



Ministry for
**Ethnic
Communities**
Te Tari Mātāwaka

Future Leaders Programme Self-evaluation Report



18 - 22 May 2025



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Introduction

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities (the Ministry) successfully delivered the Future Leaders Programme (FLP) in May 2025. This pilot initiative was jointly designed and delivered in collaboration with the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ).

FLP aimed to empower, educate, and engage young Muslim-Kiwi leaders to become active and influential civic contributors. It focused on equipping participants with applied knowledge and practical skills for effective leadership, civic engagement, and participation.

The programme objectives were to familiarise participants with key areas of leadership: leadership and community, media engagement, and effective conflict resolution. Participants had the opportunity to hear directly from senior public servants and community leaders who have deep connections to matters affecting Ethnic Communities. The speakers brought valuable insights and decades of professional experience, creating a rich learning environment. This report summarises the impact of the programme in achieving its practical and experiential objectives.



Description of the Future Leaders Programme

Throughout the four-day programme, participants and experienced leaders engaged in a two-way dialogue, asking questions and exploring topics across a range of fields, including media, community advocacy, academia, human rights, governance, security, and conflict resolution.

This interactive approach fostered robust and meaningful discussions that broadened participants' perspectives and deepened their understanding of civic leadership.

In addition to sharing their professional expertise, guest speakers shared their personal leadership journeys, and the challenges encountered throughout their careers. The speakers, including senior government representatives, reinforced the importance of social cohesion and investing in emerging youth leadership within Ethnic Communities.

The programme concluded with the presentation of six group projects, each addressing issues of significance to the participants. Project topics included mental health support for Muslim youth, Halal financial literacy, access to cultural and language education, strengthening intercultural connections, particularly with mana whenua, and youth mentoring initiatives.

These projects reflected the diverse interests and leadership drive of the cohort. Participants demonstrated their ability to apply lessons from the programme by identifying community issues, developing plausible solutions, and incorporating data to build compelling, evidence-based narratives.

Thematic assessments of participants

The programme attracted strong interest, with over 106 applications received. A cohort of 23 young Muslim-Kiwi leaders (10 males and 13 females) was selected, representing diverse regions across New Zealand, including Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, Wellington, and various regional centres.

Participants came from varied educational and professional backgrounds. Many are current university students pursuing studies in disciplines such as law, engineering, accountancy, public health, and the humanities, while others are early-career professionals working in these sectors. This diversity enriched the group discussions and brought a range of lived experiences into the learning environment.

To understand the collective leadership profile of the group, participants answered three pre-programme questions on what they had hoped to gain from the programme.

- What type of leader do you aspire to be and why?
- What inspired you to join this programme?
- What do you want to get out of this programme?

Participants expected by joining the programme to:

- Gain connections and networks.
- Acquire practical skills and learn how to apply them.
- Gain knowledge and confidence from experts and peers.
- Make an impact on their community and fulfil their growth and motivation.

Key insights (impact assessment)

To evaluate whether the programme achieved its intended outcomes, we tracked shifts in participants' confidence levels and intention to apply the learning outcomes across three leadership domains: Leadership and community, media engagement, and effective conflict resolution.

The youth participants filled out two surveys, at the baseline and post-programme. Participants also reflected on what they took away from the programme by the end.

The surveys had a 100% completion rate. However, three participants had to drop from the last day of the programme for personal reasons. They did not fill out the post-programme survey. Nevertheless, the survey responses strongly show that attending the FLP achieved the following:

- It deepened participants' understanding of community leadership, their confidence to influence change in their community, and their willingness to engage in civic participation (voting, public meetings, consultations, submissions) as community leaders.
- It increased participants' confidence and willingness to engage with media to communicate, influence and, raise public awareness about community issues.
- It resulted in an increase in familiarity with effective conflict resolution strategies and confidence in applying them.

Below, we discuss key insights from the three leadership domains, followed by an assessment of the takeaways that the youth drew from participating in the FLP.

Leadership and community

Three aspects of community leadership were assessed pre and post programme: influencing change, civic participation, taking action. Participants were asked to rate their confidence in answering the following questions pre and post programme:

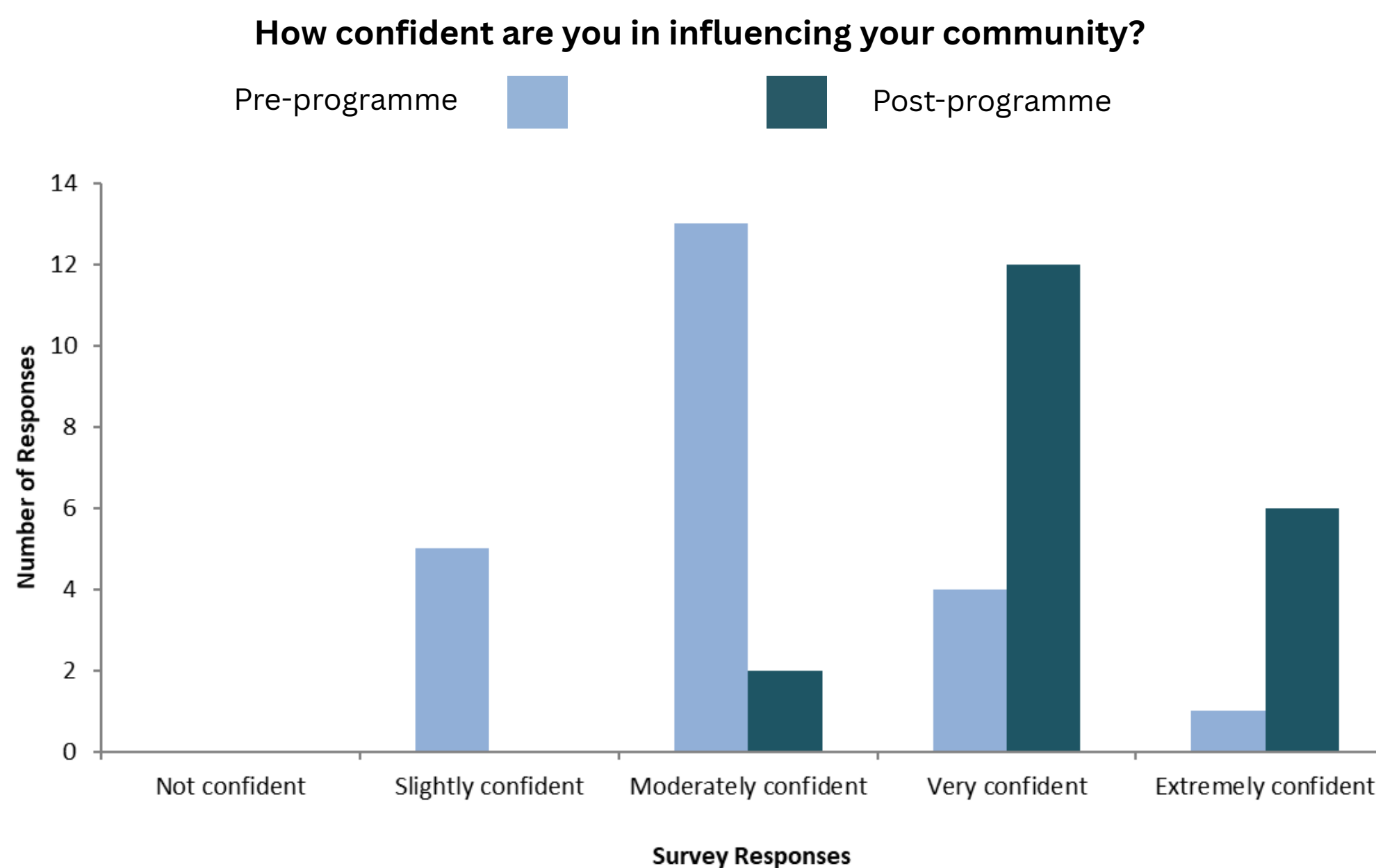
- 1.How familiar are you with leadership?
- 2.How confident are you in influencing change in your community?
- 3.How likely are you to participate in civic activities?
- 4.How confident are you in identifying actionable community needs and implementing solutions to community problems?

As shown in the table below, the majority (70%) of participants rated themselves as very or extremely familiar with community leadership before the programme. Following the programme, all respondents reported an increase in their understanding of community leadership.

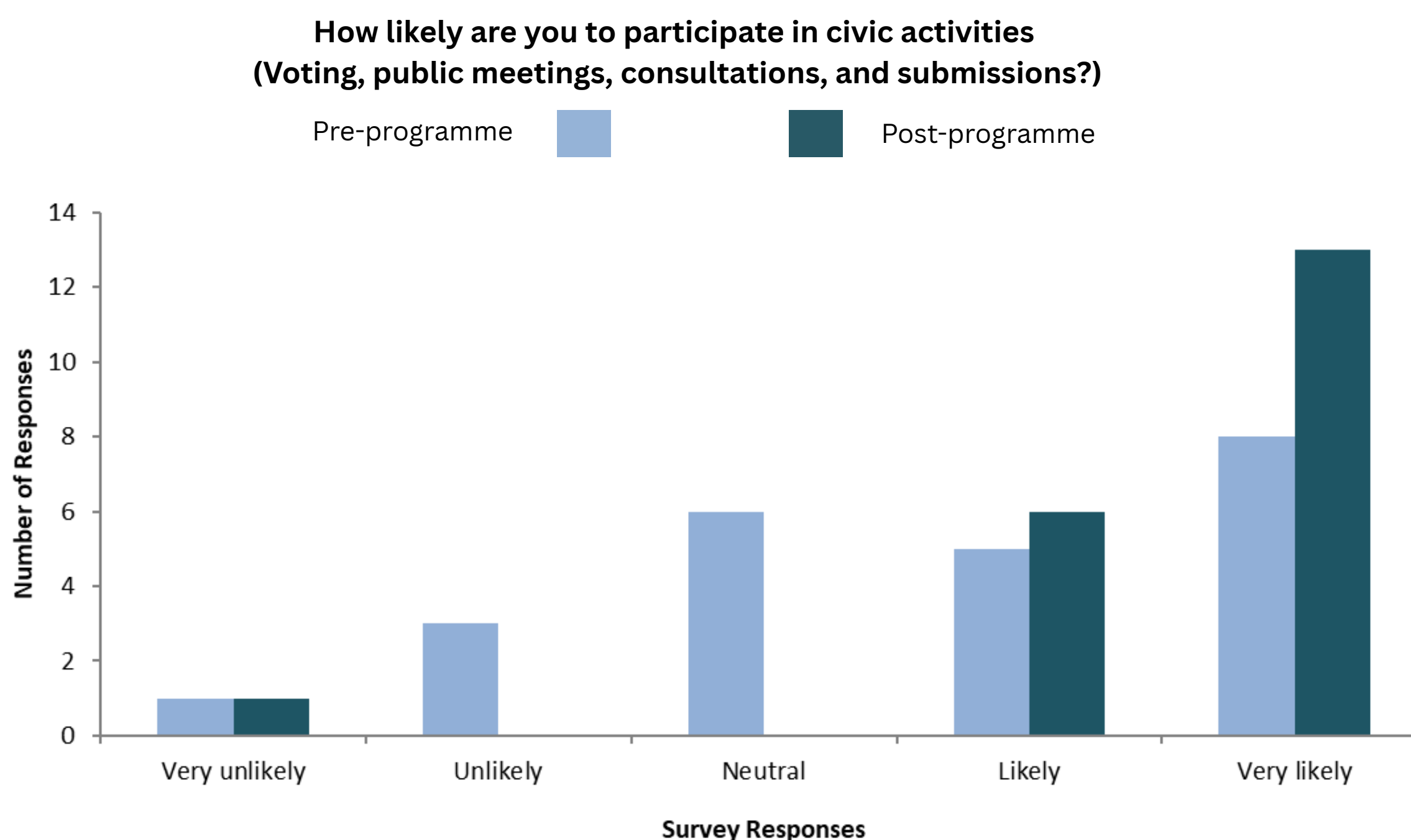
Question	Pre-programme	Post-programme
<p><i>How familiar are you with community leadership?</i></p> <p><i>Post-programme: Has your understanding of community leadership changed?</i></p>	<p>Slightly familiar – 3</p> <p>Moderately familiar – 4</p> <p>Very familiar – 11</p> <p>Extremely familiar – 5</p>	<p>No change – 0</p> <p>Slightly increased – 1</p> <p>Moderately increased – 4</p> <p>Significantly increased – 15</p>



When measuring the impact of the programme on the participants' confidence level to influence change in their community, only five participants were either very confident or extremely confident prior to the programme. That number increased to 18 following the programme. The chart below compares participants' responses before and after participating in the programme.

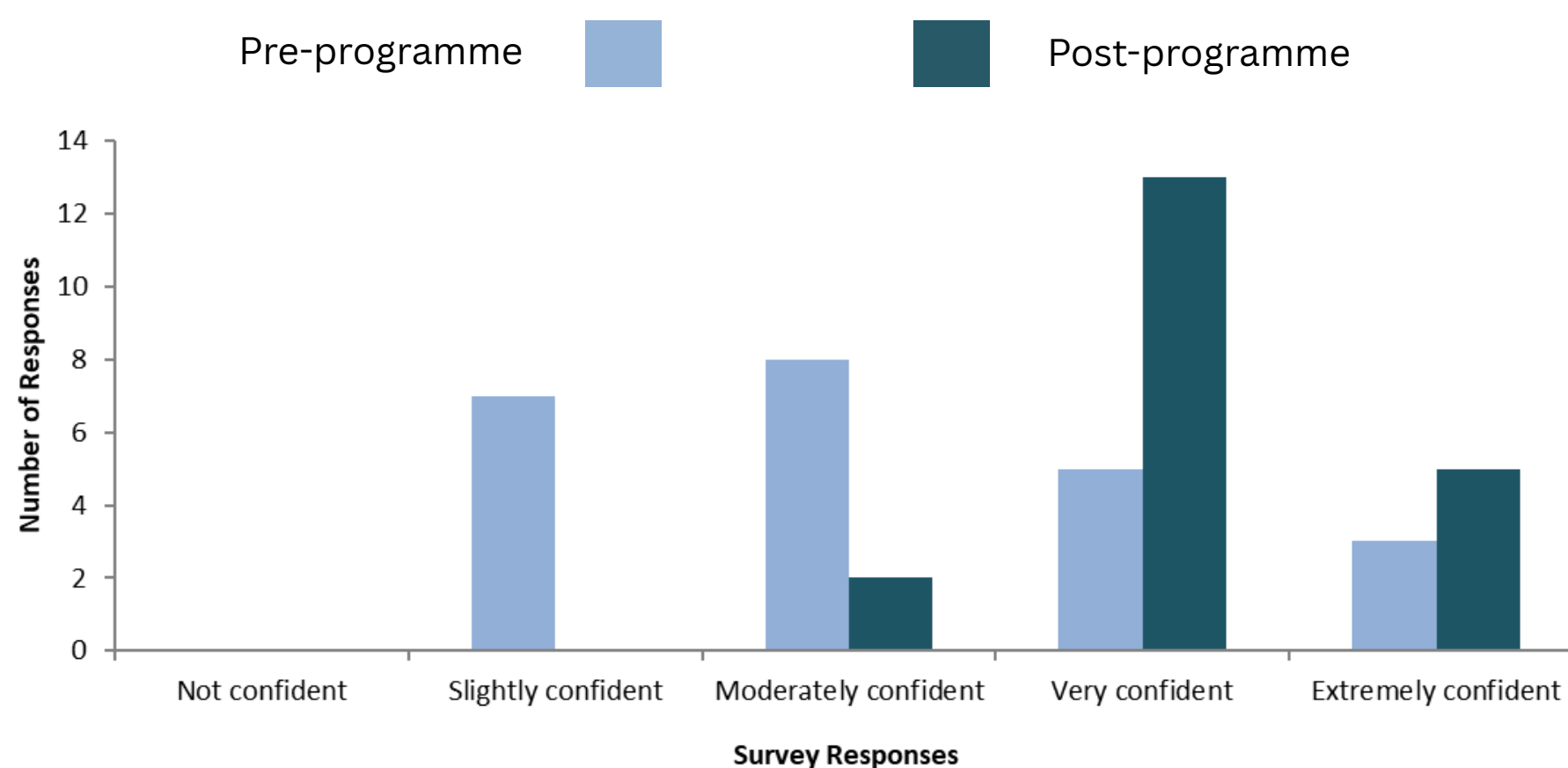


The likelihood of engaging in civic participation (voting, public meetings, consultations, submissions) increased for the majority of participants after the programme. Prior to the programme, three participants reported neutrality and six expressed they were unlikely to engage in civic participation. The chart below compares participants' responses before and after participating in the programme.



Similarly, a strong upward shift is seen in participants' confidence in identifying and taking action on community problems. Eighteen participants reported after the programme that they were either very confident or extremely confident compared to only eight before the programme. The chart below compares participants' responses before and after participating in the programme.

How confident are you in identifying actionable community needs and implementing solutions to community problem?



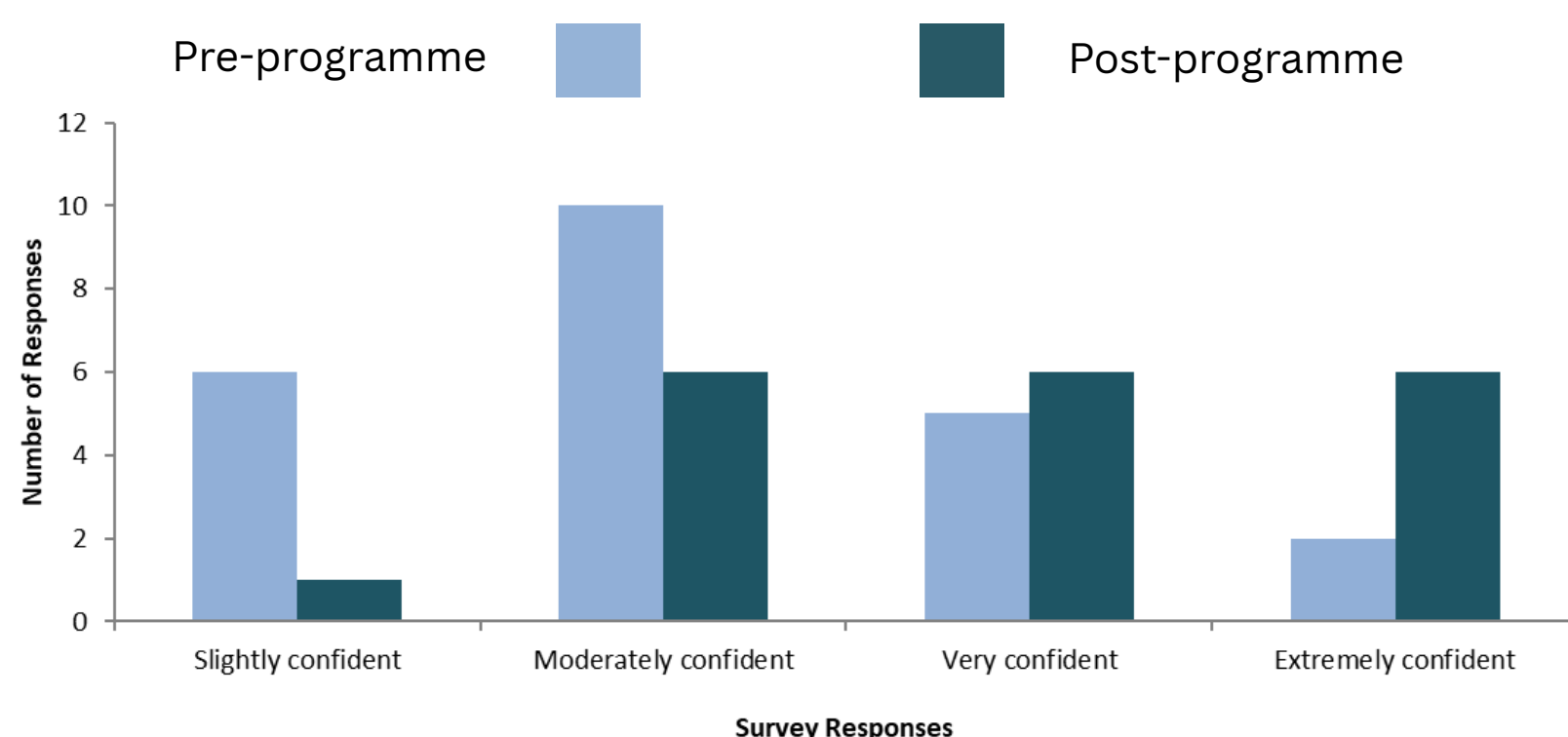
Media interaction

We assessed the confidence and intention of engaging with media to communicate, influence, and raise awareness about community issues through the following two questions:

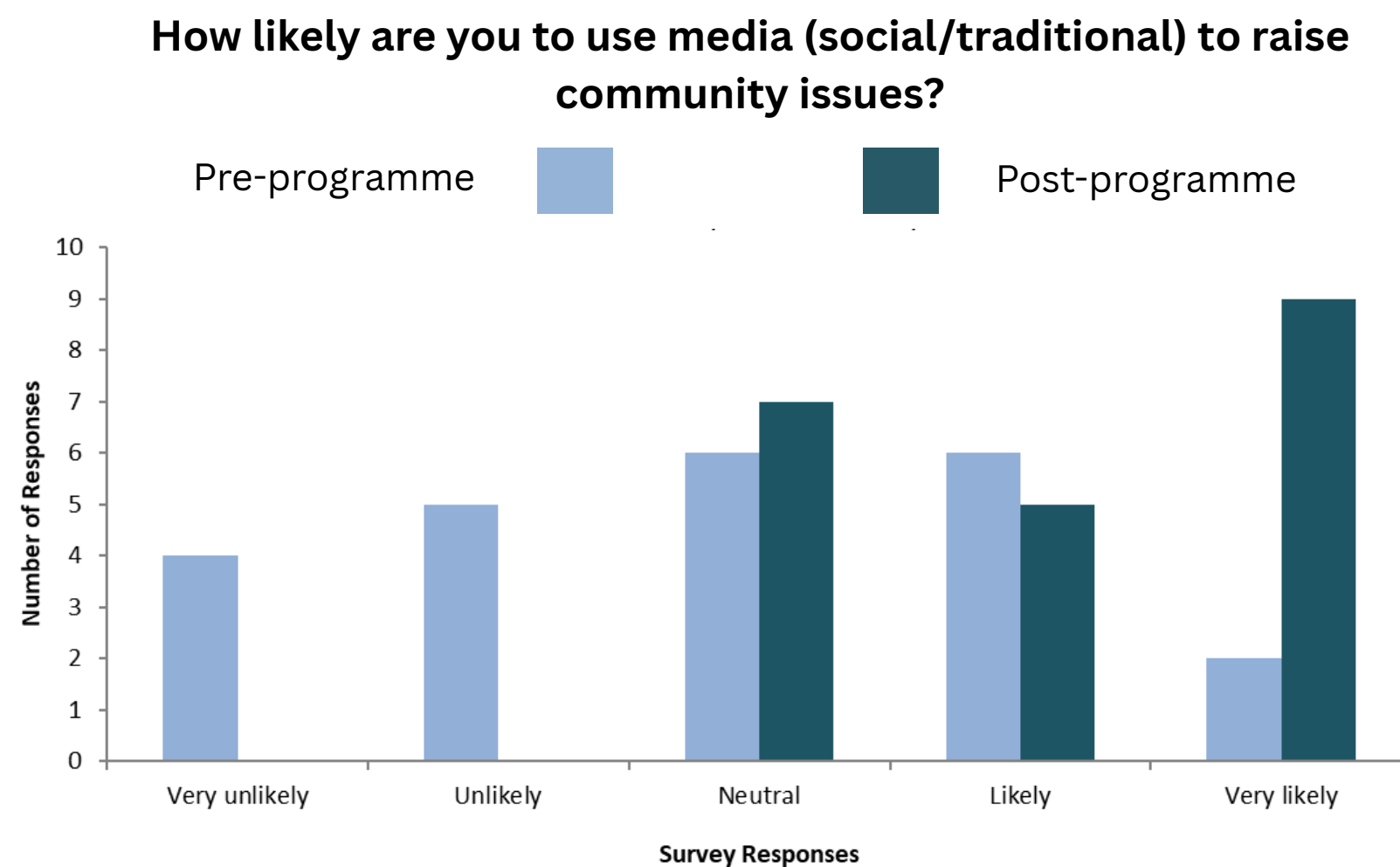
1. How confident are you in communicating community issues through media (social/traditional)?
2. How likely are you to use media (social/traditional) to raise community issues?

Participation in the programme shifted confidence in the participant's self-reported ability to engage with the media. Prior to the programme, only seven participants showed high confidence (as either very confident or extremely confident) in engaging with media. In comparison, 16 participants were slightly confident or moderately confident. The chart below compares participants' responses before and after participating in the programme.

How confident are you in identifying actionable community needs and implementing solutions to community problems?



The programme remarkably shifted the participants' intentions to use media to highlight community issues. The subset of participants that expressed hesitation prior to the programme dropped to zero following the programme (down from nine participants before the programme). The chart below compares participants' responses before and after participating in the programme.



Conflict resolution

We measured the participants' familiarity with conflict resolution strategies and willingness to employ them to address community challenges.

The shift from a low-confidence baseline to a high level of comfort indicates a transformative impact on the youth's understanding of the significance of conflict resolution. All participants, following the programme, expressed an increase in their familiarity with conflict resolution strategies. This contrasts with the pre-programme responses, where the majority of participants were either not familiar, slightly familiar, or moderately familiar with conflict resolution strategies.

The participants indicate a readiness to apply the skills that were introduced to them during the FLP. There is a notable shift in confidence in employing conflict resolution strategies to address emerging community issues. Many participants expressed being confident, very confident, or extremely confident in this regard. The table below compares participants' responses before and after participating in the programme.



Questions	Pre-programme	Post-programme
<p>How familiar are you with conflict resolution strategies?</p> <p>Post-programme: Has this programme improved your understanding of navigating conflict as a leader?</p>	<p>Not familiar – 4</p> <p>Slightly familiar – 8</p> <p>Moderately familiar – 6</p> <p>Very familiar – 5</p> <p>Extremely familiar – 0</p>	<p>Significantly decreased – 0</p> <p>Slightly decreased – 0</p> <p>No change – 0</p> <p>Slightly increased – 9</p> <p>Significantly increased – 11</p>
<p>When conflict arises in your community, how comfortable are you taking a leadership or mediation role?</p> <p>Post-programme: How confident are you now in applying the strategies learned to help resolve community conflict?</p>	<p>Not comfortable – 1</p> <p>Slightly comfortable – 4</p> <p>Somewhat comfortable – 14</p> <p>Very comfortable – 3</p> <p>Extremely comfortable – 1</p>	<p>Not confident – 1</p> <p>Slightly confident – 0</p> <p>Moderately confident – 7</p> <p>Very confident – 6</p> <p>Extremely confident – 8</p>

Reflections from the cohort – takeaways

At the programme, we invited the participants to reflect on their experience and share what they would take forward.

At a high level, the participants’ feedback reflects the transformative impact the programme had on their commitment to building stronger, more inclusive communities across Aotearoa.

While each participant’s journey was unique, their post-programme reflections consistently highlighted the importance of confidence, identity, purposeful action, and the courage to lead.

Several common themes also emerged, showing that the programme positively influenced their leadership skills, practical capabilities, networks, and sense of impact. Below are some quotes that illustrate these themes:

“Confidence in being Māori Muslim and learned about community and government engagement.”

“I want to stay connected with this cohort as everyone has such good ideas and I want to be able to help them with it to make NZ into the country we want it to be.”

“Working more within the system and bringing our issues to light in a way that is strategic.”

Links and photos

[Future Leaders Programme: Next generation rising | Ministry for Ethnic Communities.](#)

[Read the full agenda of the Programme to learn more about the topics and speakers or PDF.](#)

[View the Programme's album on our Facebook.](#)



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