, and in doing so teaches the subject of the intervention.

5. Metacognition. Following cognitive conflict and the construction zone, the teacher needs to discuss how the student thought about the problem. Adey and Shayer (p. 68) write "In practice a teacher can ask pupils to talk about difficulties and successes they have with problems, both with the teacher and with each other – not just 'that was difficult' but 'what was difficult about it, and how did I overcome the difficulty?'"

6. Bridging. The final stage of a successful education intervention is linking the skills developed above to similar problems, across subjects.

In addition to this, the literature breaks interventions into three categories: first, second, and third wave interventions (Brigden, et al., 2019).

1. First wave interventions involve the modelling of desired behaviour, reinforcement of desired behaviour, and habit formation.

2. Second wave interventions involve cognitive-behaviour therapy, whereby people are taught to identify negative or destructive emotions and behaviours and rectify them at a cognitive level.

3. Third wave interventions involve metacognition, mindfulness, compassion, and spirituality. For most interventions, first wave interventions are far more successful. This is especially true for interventions aimed at children, but second and third wave interventions only work for older students (aged 16 and above).

5.2. Lifting Achievement Rates

Achievement rates have been identified by many stakeholders as a key issue facing the sector. Whilst this report will not address large-scale educational reforms, as the Royal Society of New Zealand is currently investigating this, this report will instead look at educational interventions.

The quality of early childhood education, and the early intervention in the academic performance of young children, is widely recognised as one of the best ways to lift academic

performance across the board (Bakken, Brown, & Downing, 2017; Smith, 2014). These interventions in early childhood education can reduce education disparities across socio-economic and ethnic lines (Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2009).

Interventions that are solely aimed at lifting achievement rates should not be focused on social and emotional behaviour building as this is highly unlikely to work. Whilst some interventions aimed at developing the emotional intelligence and resilience of young people within the education sector may be considered as part of the wider aim of lifting education achievement rates, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that there is a connection between the two. One study of 30 interventions with 496,299 young people found that these interventions have benefit in developing social and emotional skills, but found that there was no significant impact on educational achievement rates (Goldberg, et al., 2019).

There is some evidence to show that interventions that focus on academic performance through physical activity can improve cognitive and academic behaviour. For example, one analysis of 28 school-based physical/academic interventions suggests that they worked better than academic-alone interventions (Mura, Vellante, Nardi, Machado, & Carta, 2015). These results were replicated in another meta-analysis, with physical activity impacting positively on 60% of academic interventions (Singh, et al., 2019). Another study found similar benefits of physical activity and cognitive improvement, with the benefits felt most strongly in an increase in mathematic skills (Sneck, et al., 2019).

5.3. Increasing Attendance and Engagement

The Ministry of Education is increasingly concerned with the high levels of absenteeism across all schooling types, and these concerns were echoed by the stakeholder interviewed in this research.

The Behavioural Insights Team at the Ministry of Education conducted analysis on the issue of absenteeism in New Zealand schools and found that there are two key drivers of non-attendance: family disengagement and student disengagement. Therefore, programmes that are successful at reducing rates of absenteeism will have a dual focus: both on the families and on the individual.

The drivers of family disengagement are

(i)   "parental distrust of the school;
(ii) shift work for parents which leads to less oversight; and
(iii) dysfunctional households with drug or alcohol problems."

The key drivers of student disengagement are:

(i)   "disinterest in the content of classes; and
(ii) mental health issues, particularly anxiety" (Behavioural Insights Team, 2018, p. 4).

The Education Review Office published a paper in 2020 which called for a variety of interventions to be used to combat absenteeism, based on a three-tier hierarchy of need (Education Review Office, 2020a). This proposed model is below.

Table 2. Three Tiers of Interventions

	Who is this for?	What types of interventions?
Tier 1: Universal interventions	All students, all the time	• Monitoring and following-up on absences; • School climate interventions; • Safety-oriented strategies, such as supporting student advocacy groups; • School-based mental health programmes; • Parental involvement initiatives; • Learning support strategies, such as providing home-learning material.
Tier 2: Targeted interventions	Students with declining attendance	• Providing specific and relevant feedback to parents/whānau, such as feeding back about content students miss during absences; • Improving student engagement, such as developing culturally responsive curricula; • Teacher or peer mentoring, such as older students assisting in understanding and managing expectations; • Mental health and wellbeing support, such as counselling.
Tier 3: Intensive interventions	Students who are chronically absent	• Parent/whānau involvement strategies; • Alternative educational programmes and schools; • Intensive case management.

The Education Review Office notes that many interventions that currently take place are in the Tier 3 area, for those students who are chronically absent. However, the literature suggests that taking an approach to earlier intervention would reduce absenteeism by stopping students and young people from reaching the Tier 3 category. One study suggests that Tier 1 and 2 interventions are six times more likely to reduce absenteeism than Tier 3 interventions (Reid, 2012).

Feeding students is widely acknowledged both in the literature and by stakeholders in the sector as one way to decrease absenteeism (Kleinman, et al., 2002; Tamiru & Belachew, 2017). However, some studies suggest that is either not true (Mhurchu, et al., 2013), or that the effect is limited (Ribar & Haldeman, 2013). These programmes should be treated as one part of the wider approach to reducing truancy, but cannot be seen as the silver bullet to the issue. A holistic, multi-channel approach is necessary, with food in schools programme a facet of this.

Therefore when the Rātā Foundation is considering funding for programmes that are meant to prevent absenteeism, they should consider:

• Is the intervention aimed at the early phases?
• Is the intervention aimed at both families and individual students?
• Is the intervention holistic?

Regarding the increase of engagement with young people in the classroom, there are a plethora of studies done on pedagogical changes/behavioural interventions that can be made to foster better rates of engagement (for example: Lange, 2018; Radley, Dart, & O'Handley, 2016; Smith, Sheppard, Johnson, & Johnson, 2005). However, it is more useful to evaluate the efficacy of programmes and interventions that seek to reduce the barriers to engagement. The three most common barriers that were raised by the stakeholders interviewed are (1) the digital divide and technology, (2) the mental health of students, and (3) the income inequality and deprivation that some students experience.

These three barriers, and what successful interventions look like for each of them is detailed below.

5.4. Barrier: Digital divide and the role of technology

As previously discussed in this report, digital inclusion is a potential way to reduce the digital divide in New Zealand. There are four key elements of digital inclusion:

• motivation (desire to access digital technologies, and knowledge of how they work),
• access,
• skills, and

- trust (Department of Internal Affairs, 2019a).

However, there is evidence that increasing access within the digital inclusion category, without developing the other three criteria of motivation, skills and trust does not realise the full potential of integrating technology into the education sector (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010). One of the ways to build the skills necessary for digital inclusion is through the concept of 'digital citizenship'. Jones and Mitchell (2016, p. 2064) provide a useful discussion on what constitutes digital citizenship:

Early use of the term referred to online access (e.g. "increasing the number of youth digital citizens") (Mossberger et al., 2008; Shelley et al., 2004), but it has been used more recently to refer to safe and responsible behaviour online. One author defined digital citizenship as comprising the concepts of responsibility, rights, safety, and security (Ribble and Bailey, 2011). Others describe it as involving "appropriate technology usage," and "making safe, responsible, respectful choices online" (Common Sense Media, 2011; Microsoft, n.d.). A media education programme (Common Sense Media, 2012) has translated digital citizenship education into curricula on the following topics: Internet safety, privacy and security, relationships and communication, cyberbullying, digital footprints, reputation, self-image and identity, information literacy, and creative credit and copyright.

Developing digital citizenship in young people will in turn fulfil three of the four criteria of digital inclusion: motivation, skills, and trust. Successful digital citizenship interventions have the following characteristics:

- Teachers who have undertaken digital citizenship training themselves are better placed to teach it and recognise it within their students (Martin, Gezer, & Wang, 2019).
- Taking a whole-school approach has a much stronger effect in improving digital citizenship (SSM, 2016).
- Involving wider whānau in programmes around digital citizenship makes them more effective (Hiefield, 2020; Oh, 2019).

Considering the evidence above, the digital divide is more than access to devices/internet: programmes that work on providing digital citizenship can be just as successful in creating an environment of digital inclusion. **However access does remain a precursor to digital citizenship.**

5.5. Barrier: Mental health of students

Mental health has been attributed as a barrier to engagement by many stakeholders. There are a plethora of pilots, programmes, and systems that are in place to improve the mental health of

students. Because of this, it would be too cumbersome to evaluate the efficacy of every program. However, there are some key components of mental health programmes that contribute to the success of the programmes.

A study of 23 different mental health in-school programmes found that they are most effective when they:

- are delivered early (before the issue got to a crisis level),
- have a long-term view which includes positive reinforcement,
- have an ecological focus with family and community sector involvement, are consistent adult staffing, and are interactive, non-didactic programming adapted to gender, age and cultural needs (Browne, Gafni, Roberts, Bryne, & Majumdar, 2004).

This non-didactic programming means that it is not a lecture-based instructional intervention, and instead focuses on behavioural modelling, group discussion, etc., and could be classified as a 'first wave' technique of behavioural change.

A review of school-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) based interventions that were aimed at improving young people's mental health had mixed findings. Whilst there was a small reduction of the symptoms of depression for many of the 11-19-year-olds who went through the program, any decrease of depression was short-term, with an effectiveness period of about six months (Kavanagh, et al., 2009). However, those young people with middle to higher socioeconomic status responded better to CBT than those with lower socioeconomic status (Kavanagh, et al., 2009).

In another study of CBT by Haughland, et al. (2020) to treat anxiety in adolescents (aged 12-16), they found that the use of CBT reduced anxiety with a small effect to moderate effect. The authors also tested the use of brief CBT (5 sessions, total time 5.5 hours) against standard CBT (10 session, total time 15 hours) and found that the brief CBT session was not inferior to standard CBT. The authors found that both models of CBT were sustained at a 1-year follow up.

The literature posits that both first wave (modelling behaviour) and second wave (cognitive training) techniques of behavioural intervention can work in reducing depression and anxiety rates in young people. The difficulty then is ascertaining which intervention type applicants should use. The literature suggests that:

- non-didactic first wave techniques are best for younger children (aged 3-11 years old)
- and cognitive-based second wave techniques are best for older children (aged 11-19 years old) (The Werry Centre, 2010).

Therefore, it is recommended that applicants use programmes or interventions that use **age-appropriate techniques**, and in their application provide their justification for their technique to ensure that it fits inside what the literature has established as best practice.

5.6. Barrier: Income inequality and its effects on education

Income inequality and the subsequent deprivation has a demonstrable effect on the educational outcomes of learners. Stakeholders identified income inequality as a barrier to attendance and engagement. Whilst some of the concerns about material deprivation have been addressed earlier in this report (for example, providing food to reduce absenteeism), the Rātā Foundation may expect to get funding applications for programmes that are aimed at reducing the effects of deprivation.

The literature has identified that philanthropic organisations can play a role in making educational access more equitable and provide opportunities for students who might otherwise miss out. This is, in turn, trying to disrupt the cycle of deprivation. However, most of these programmes and interventions are already covered in other areas of this report. For example, getting students to attend more will make them less likely to move into the NEET category, and in turn, more likely to break the cycle of intergenerational deprivation. This is similar to programmes that focus on mental health, low achievement rates, etc.

5.7. NEETS

There is a wide array of literature on how New Zealand can reduce the number of people, in particular young people, in the NEET category. Most of the literature points to taking a community-based approach which focuses on a lack of intergenerational skills of those in the NEET category.

The Maxim Institute published a discussion paper in 2020 with an analysis of how COVID-19 had impacted the NEETs in New Zealand and concluded with three recommendations on strategies that will deliver better outcomes for NEETS (Light, 2020, pp. 19-20). Whilst they are aimed at the government, there is considerable room for charitable organisations, such as the Rātā Foundation, to work on these areas. These are:

1. Change the narrative of youth employment pathways in New Zealand. The current approach to NEETs is often siloed and patchwork. A more comprehensive focus on NEETS, especially those aged 20-24, is needed. By promoting positive stories about those who moved into education, employment, or training can help to facilitate greater change, and get more people ready for 'the future of work.'

2. Centre community-based models in government NEET interventions. Community-based models are more effective than regional or national models at reducing the number of NEETs.
3. Funding more pastoral care work through He Poutama Rangatahi. Though this aimed at one particular government agency, the report discusses the important role that pastoral care/role models have on those wanting to enter into education, employment, or training. Programmes that focus on pastoral care could have a considerable impact on overall NEET numbers.

Analysis conducted by the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment found that programmes that target improved school engagement, as well programmes that assist in getting driver's license could potentially reduce the Māori and Pasifika NEET group (Apatov, 2019, p. 32). The analysis also cited a 2018 study by Potter and Macky who found that young mothers who have their driver's license are more likely to be in education, employment, or training, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. The analysis concludes that the number of Māori and Pasifika in the NEET category is linked to socioeconomic/deprivation status, and programmes that focus on this will reduce the number of NEETs.

Another report published by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment identified core areas where action can be taken to reduce the number of young people in the NEET category (McGirr, 2019, pp. 21-22). Those that can be actioned by the Rātā Foundation are listed below:

1. As intergenerational factors act as key employability risk, disadvantage or advantage this should be a focus for NEET programmes. These intergenerational factors are especially important in relation to gaining social network capital and work experiences, and non-cognitive skill development. Effective programmes incorporate the wider family, as well as the individual. Programmes that assist in building networks of employability and education work to give individuals connections that they do not normally get, because of intergenerational factors.
2. A focus on young parents who move in and out of caregiving, low paid, and part-time work. This is the category of people who are most at risk of creating intergenerational factors which may lead to young people NEETs. Because of this, investing in young parents who are in the NEET category brings them out of the NEET category, and lessens the likelihood of their children from entering it.
3. Regarding the most at risk, a cross-sector response towards improving outcomes among highest-risk young people might work better if it involves fewer, longer and deeper (or more holistically focused) service provisions.
4. More intensive non-cognitive skills training that are more closely matched with what employer's need and the future of work. Have work experience incorporated more closely into the curriculum for those at risk of moving into the NEET category.

Other evidence points to more intensive interventions with a mixture of classroom and workplace settings that work better to reengage NEETs with education, employment, or training (Mawn, et al., 2017). However, the same research points out that even successful interventions to reengage young people are only minimally effective, and **the most effective strategy is preventing them from entering the NEET category in the first place.**

Therefore, when the Rātā Foundation is considering funding for those who are working with NEETs to get them into education, employment, or training, proposed programmes should be in line with the areas of focus above. These programmes take a holistic approach, are community-based and community-led, involve the family, and prepare young people for the future of work with in-class and in-workplace skill-building.

5.8. Alternative Education

There is a wealth of literature about why some alternative education programmes are successful. This section of the literature review will identify what parts of the alternative education system work to assist the Rātā Foundation in their funding decisions.

Ultimately, capacity was identified by stakeholders as one of the key issues facing the sector, which effectively capped the number of young people who could go through the alternative education system. Low student-to-teacher ratios are a hallmark of successful alternative education systems (Bland, Church, Neill, & Terry, 2008). The smaller class creates a more personalised relationship with staff and students, leading to better educational outcomes. The literature does note, however, that the smallness of the school also contributes to the overall success, so if alternative education providers were to grow too much, then this may also be at the detriment of the educational outcomes for the students (Gutherson, Davies, & Daszkiewicz, 2011; Young, 1990).

A comprehensive literature review of alternative education providers by Gutherson, Davies, & Daszkiewicz (2011, pp. 5-6) found that successful alternative education has the following characteristics:

- High standards and expectations that build aspirations.
- Small schools, small class sizes and high staff/learner ratios.
- Student-centred or personalised (needs-led) programmes that are flexible and customisable to individual need.
- High quality 'caring and knowledgeable' staff as well as ongoing professional development and support for all staff.
- Links to multiple agencies, partners and community organisations and 'a safety net' of pastoral support including counselling and mentoring.

- An expanded, challenging and flexible curriculum related to learners' interests and capabilities that offers a range of accreditation opportunities; a good curriculum is skills-focused and also emphasises the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, communication and ICT.
- Expanded curricula that foster the development of interpersonal and social skills and enable holistic approaches to be taken; this can be through integration into all lessons and activities, as well as being taught discretely.
- Family and community involvement.
- The creation and maintenance of intentional communities that pay considerable attention to cultivating a strong sense of connection among students and between students, families and teachers. This includes establishing relationships that are adult-like and based on respect.
- Healthy physical environments that foster education, emotional well-being, and a sense of pride and safety.

Therefore, funding applications that are aimed at developing alternative education providers' capacity of one or more of these characteristics would be valuable. Conversely, if an applicant was to apply for funding that was contrary to one of the above principles, then the evidence base of the application would need to be carefully examined.

5.9. Careers Advice

The literature suggests that interpersonal careers advice is the most effective way to transmit information and that the internet is a poor substitute for this information sharing (Leach & Zepke, 2005; Hodgetts, 2009). Other literature recommends taking a whole-school approach to careers advice, and that it be more deeply embedded into the cirriculum (Hodgetts, 2009) and involve the family (Dik, Steger, Gibson, & Peisner, 2011). Other interventions propose that the key to effective careers advice is rooted in developing a young person's understanding of their personality, skillset, etc (Whiston & Blustein, 2013).

Therefore, when considering applications for funding that are aimed at developing knowledge in young people about careers advice, perspectives should look at taking an interpersonal approach, connecting the young person with the plethora of internet resources and walking through them in person. The Rātā Foundation should be aware that that the evidence pool for these kinds of interventions will be limited. There are limited contemporary studies within the New Zealand context or otherwise that are aimed explicitly at young people receiving careers advice.

5.10 Table of Best Practice Principles of Interventions

Best Practice Principle	Explanation	Application of Principle
Appropriate behaviour change techniques are used.	Different areas of behaviour change require different methods to effectively change the behaviour. Using methods that have not proven to work would not constitute good value-for-money for the Rātā Foundation, and could also do harm to the young people involved in the programmes.	Applicants wanting to deliver programmes focused on anti-smoking, mental health (for those aged under 11 years old), health and wellbeing, alcohol and drugs, anti-social or disruptive behaviour, and educational outcomes should use modelling of behaviour, reinforcement of good behaviour, or habit formation. Applicants wanting to deliver programmes that are aimed at lifting achievement rates should not explicitly focus on building emotional and social skills. There is evidence that programmes that use physical activity can lift academic achievement rates. Applicants wanting to deliver programmes focused on pornography, sexuality education, and mental health (for those aged over 11 years old) should use skills-based or didactic learning techniques.

Kaupapa Māori / bicultural values are incorporated where appropriate.	It is fundamental that programmes and interventions are rooted in the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, particularly that of partnership. Programmes that demonstrate this commitment are more likely to be effective. Programmes that use a kaupapa Māori approach are also more effective if they have the prerequisite structural factors.	Applicants should demonstrate how they will incorporate te Tiriti o Waitangi into their program. Applicants wanting to undertake a kaupapa Māori approach should show that they have the systems in place for it to be successful.
Programmes are culturally responsible and responsive.	For programmes to be effective, they need to be culturally responsible (not unduly punish minority ethnic groups), and culturally responsive (are designed in a way to account for cultural differences for those participating in the program).	Applicants should ensure their programme is culturally appropriate and have a mechanism to ensure that minority ethnic groups are not going through behaviour change programmes at a higher rate than the majority ethnic group.
Programmes protect and enhance mana.	Programmes are more effective if they protect and enhance mana. If the young people are built up through the process, then the effects are felt more strongly for longer.	Applicants seeking funding for programmes should demonstrate how the programme will protect and enhance mana. This is particularly important for applicants wanting funding for programmes or interventions aimed at sexuality or relationship education.

There is parent or whānau involvement in the programmes.	Programmes are more effective if parents or whānau are involved, as they serve as good role models of desired behaviour, and/or can support the programme in the teaching of skills. Programmes that involve parents show better changes in attitudes and educational outcomes.	Applicants should detail how they will involve parents/whānau in the programme, or justify why they have not included parents/whānau (time commitments in time-poor communities, etc).
Programmes span multiple environments.	Programmes are more effective if they span multiple environments: the classroom, the playground, the home, etc. Programmes that utilise this approach are more likely to be successful, as they re-enforce behaviour across multiple environments.	Applicants should detail how their programme will span multiple environments, or justify why their programme will not span multiple environments.
Programmes are age and developmentally appropriate.	Programmes that are not age or developmentally appropriate are less likely to create a long-lasting change of desired outcomes. Some programmes are not suited for younger children or those who have developmental delays.	Applicants should ensure that their programme or intervention is age and developmentally appropriate, and show how they will consider this in the planning and implementation of the programme or intervention.

Those teaching programmes have sufficient expertise.	Having a poorly trained facilitator weakens the effectiveness of the program and can do harm.	Applicants should detail the training they will offer to the teaching staff, and ensure that those teaching the programmes or interventions have sufficient resources.
Programmes have sufficient time and intensity.	The literature is not unanimous on what constitutes sufficient time and intensity for the different areas that the Rātā Foundation funds. However, it is clear that one-off seminars/lessons do not work.	Applicants should ensure that the programme they are seeking funding for is of sufficient time and intensity. Applicants should give an indication of what evidence they have consulted in the design of the time and intensity of their programme.
Programmes are evidence-based and evaluatory.	Programmes or interventions that are evidence-based are more effective. Programmes or interventions that have an evaluation mechanism that can monitor the outputs of the program, and change them as needed, are more effective as they are more adaptive.	Applicants should include the evidence they have considered in their creation of a programme and should have an evaluation mechanism built into their programme or intervention.
Programmes take a whole school (or setting) approach.	Programmes or interventions that take an ecological/whole of school or service approach are more effective in creating and sustaining long-term behaviour change.	Applicants should demonstrate how they will take a whole school approach, or, justify why they have not taken this approach, drawing on appropriate literature.

Programmes do no harm.	Programmes or interventions should not do harm to those participating in, or facilitating them.	Applicants should be cognisant of the harm that programmes can do, and show how they will mitigate against it. Applicants should not seek funding for programmes or interventions that have ties to the industries they are seeking to reduce harm from.
Programmes are early intervention.	Preventative programmes, rather than reactionary, are both more likely to work and constitute better value-for-money.	Applicants seeking to address issues such as absenteeism should focus on a preventative approach (i.e., when there are early warning signs of repeated truancy, to activate processes then).
Programmes involve the whole community, where appropriate.	Programmes that involve the wider community are more likely to have the desired result, they also foster more of a community spirit in the wider education sector in the community.	Applicants seeking to reduce absenteeism, increase digital literacy, raise achievement rates, etc. should demonstrate elements of community engagement.

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