This project was a review of literature about young people’s wellbeing, resilience and spirituality in times of austerity. The review aimed to explore how young people are managing in times of social and political uncertainty and the strategies that are being pursued in order to manage changing circumstances.

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that meaningful stable employment, training and/or education are significant to young people’s spiritual wellbeing and resilience. Such social resources and their outcomes need to be long term in order that young people sustain a sense of efficacy and esteem. Short-term programs that result in no pay or long-term work can create a cycle of instability and demoralization. Families, friends and supportive people in the community are also important and can help to create opportunities and nurture resilience.

There are a number of potentially significant avenues for future research and exploration that have been discovered through this literature review. First, confronting unpredictability and financial insecurity in times of austerity raises questions about the emotional, mental and physical health of young people. This raises questions about how young people manage their emotional security, mental wellbeing and physical health during the economic downturn. Second, the interrelations between identity formation and resilience tend to be context specific and so it would be interesting to explore variations in young people’s experiences in different regional and local contexts. Third, whilst this review shows that religion and spirituality help young people to cope during austere times and provides them with a sense of identity and purpose, less is known about how religious communities work with different groups to enhance wellbeing and resilience. Fourth, looking longer term, longitudinal studies could add much to understandings of young people’s spiritual wellbeing in times of austerity, and this could usefully include considerations of the role of class, gender and location. Additionally, little is known about how landscapes of race and ethnicity mediate young people’s spiritual wellbeing and resilience during times of economic insecurity. Finally, rather than only focusing on the individual level, and given the significance of young people’s familial and social networks, future research could usefully explore the role of these in terms of promoting the resilience and spiritual wellbeing of young people in times of austerity.