Between 2003 and 2007, the authors investigated what life was like for 93 young people coming to adulthood in New Zealand in the wake of Rogernomics. Participants were interviewed in their final year of high school and again 12–18 months later. This book is the result.

The lives of these young people are brought into sharp focus revealing the powerful effects of neoliberal ideas. Their stories show how neoliberalism obscures the structural basis of inequalities and insists that failure to achieve a straightforward transition from school to tertiary education to employment is the result of personal inadequacy. Institutions drawing on neoliberal ideas create additional barriers for the groups for whom inequality matters most – young Pasifika and Māori, and young working-class women and men.

The stories are authentic and hard-hitting. Importantly, they also show how ordinary lives can be inspirational, as young people attempt to work and re-work the possibilities, opportunities and constraints of their times.
About the Authors

Karen Nairn is a senior lecturer at the University of Otago College of Education; Jane Higgins is a senior researcher at Lincoln University; Judith Sligo is a research fellow at the University of Otago Dunedin Multi-disciplinary Health and Development Research Unit.

Contents


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