

## Submission for a fair chance for all.

August 27, 2021

We are making this submission as You Thrive NZ Ltd, a kiwi business dedicated to youth development, health and wellbeing mentoring, and data driven programming. We have recently launched our first program, Lālanga- focused on delivering these services to Pasifika youth in decile 1 high schools. We have also started beta trials of our first data capturing solution - our Health and Wellbeing Survey is a web app-based questionnaire that generates a quantitative snapshot of the wellbeing of the participants, including an overall view for the school executive's benefit.

We would welcome the opportunity to assist with your inquiry. Please contact Daniel Oliver for further information: 0272264995 or [daniel@youthrive.com](mailto:daniel@youthrive.com). For more information about Lālanga please visit: [www.lalanga.co.nz](http://www.lalanga.co.nz)

### Question 1. What are the main aspects of disadvantage that should be investigated in this inquiry?

We would like to see the inquiry to focus on the following aspects of disadvantage:

**Education:** - In our service delivery we notice a disconnect in people suffering under persistent disadvantage from the value of education and the opportunities that come from it. Young Pasifika people, who we predominantly deal with in our services suffer from poor educational outcomes but react strongly to stories and encouragements from Pasifika who have escaped the poverty cycle and cite education as a key mechanism to escaping. Why is education failing the people who need it most? How can education be enhanced to ensure those affected by persistent disadvantage take hold of this precious commodity?

**Culture:** - Again, in our services to Pasifika we see the impact of culture on young people and the intergenerational cycles that might fall into. To be clear, every culture in the world has it's admirable traits as well as it's less useful elements. There is a very strong bond between generations in Maori and Pasifika families. Sometimes that bond leads to the same patterns that contribute to persistent disadvantage being repeated each generation. We would like to see the inquiry dig into the cultural elements of disadvantage, more specifically to determine useful means by which to speak into that cultural aspect with sensitivity and understanding to address the shortcomings and celebrate the strengths thereof.

## Question 2. Where should the Commission focus its research effort?

Social services, in general, struggle to quantitatively demonstrate their effectiveness and outcomes. To raise NZers out of persistent disadvantage we have to do better. The Commission may be well placed to focus research effort on developing a compelling set of metrics and measures for describing the complex and intricate elements of disadvantage and wellbeing. This would allow those who are working in this space to converse with a common understanding and work towards common goals that are clear to comprehend.

## Question 3. Where should government focus its effort on finding solutions?

In our experience gathering data on the health and wellbeing among young Pasifika people we have noticed a subtle trend; in many ways, the abundance of programs and solutions deployed by the government to assist them overcoming disadvantage have an unintended consequence of eroding their own personal resilience. Programs and solutions should have an underlying primary objective of equipping disadvantaged youth to overcome their circumstances, rather than simply relieving them of the disadvantage. The common poverty traps that we see Pasifika youth falling into intergenerationally are sometimes merely delayed by the dearth of programs and solutions at high school age.

This leads us to believe that the following key elements of solutions need to be focused on by the government:

**1. Education reform:** We notice many students (again, focusing of Pasifika, which we work directly with) concluding their high school life without critical life skills. Time management, basic financial skills, nutritional understanding. Young people living in persistent disadvantage have a greater need for basic subjects and core life skills – it's concerning that we see these students enter the world of higher education, career and adult life without some of these core tools.

**2. Non-programmatic solutions:** Consideration should be given to streamlining and simplifying the ever increasing array of programs and solutions that are deployed to combat the problems that come with persistent disadvantage. There are copious service providers with overlapping foci and objectives – how we can simplify the landscape to ensure that tax money spent on combatting persistent disadvantage is having a powerful impact and delivering meaningful change. The prevailing system of allocating funds to organisations that demonstrate they can tick the right box produces a high number of substandard programs that occupy time and attention of schools and young people who are trying to focus on their studies. Sometimes the best solution is less, not more.

**3. Resilience and agency:** Focus on producing high quality solutions that are:

a. Firstly, and most importantly, measurable and able to demonstrate effectiveness. Data collection and data fidelity should become requirements, not nice-to-have elements.

b. Secondly, developing a strong sense of agency in those who are experiencing persistent disadvantage. Solutions should be able to differentiate between handing out relief and drawing out the personal agency of the individuals and collectives in need.

c. Thirdly, developing resilience and grit in those who are experiencing persistent disadvantage, particularly young people. One of the most powerful tools for young people who are (consciously or not) trying to escape the cycles of poverty is attitude – the ability to pick themselves up and have the personal resilience to keep going.

4. Community enablement: Developing strategies to re-empower communities to become strong and familiar so that those in disadvantage (temporary or persistent) know they can seek help from friends and family first, and not seek government assistance when the troubles of life afflict them.

## Question 4. Is there anything else that you would like to see covered in this inquiry?

In the consultation paper we read that, “In all, opportunity is the domain where New Zealand rates most poorly compared with other nations.” We believe that opportunity abounds in New Zealand in the era that we live. We would like to see a greater exploration of this topic so that, if it proves to be a truthful statement, we can all work together to solve this issue.

### About you:



Daniel & Lesieli Oliver are the founders of You Thrive NZ and both reside in Pukekohe, Auckland.

About Daniel: Age: 39, Ethnicity: New Zealander

About Lesieli: Age 37, Ethnicity: Tongan

# About the founders

## The people behind Lālanga



### **LESIELI OLIVER**

**FOUNDER | PROGRAM DIRECTOR |  
LEAD FEMALE MENTOR**

BA.Politics, Cert.Pac Nutrition,  
ICF Life Coach

Lesieli is a proud Tongan and comes from the villages of Tatakamotonga and Tu'anuku. She is a mother of four and proud wife of 15 years to her husband Daniel. Lesieli attributes her success, drive and determination to the struggles she watched her family go through after migrating to New Zealand from Tonga when she was 4. She is driven to lead You Thrive because she knows what it's like to have challenges impact your wellbeing as a learner.

She studied Politics at University, and she was the first Pacific female to be elected as the Auckland University Student Association President. Lesieli is savvy and multi-passionate, and attributes this to her cultural heritage.



### **DANIEL OLIVER**

**FOUNDER & TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR**

MBA, B. Eng, DipAppSc,

Dan's heart for Pacific people began when he went on his first Missions Trip to Tonga with the Salvation Army when he was 17. He is now the proud husband of a Tongan, and also proud father to his four young European-Tongan children..

Dan has an extensive background. He is the Director of Unify Digital, which is a business he began 16 years ago.

As a Managing Director he has a demonstrated history of working in the information technology, software, cyber security and services industry. Skilled in Sales, Management, Account Management, Start-ups, and Business Development and leadership development.

# OUR ORGANISATION: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

You Thrive NZ is a New Zealand based company dedicated to championing the success of young New Zealanders through innovative mentoring and coaching programs, and solutions designed specifically to inspire, empower and encourage young New Zealanders to thrive in their lives, now and in the future.

We launched our first product in November 2020, in response to the Ministry of Education's call for innovative ideas to meet the wellbeing needs of NZ learners impacted by COVID-19. Our response was the creation of our first product, called Lālanga mentoring. Lālanga is a health and wellbeing mentoring program and curriculum for Year 12 & 13 Pacific students. Together with the Lālanga App, which delivers the program content, engages the community of learners, collects valuable data about the participating young people, this program enables us to measurably improve the wellbeing of learners through program curriculum that is driven by data.

In New Zealand there is a plethora of mentoring programs available for young people, but what sets us apart is our commitment to using technology to measure, report, and adapt the effectiveness of our programs on the lives of those enrolled in our programs. The design and evolution of our solutions is driven by real insights, therefore meeting and improving real needs of young New Zealanders.

In November 2020, founders Dan & Lesieli Oliver kickstarted You Thrive with an investment into the development of the first release of the Lalanga app. The app and the original content of the teaching modules was used in a pilot program with 60 year 12 & 13 students at Tamaki College in Term 1 & 2 of 2021. With assistance from the Ministry of Education, You Thrive have quickly expanded to reach 260 year 12 & 13 students by June 31st 2021, in four decile 1 schools in South Auckland. So far 100% of participants in Term 1 are reporting that they will continue in the Lālanga mentoring program because it empowers them to succeed.

After a positive pilot phase we are preparing to build on the momentum of the program by launching secondary programs to complement Lālanga mentoring. The focus of complementary programs is to address the social issues that our data is indicating and use the data to construct meaningful and innovative solutions. As the successes of the program has spread, many other Auckland schools are asking for the program, so we have constructed a robust business plan to demonstrate the viability of the business and excite partners and investors with a vision of what You Thrive NZ can achieve in the lives of young New Zealanders.



I have found Lālanga amazing. My Dream career would be to become a Neurosurgeon or General Surgeon. Being part of the program has helped me know that I have mentors who actually have my back and care about my studies.

**Year 13 Student - Tamaki College**