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| **Engaging with Children and Young People to Build a Healthy, Child and Youth Friendly Whangārei** |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)****Setting/problem**Whangārei was the first city in New Zealand to register as a Child Friendly City under the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative. But what does it mean to be “child and youth friendly” in Whangārei, according to its own young people? The Child and Youth Friendly (CYFC) Whangārei steering committee, housed in Manaia Health Primary Health Organization in Whangārei, New Zealand wanted to find out. We developed an evaluation project to engage with young people in and around the city to hear their thoughts on our city and suggestions on how we can truly live the value of being “child and youth friendly.”**Intervention**In winter 2018, the CYFC team engaged with school-aged children and youth (aged 6-18 years) in focussed conversations across Whangārei. We asked youth directly what mattered to them and how we could make Whangārei better for our young people. Then, we brought their voices back to the steering committee and to partner organizations in the community.**Outcomes**Seven themes emerged from our engagement project. Children and youth in Whangārei area care and want to make a difference in their communities. Most significantly, we found that our conversations with young people moved from wanting “more” things to wanting “meaningful” things. The imperative for building strong, resilient, healthy communities is an obvious desire from young people in Whangārei.**Implications**How might we be more child and youth friendly in our health promotion work in New Zealand and across the globe? This evaluation project tells one community’s story to move in that direction, sharing our learning along the way.The evaluation project for CYFC Whangārei was a catalyst and conversation starter for changing processes and outcomes towards being truly child and youth friendly in our communities. While this project gave us information specific to community, our methods could be replicated and our successes stories can be shared with anyone with an interest in the well-being of children and young people. This story is for those who want to build a healthier, stronger community for young people, *with* young people.**Preferred presentation format**Oral  |