

1 JAN - 31 DEC 2024

**ENCOUNTER**<sup>NZ</sup>  
LIVE LIFE WIDE OPEN



# IMPACT REPORT 2024

Unleashing potential  
in young people to  
Live Life Wide Open!



"Encounter has helped me to realise the potential I have to do things I never thought I'd feel confident enough to do... On camp I felt very safe and encouraged at all times."

## ABOUT US

At Youth Encounter, we believe in the incredible potential of every young person in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are a vibrant community dedicated to empowering youth to thrive, or as we say "live life wide open!" Our therapeutic activity-based programs provide a safe and welcoming space where young people can discover their true value, form authentic connections, and unleash their God-given potential.

This year, we've focused on strengthening our foundation and maximizing our impact. Through strategic planning and the dedicated effort of our staff, we've delivered more face-to-face time and achieved greater outcomes for less cost, increasing the social impact value of every investment.

Thank you for partnering with us as we reshape youth culture in our nation through self-discovery and empowerment!

Ngā mihi,  
**Mary Wanhill**

**99%**

participants said their **experience** at Youth Encounter was good or excellent.

**99%**

participants rated excellent or good when asked how **safe they felt** while at Youth Encounter



# OUR PURPOSE

03

## VISION

Our vision is to empower all young people of Aotearoa New Zealand to live life wide open. We are dedicated to creating an environment where genuine acceptance can be found and authentic connections formed. Through our fun culture, we create a space where people not only discover their true value but are also empowered to live life to the fullest.

## CORE VALUES

Participants' feedback while at Youth Encounter...

- 100% said they had **FUN**
- 100% felt **ACCEPTED**
- 97% said they **CONNECTED** with others
- 99% felt **EMPOWERED** to be their best

## MISSION

Our mission is to create a safe place of belonging to unleash the God-given potential in our staff and participants, through therapeutic activity-based programs that restore identity, purpose, hope and resilience.

Critical to accomplishing our mission is;

- ✓ **1. CULTURE DRIVEN**  
Powerful culture that leads change
- ✓ **2. IMPACT FOCUSED**  
Sustainable and measurable outcomes in place
- ✓ **3. ENERGIZED STAFF**  
Engaged and empowered team
- ✓ **4. SAFE ENVIRONMENT**  
A safe space for clients and our team



"Youth Encounter has helped me with confidence and making new friends as well as being more comfortable talking to new people."

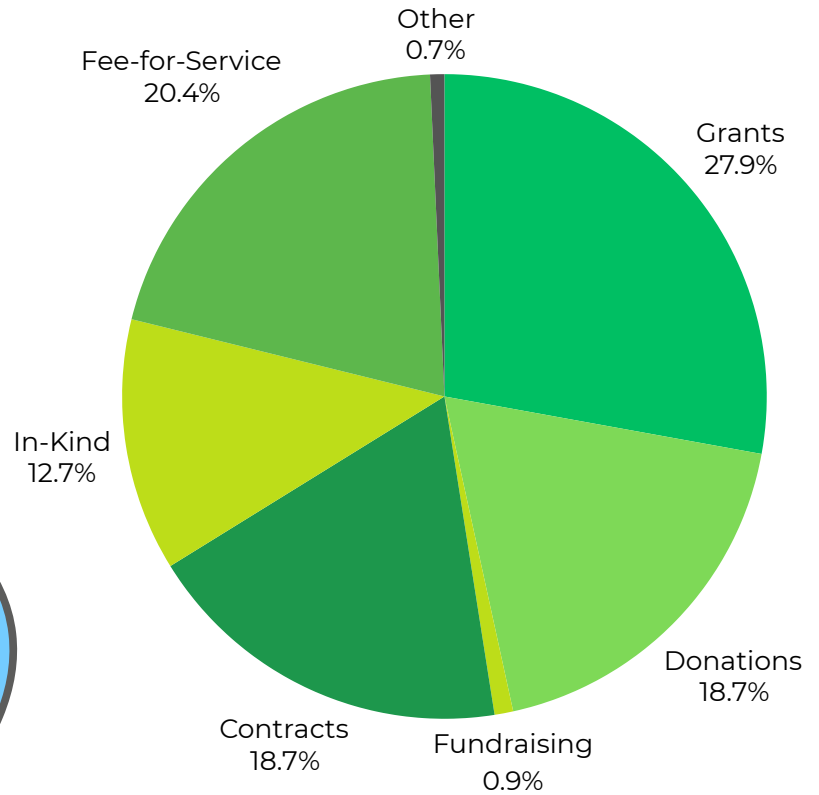
87%

participants said their **activity enjoyment** was excellent or good.

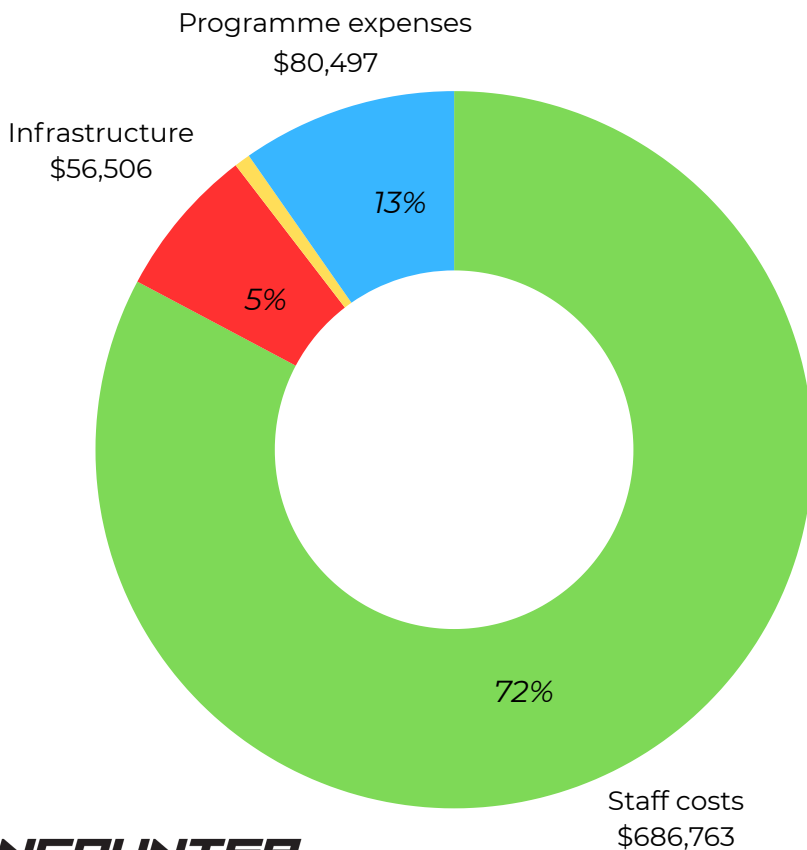
## INCOME STREAMS

Youth Encounter relies on a diverse array of revenue streams for sustaining its operations and fulfilling its mission. These multifaceted methods used to raise funds and leverage various channels of partnerships, ensures financial stability and enables the organization to effectively carry out its mission through the service delivery of its programmes.

*"Youth Encounter helped me to be more happy and confident in myself. I know that there is a purpose and a good future for me, if I build a strong foundation from it."*



## INCOME DISTRIBUTION



**\$823,767**

Profit & loss for calendar year  
1 Jan - 31 Dec 2024

Youth Encounter strategically allocates its income to ensure effective operation and impact. Funds are dedicated to special projects for innovative initiatives, program delivery direct costs for quality youth services, infrastructure for operational support, and staff costs for a talented team. This balanced approach allows us to effectively measure and sustain our Impact Focused goals.

# OUR OUTPUTS

381

Worked with **381 young individual clients**, a 37% increase from the previous year of 2023.

48

We maintained an average **weekly engagement** with 48 young individuals.

2317

Delivered an inspiring **2317 1on1 & group sessions, camps days, and event participations** for our young people, a 5% decrease from 2023.

## Gender

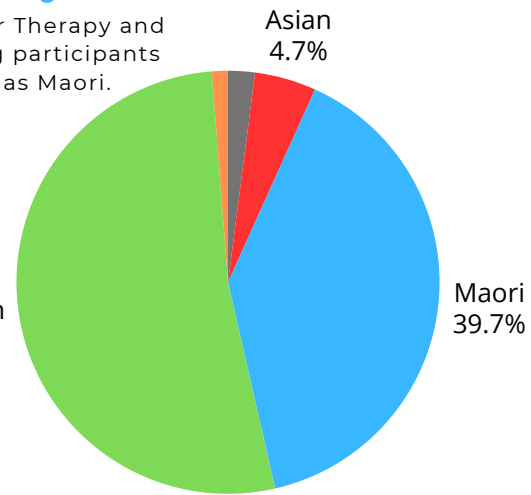
72% MALE

28% FEMALE

There has been a 2% increase of female participants

## Ethnicity

74% of our Therapy and Mentoring participants identified as Maori.



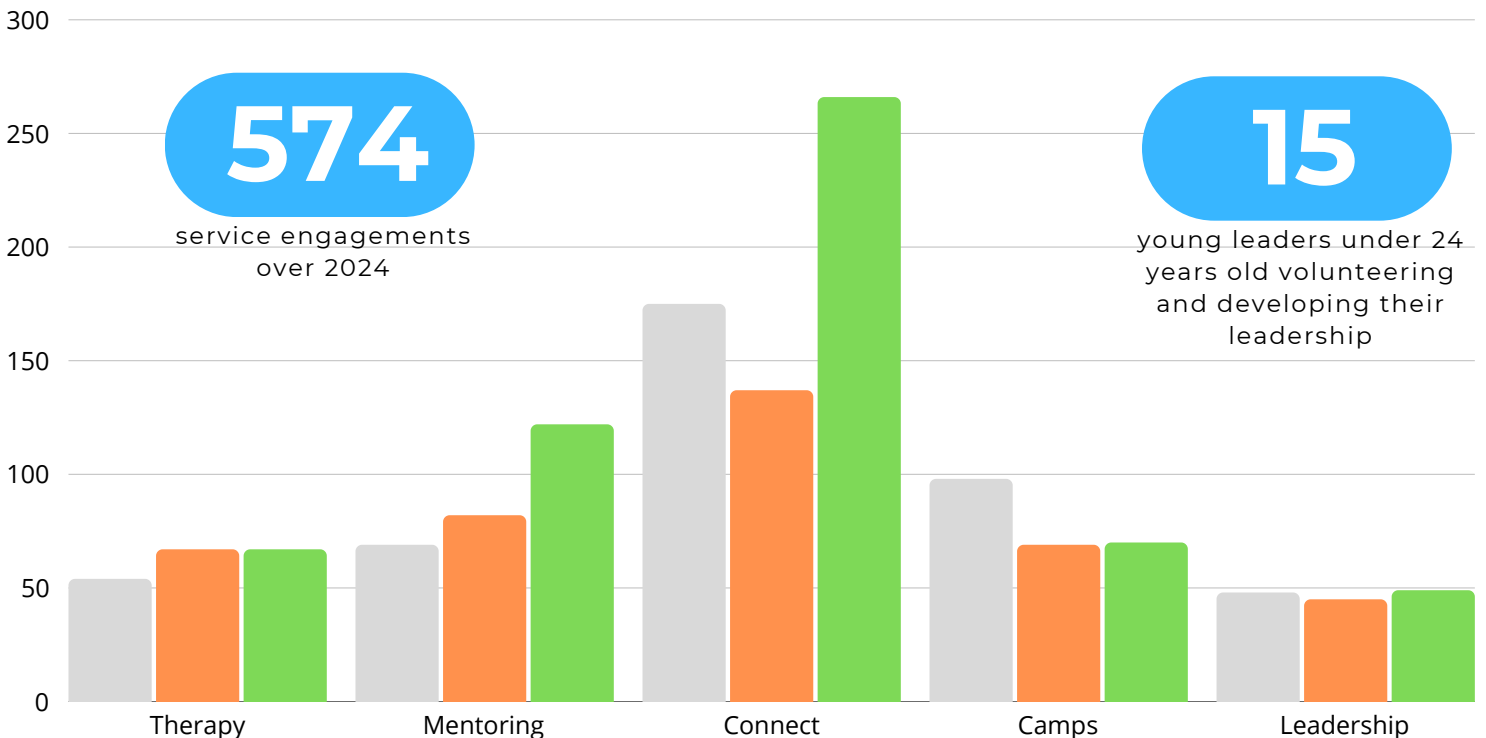
## Engagement

60% NEW

40% RETURNING

## Programme Engagement

2022 2023 2024



574

service engagements over 2024

15

young leaders under 24 years old volunteering and developing their leadership



## THE NEEDS WE ARE ADDRESSING

### 1. INSECURE IDENTITY

- Low self-worth leading to depression and anxiety, resulting in the breakdown of whānau relationships, and disconnection.

### 2. LACK OF PURPOSE

- A lack of purpose and motivation, often resulting from trauma, that drives addictions, suicidal ideation, and criminal behaviors.

### 3. LOSS OF HOPE

- Feelings of despondency and a loss of hope and direction underpin disengagement from education, unemployment, and an inability to contribute to society.

### 4. INADEQUATE RESILIENCE

- Trapped in a generational cycle of poverty, with inadequate resilience needed to break free.

*“Our country is experiencing a youth mental health crisis,”*

- Shaun Robinson (Mental Health Foundation CEO)

## NZ YOUTH STATISTICS

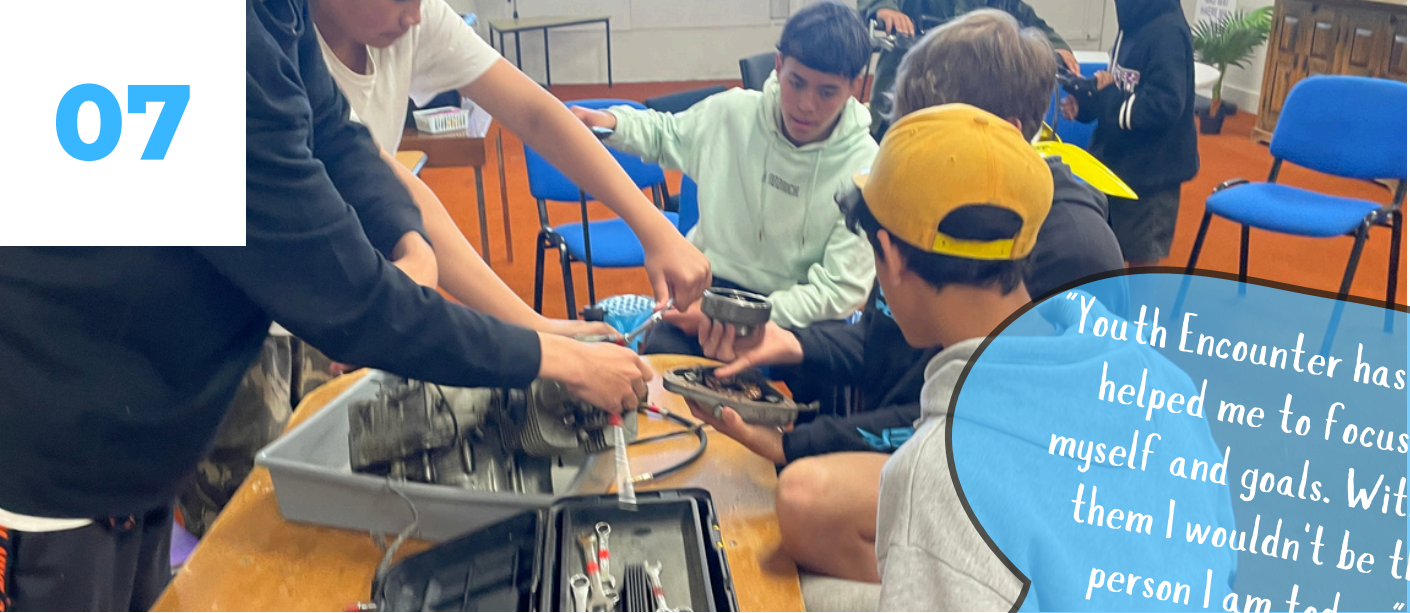
**Over half** of all New Zealanders aged 15-24 **experience anxiety or depression** – and numbers of young people with moderate to high distress have nearly **doubled** since 2016/17, a recent Ministry of Health survey shows.

The 2022/23 New Zealand Health Survey found that even though **over a quarter** of our young people experience **high mental health** need, the percentage who can't access support when they need it has **risen by 77%**.

Rising mental health challenges among youth are driving more young people into unemployment status, as psychological distress hinders their ability to engage in education and employment. From March 2023 to March 2024, there has been a **10.9% increase**.



*“It has changed the ways I approached things in my life and I know I have someone to talk to instead of my friends and family. I don't do things without thinking now.”*



*"Youth Encounter has really helped me to focus on myself and goals. Without them I wouldn't be the person I am today."*

## OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth Encounter recognizes the complex challenges facing the young people we support. Many struggle with multiple risk factors impacting their well-being. We take a collaborative approach to mitigate these risks and empower positive change. By gathering data through referrals and staff interactions, we tailor support plans and referrals to meet each young person's unique needs, guiding them towards a better future.

2024 saw a 20% rise in risk factors among youth we support. This highlights the increasing need for our services. Key trends include:

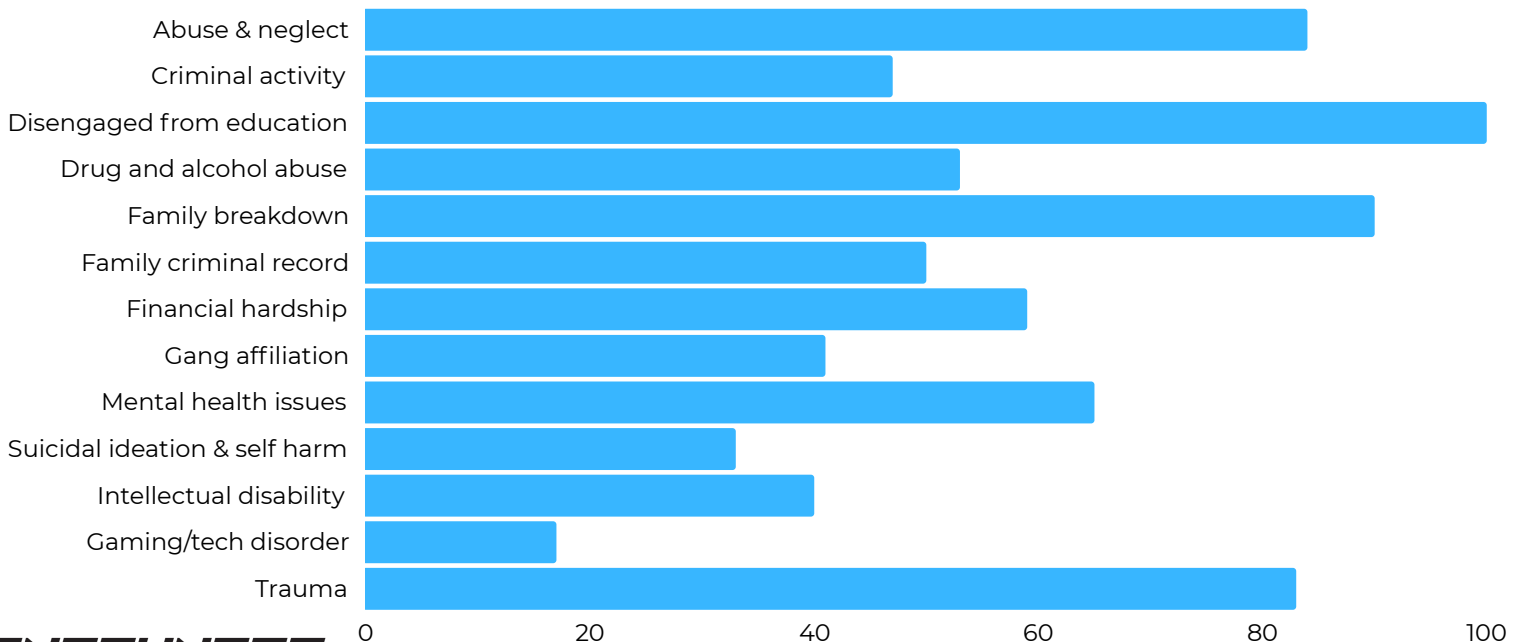
- **Digital Dependence:** Gaming and technology disorder/addiction increased by 89%. We combat this through outdoor activities and play.
- **Increased Disclosure of Trauma:** A 98% increase in young people sharing their trauma allows us to provide crucial support through counselling.
- **Intergenerational Cycles of Offending:** A 43% rise in youth reporting family with criminal records is concerning, with 47 youth involved in criminal activity themselves. However, through partnerships, we effectively work with these youth, and only one reoffended while engaged with us.
- **Education Disengagement:** 100 young people were disengaged from education, highlighting the need for alternative pathways and support.
- **Substance Use on the Rise:** A 23% increase in drug, alcohol, and vaping addiction necessitates ongoing prevention and early intervention.

80%

participants said our communication was excellent while they were at Youth Encounter

These findings show the complex challenges facing youth. Youth Encounter remains dedicated to providing a safe environment where rangatahi can overcome these challenges and thrive.

## RISK FACTORS

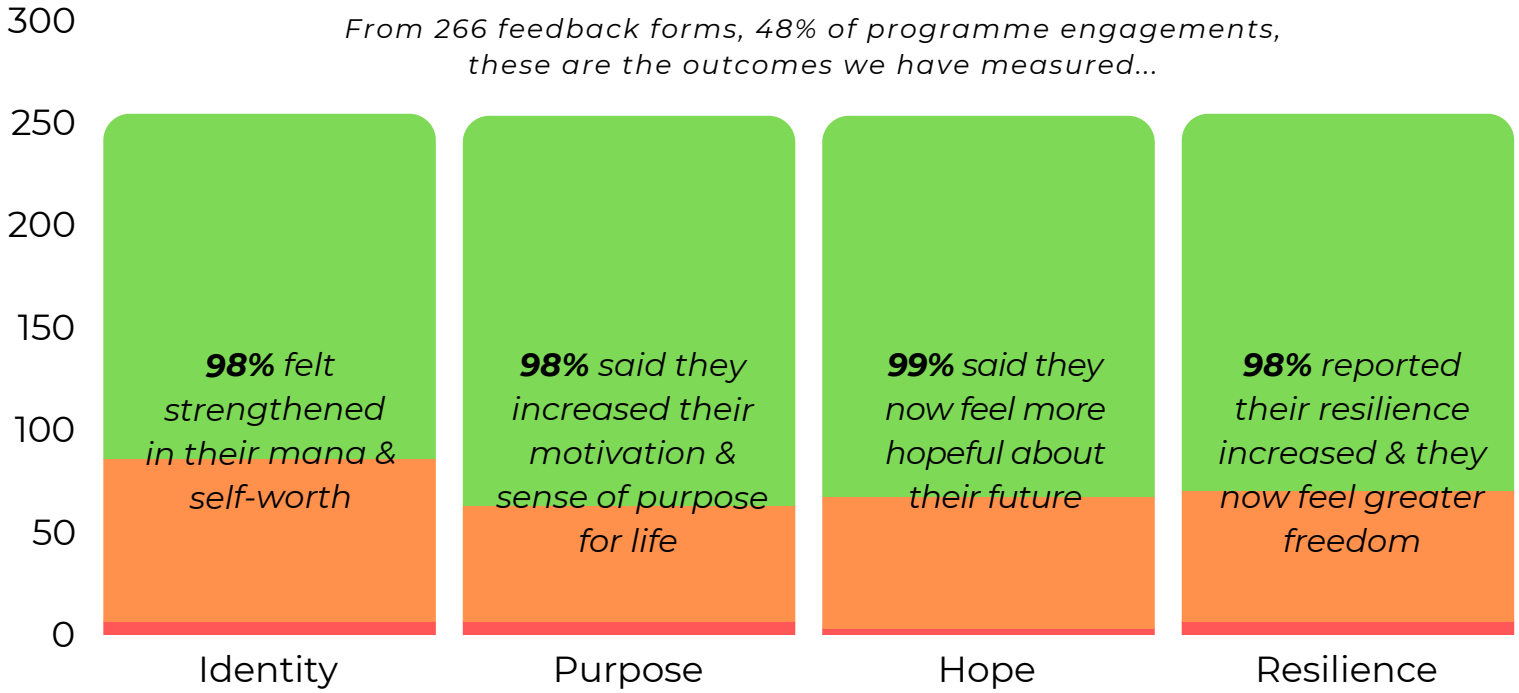


# OUR OUTCOMES

Youth Encounter has four strategic outcomes that show the difference we are making in young people's lives. Outcomes are measured with indicators to assess if anyone is better off from the programmes we are delivering. Outcomes are strategically set for each programme and delivered through our Live Life Wide Open modules. Each of the indicators includes a comprehensive set of questions about their life, behaviours, and feelings to accurately capture their current state.

■ Not Very
 ■ Some what
 ■ Very much

*From 266 feedback forms, 48% of programme engagements, these are the outcomes we have measured...*



**91%**

participants successfully completed the service they engaged in

**14**

only young people did not engage in the services we offered

**40** hours

hours of average time spent face-to-face with each individual who engaged at Youth Encounter during 2024

**1.6** years

On average, young people are engaged for **578.5 days (1.61 years)** in programme service delivery

*"Youth Encounter has impacted me most by being friends and doing lots of fun activities"*

**22%**

of our youth were engaged in multiple programmes at Youth Encounter during 2024

## How likely would you be to recommend Youth Encounter to a friend?

Not likely ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 Extremely likely







# THE IMPACT

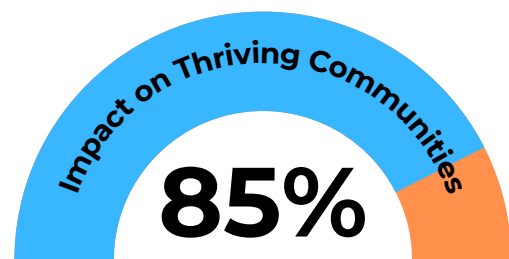
At Youth Encounter, our impact extends beyond the individual lives of our clients — it resonates at the community and national levels. Through our commitment to being impact focused, we are enhancing the well-being of entire populations. Our outcomes are designed to not only transform the lives of the young people we serve but also contribute to the health and vitality of communities across Aotearoa. By facilitating positive change within individuals, we drive broader social impact, creating a ripple effect that benefits society as a whole.

*"Youth Encounter provides an incredible service, and I honestly can't praise enough the support they offer to Rangatahi. Over the years, I've witnessed the profound impact they've made on students facing highly complex backgrounds. The strategies they use and the way they empower students to navigate life challenges become lifelong tools for managing emotional difficulties. Every student deserves to feel valued in their community, and Youth Encounter goes above and beyond to ensure our students experience that. Each student carries their own story, and through their programs, YE helps our youth recognize their worth. I'm deeply grateful to YE for their ongoing support of our students and whānau."*

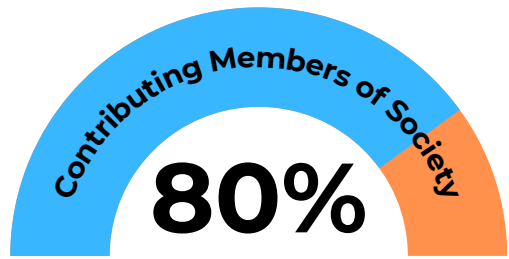
We invited community members to provide anonymous feedback on how Youth Encounter is impacting the community as a result of our four strategic outcomes - here are the results from 20 respondents;



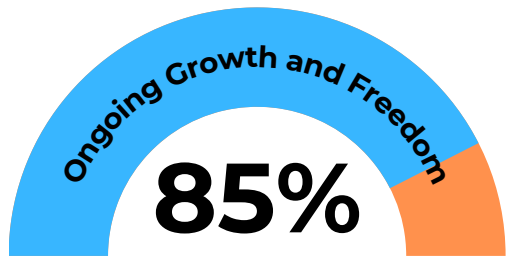
80% reported that Youth Encounter's outcomes with young people was having a high impact on creating healthier whānau.



85% felt Youth Encounter's outcomes were being very impactful towards building thriving communities.



80% of respondents believe Youth Encounter has a high impact on young people becoming contributing members of society.



85% have observed a high impact on the young peoples ongoing growth and freedom after being engaged with Youth Encounter.



# STORY OF TRANSFORMATION

## **Tayn's journey with Youth Encounter is a testament to the long-term impact of the Youth Encounter community, mentoring, and engaging programmes.**

When Tayn began his journey with Youth Encounter at age 13, he was struggling with an auditory processing disorder, learning difficulties, and social isolation. Frustration, anger, and confusion clouded his life, pushing him to make poor friend choices and leading him down a path of depression and even suicidal thoughts. His self-esteem was at rock bottom, and he didn't know how to manage his emotions.

His mother recalls that the one-on-one sessions with Youth Encounter's therapists were a turning point for him: "The one-on-one sessions gave Tayn something to look forward to during the school week. At first, it was only about the motorbikes, but soon, he realized it was a tool to help him deal with his feelings."

Through Youth Encounter's Dirt Bike Therapy program, teen camps, and mentoring programs, Tayn was given the tools to identify his triggers, work through his anger, and build confidence. He found a safe space where judgment was replaced with encouragement, and he began to see a future beyond his struggles.

"There's something about it that makes you want to go back," Tayn says. "They don't try to fix you or judge you as a person. They think you are awesome because of who you are."

Tayn's transformation was remarkable. He began rebuilding relationships with his loved ones and even started attending a youth group at a local church, engaging with faith in a way he had never done before. "I didn't really have a relationship with God before," Tayn shared. "But since joining Youth Encounter, I feel happy about myself and don't feel like I have to prove myself to anyone."

With the support of Youth Encounter's incredible volunteer mentors, Tayn found a solid friendship group and learned to manage his emotions in healthier ways. He even began volunteering as a young leader at camps himself, eager to give back to the community that had given him so much.

"Now I have a group I can rely on, and I'm starting to give volunteering a go, being a young leader on camps," Tayn says. "I can give back to people what they gave me; they're where I started."

Today, Tayn is thriving. He has completed his apprenticeship in engineering and is pursuing a successful career. The self-doubt, anger, and confusion that once held him back have been replaced by confidence, purpose, and a sense of belonging.

Reflecting on his journey, Tayn says, "Without Youth Encounter, I would still feel quite lost in life, not able to live to my potential. They've helped me understand that I'm good enough and can face my challenges."

Tayn's story is a powerful reminder of what can happen when someone is given the right tools, community, and guidance. Youth Encounter didn't just provide Tayn with a distraction—they gave him a family, a purpose, and a renewed sense of hope. And in turn, Tayn is using what he's learned to inspire and support others, ensuring that the ripple effect of his transformation continues for years to come.

*For confidentiality purposes, real names or identifiable photos are only used with permission.*

# OUR PROGRAMMES

574

total programme services participant engagements over 2024

"By helping me to believe in myself and to unleash my potential."



**Stage 1: Mauri Moe**  
- the development of social skills  
- *belonging*

## MENTORING

- Matched Mentoring
- Moroki Mentoring

**Stage 2: Mauri Oho**  
- the development of life skills  
- *believing*

From low self-worth to secure **identity**

Lacking direction to finding **purpose**

## THERAPY

- Ton1 Activity Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Clinical Counselling

## CONNECT

- Ton1 Specialized Connect
- Connect Groups
- Connect Gatherings

# UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

Breaking free of the negative cycle with **resilience**

## LEADERSHIP

- Leadership Training
- Volunteering
- Team Building

## MAHI

- Mahi Mentoring
- Mahi Readiness
- Mahi Transition

Feeling despondent to having a **hope-filled future**

## CAMPS

- Teen Camps
- Young Adults

**Stage 3: Mauri Ora**

- the development of leadership skills - *becoming*

## MAURI ORA SPECTRUM

### MAURI MOE

#### Untapped Potential

This state of being is withdrawn with expressions of isolation, pain, anguish and sorrow. There is darkness and inactivity.

### MAURI OHO

#### Being Awakened

This state of being indicates courage and locating inner strength. Interest has been sparked and there is a newfound willingness to participate.

### MAURI ORA

#### Transformative Potential

This state of being has full awareness of and engages in purpose, identity, inspiration and motivation for the future. There is growth, hope and life.





# SERVICE DELIVERY

## Outputs;

**Reach:** We engaged with 66 individuals through 67 separate service engagements.

**Engagement:** Delivered a total of 281 sessions with an impressive 80% attendance rate.

**Responsiveness:** Successfully engaged with all but one client who was referred to our therapy services.

**Completion & Success:** 58 individuals successfully completed their therapy course with 8 partially completing.

**Ongoing Support:** 22 therapy clients continue to receive support after their therapy.

**Group Therapy:** Facilitated 31 group therapy sessions.

**Challenges:** 9 clients disengaged before fully completing their service delivery. One individual reoffended during their engagement with us.



## Strategic Outcome One

From low self-worth to more secure **identity!**

### As a result of our Therapy programme;

- **Increased Self-Worth & Strengthened Mana:** A significant majority (**84%**) of participants reported an increase in self-worth and a strengthened sense of mana, indicating a positive impact on their cultural identity and overall well-being.
- **Improved Family Relationships:** **84%** of individuals reported developing more meaningful relationships with their whānau, highlighting the program's role in strengthening family bonds.
- **Values-Based Learning & Social Skills:** The program successfully engaged **89%** of participants in values-based learning, leading to the development of social skills and healthier relationships.

## Strategic Outcome Two

Lacking direction to finding **purpose** in life!

### As a result of our Mentoring programme;

- **Life Skills & Knowledge:** Three-quarters (**75%**) of participants reported developing essential life skills and knowledge, equipping them to navigate challenges and make informed choices.
- **Values & Authenticity:** **75%** of mentees gained a deeper understanding of their personal values and feel more empowered to live authentically, aligning their actions with their beliefs.
- **Motivation & Goal Setting:** A significant majority (**73%**) experienced increased motivation towards pursuing their goals and aspirations, demonstrating a newfound sense of purpose and direction.
- **Community Engagement:** Nearly **80%** (**79%**) of participants showed a greater inclination towards contributing to healthier communities, reflecting a growing sense of social responsibility and belonging.



## Outputs;

### Reach & Engagement:

- 122 service engagements across three distinct mentoring types:
- Served a total of 91 individual young people.

### Program Completion & Success:

- 51 clients successfully completed their matched mentoring plans.
- 48 clients are continuing with mentoring support into 2025.

### Challenges:

- 7 accepted referrals did not engage with the service (all Moroki mentoring).
- 16 clients disengaged before completing the program, 11 partially completed their mentoring journey & 5 left the area.
- 1 client with an offending record re-offended during their engagement.

## Connect Programme Outputs;

### Reach & Engagement:

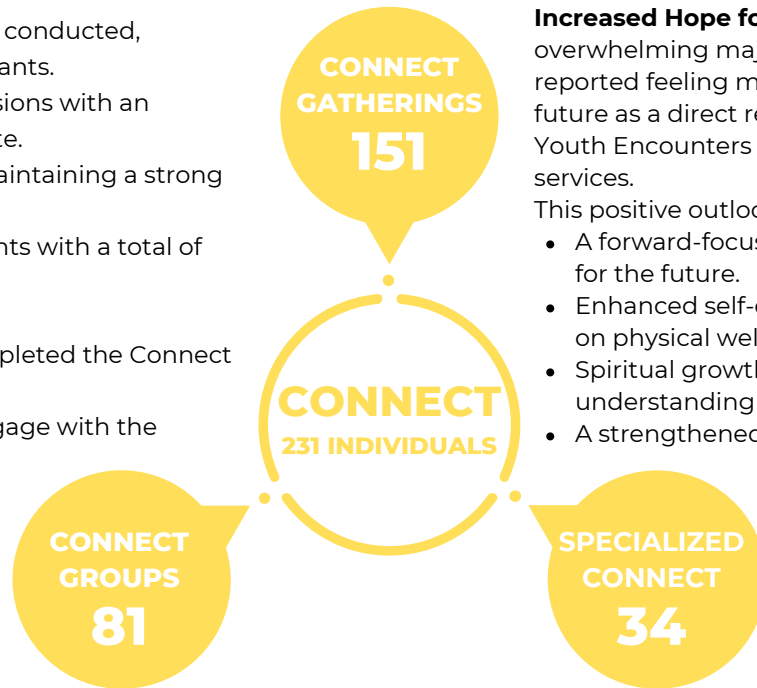
- 266 service engagements were conducted, involving 231 individual participants.
- Facilitated 209 one-on-one sessions with an exceptional 99% attendance rate.
- Delivered 29 group sessions, maintaining a strong 90% attendance rate.
- Hosted Connect gathering events with a total of 276 attendees.

### Completion & Success:

- 89 individuals successfully completed the Connect program.
- 24 clients are continuing to engage with the program into 2025.

### Participant Demographics:

- Gender: 68% male, 32% female
- Ethnicity: 41% Māori, 35% NZ European, 21% Asian, 3% other



### Outcomes;

**Increased Hope for the Future:** An overwhelming majority (**99%**) of participants reported feeling more hopeful about their future as a direct result of engaging with the Youth Encounters Connect Programme services.

This positive outlook was linked to:

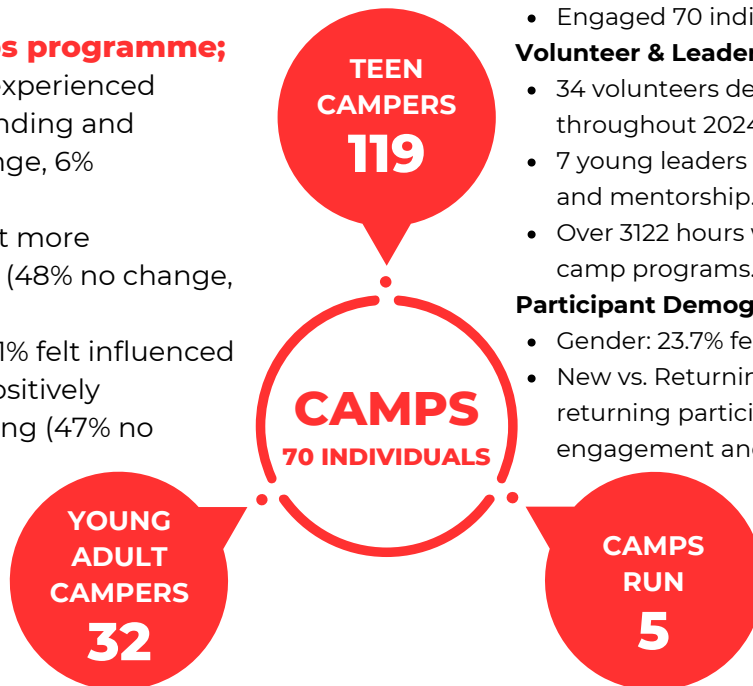
- A forward-focus with increased preparation for the future.
- Enhanced self-care and a greater emphasis on physical well-being.
- Spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of their beliefs.
- A strengthened sense of their value (mana).

## Strategic Outcome Three

Feeling despondent to having **hope** in the future!

### As a result of our Camps programme;

- **Personal Growth:** 52% experienced growth in self-understanding and spirituality (42% no change, 6% decrease).
- **Empowerment:** 48% felt more empowered and valued (48% no change, 4% decrease).
- **Values-Driven Living:** 51% felt influenced to live by their values, positively impacting their well-being (47% no change, 2% decrease).
- **Future Potential:** 34% gained a stronger belief in their future potential (62% no change, 4% decrease).



### Outputs;

#### Reach & Participation:

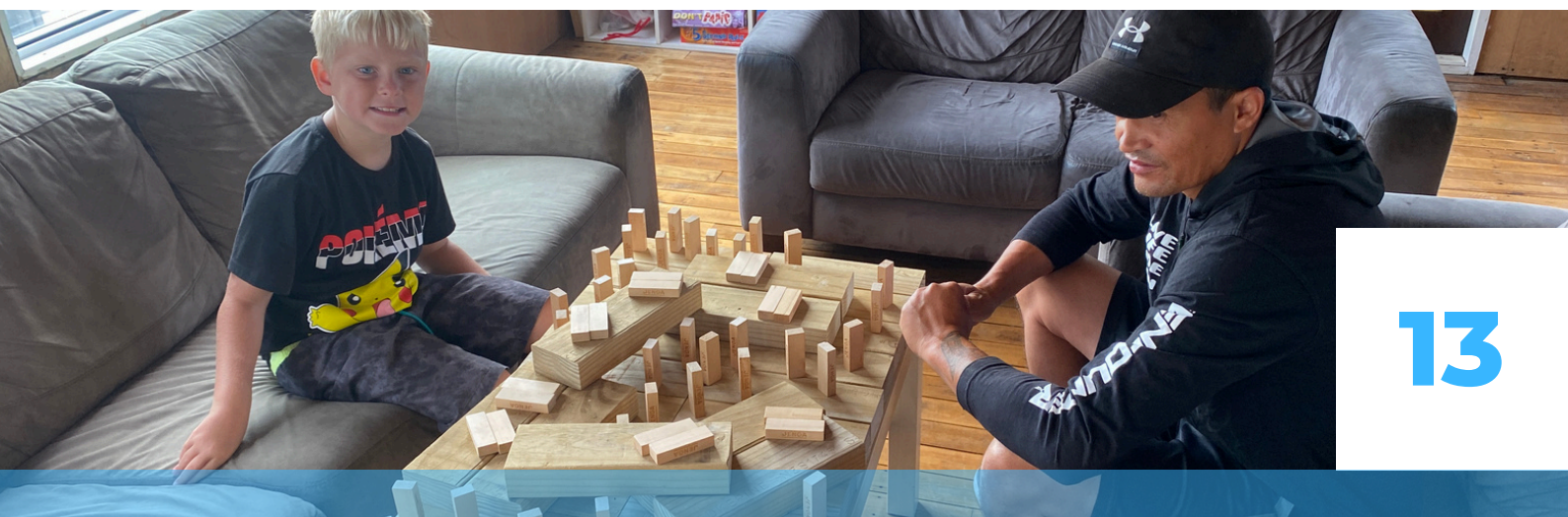
- 151 total participations across 5 camps held in 2024 (includes staff and young leaders).
- Engaged 70 individual young people.

#### Volunteer & Leadership Contribution:

- 34 volunteers dedicated their time to camps throughout 2024.
- 7 young leaders contributed to camp facilitation and mentorship.
- Over 3122 hours were volunteered to support camp programs.

#### Participant Demographics:

- Gender: 23.7% female, 76.3% male
- New vs. Returning: 22 new participants, 77 returning participants, indicating strong engagement and interest.





# SERVICE DELIVERY

## COLLABORATION

Youth Encounter places a strong emphasis on collaboration, cooperation, and creating meaningful partnerships with stakeholders who share a common purpose—empowering the youth in our communities to realize their potential, make positive life choices, and contribute meaningfully to society. Our commitment to journey alongside other organizations is essential in collectively achieving the desired outcomes for our rangatahi and their whānau, reinforcing the power of collaborative efforts in bringing a positive change in our community.

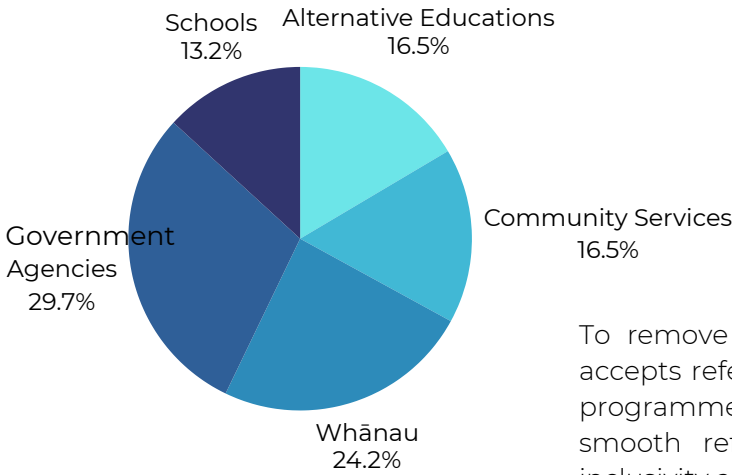
**31** agencies, education providers, community services we collaborated with over 2024 to enhance the delivery and impact of our services

## REFERRALS

**91**

high need client referrals from our online referral process, with 17 not suited or chose not to engage with our services.

*"I felt it before I saw it or touched it. Coming through the gate, I could feel it. Speaking with your kaitiaki I could feel the mauri of this mahi."*



To remove barriers and broaden impact, Youth Encounter actively accepts referrals to connect with potential clients to participate in our programme services. Our structured approach not only facilitates a smooth referral process but also reinforces our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility in engaging clients with our services.





"Youth Encounter has given me a safe place to explore my potential and step into the life God has called me to"

STAFF

95%

employee satisfaction result in 2024 using Gallup's Q12 Employee Engagement Survey, well above best-practice organisations at 72%

The transformative impact Youth Encounter has is fundamentally anchored in the exceptional dedication and expertise of our staff team (including employees and volunteers). Their unwavering commitment, passion, and tireless efforts contribute to the organization's impactful initiatives and the positive transformation of the lives of the youth we serve. Their collective skills, innovation, and collaborative spirit create a dynamic and supportive work environment, facilitating the growth and transformation through our mahi. Simply put, we could not achieve our mission without the incredible contributions of our staff, who continually exemplify the heart and soul of Youth Encounter.

The voluntary time of our staff is an integral part of the organizational framework. Comprising individuals who share a passion for empowering youth, these volunteers contribute their time, skills, and enthusiasm to various aspects of our programs and initiatives. Their roles range from facilitating young people on camps, running activities and providing hospitality, all towards creating a vibrant and empowering environment for rangatahi to unleash their incredible potential.

92%

of participants said staff friendliness and supportiveness was excellent.

Employed Staff;

- People employed full time: 7
- People employed part time: 6
- Full time equivalent: 10
- Average paid hours per week: 395

Volunteer Staff;

- Total volunteers: 33
- 3526 voluntary hours





# YOU

Thank you for supporting the future of our youth—we are a not-for-profit charitable trust ensuring all your support is contributing towards a catalyst for positive change. Together, we can make a lasting impact on young lives in Aotearoa NZ through unleashing their God-given potential to Live Life Wide Open.

Support us at...

[www.youthencounter.co.nz/support](http://www.youthencounter.co.nz/support)

Direct debit: 02-0452-0048320-000



*"Encounter has really helped me push through my fears and make me more confident with scary things because I now know I can do it."*



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[www.youthencounter.co.nz](http://www.youthencounter.co.nz)

