

Whānau Wānanga

PS Haitana Whānau Trust

Impact Report for Wave 7
Whānau Commissioning Initiative for
Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu



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Whānau Wānanga

PS Haitana Whānau Trust

Investment

Low

Location

Whakatū

Brief description

The purpose of this initiative was to create a whānau strategy to support re-connection and healing for a whānau that had endured intergenerational harm and trauma. The PS Haitana Whānau Trust members knew their extended whānau, particularly rangatahi, were experiencing continued harm and disconnection and sought to create a healing process of ongoing strength and cultural connection. The wānanga provided a meaningful context for strengthening the capability of whānau towards Whānau Ora.

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Introduction

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is the Whānau Ora commissioning agency in Te Waipounamu, a partnership between the nine iwi of Te Waipounamu; Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Koata, Te Ati Awa, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Rangitāne and Ngāti Rarua.

The Whānau Ora movement in Te Waipounamu is unique as the strategic direction is informed by values and aspirations of the nine iwi o Te Waipounamu.

It was formed in March 2014 as a legal partnership to reflect the aspirations of the Te Waipounamu iwi for whānau. A participants' council, Te Taumata, was established to act as guardians for the kaupapa of Whānau Ora in Te Waipounamu. In 2015, Te Taumata appointed an independent governance board.

The organisation is the realisation of an iwi led model that invests directly in whānau for social impact to bring about positive change.



The whānau commissioning model

Since establishment in 2014, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu has employed a social innovation model to promote entrepreneurial social investment in Te Waipounamu. The overarching objectives of this approach are to stimulate a Māori social enterprise network in Te Waipounamu and to achieve positive social outcomes for whānau through targeted innovation (Investment Plan, 2017 – 2018).

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu operates a capability development model of commissioning. The capability development model aims to build the ability of whānau to respond positively to the challenges and opportunities within their lives. Traditional models of social intervention for Māori have been heavily institutionalised, determined by knowledge and expertise external to the whānau. The purpose of commissioning whānau directly is to enable whānau to be self-reliant rather than dependent on state intervention. The model aligns with Māori values supporting transformation through self-determination.

The commissioning model is economically efficient and capable of generating long-term transformative change with a lower investment than traditional service delivery (Savage, 2017; Dalziel, Saunders, & Guenther, 2017). Service delivery tends to produce few immediate outcomes and minimal long-term outcomes, while capability development produces comprehensive outcomes over a longer period. However, developing capability is much more complex than traditional service delivery models (Investment Plan, 2017–2018).

Commissioning allows for the devolution of funding and decision making from central government so that the response to real whānau aspirations is genuine and effective. Not only does commissioning allow for a more direct relationship with whānau in the context of Whānau Ora, it places whānau at the centre of their own pathways towards prosperity (Leahy, 2018).

Whānau Ora Outcomes

The commissioning approach for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is designed to achieve the Whānau Ora outcomes.

The outcomes are based on the work of the Taskforce on Whānau Centred Initiatives that carried out extensive consultation in 2009. An additional element has been added to recognise the importance of the natural and living environments.

The Outcomes Framework confirms that Whānau Ora is achieved when whānau are:

- self-managing
- living healthy lifestyles
- participating fully in society
- confidently participating in te ao Māori
- economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation
- cohesive, resilient and nurturing
- responsible stewards of their natural and living environments.

Wave 7

The first wave of applications was called for in August 2014, since this time another 6 waves have funded over 140 whānau initiatives.

This evaluation is part of the seventh investment wave.

The initiatives were commissioning in July 2018. This case study report for PS Haitana Whānau Trust, Whānau Wānanga, is part of a wider evaluation of ten initiatives commissioned in Wave 7 by Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.

Method

The following section describes the evaluation methodology, data analysis and ethical protocols for all ten case studies completed as part of the Wave 7 evaluation.

Te Pūtahitanga Te Waipounamu employs a

Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework as a way of monitoring projects and their outputs. The commissioned initiatives have been collecting and reporting data throughout the length of the funding. In order to limit evaluation fatigue and avoid repetition, the evaluation team reviewed the proposal and monitoring information for each initiative identifying knowledge gaps and determining their evaluability (readiness for evaluation). Ten project profiles were developed by the evaluators that incorporated existing data such as whānau surveys and milestone reports.

An interview schedule was co-constructed with Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu. The interviews were designed to provide:

- An opportunity for initiatives to clearly state their purpose, aspirations and contribution to the Whānau Ora outcomes
- A space for reflection for whānau involved in the initiatives, either directly as architects or kaimahi, or as whānau who have contributed to the outcomes
- An opportunity to discuss the role of cultural connection in their initiative and the contribution this has made to wellbeing
- An opportunity to involve whānau, staff and other key stakeholders in a whānau orientated way that reflects the values of Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and Whānau Ora

Ethical protocols

Ethical and interview protocols were created by the evaluation team to ensure that the evaluation protected the rights of everyone who contributed to the evaluation. The researchers followed the guiding principles for working respectfully with indigenous peoples nationally and internationally. These are articulated by Kennedy and Wehipeihana (2006, p. 1-2):

Self-determination - including the right to make decisions about all aspects of their lives. Clear benefits to those being researched.

Acknowledgement and awareness - refers to

respect and due recognition and appreciation for indigenous culture, values, customs, beliefs and rights, including an acceptance of a worldview that may not be consistent with Western ideologies.

Cultural integrity - relates to the validity of indigenous knowledge and ways of being, and that cultural knowledge must be protected from misuse, misappropriation and must be preserved for future generations.

Capacity building - enabling indigenous peoples to participate actively in the research, with the aim to ultimately drive their own research.

An information sheet was developed that was distributed to the ten whānau initiatives prior to the evaluation. The evaluators also provided the information sheet to whānau who participated in the interviews. Whānau were given the opportunity to sign or record verbal consent. They were assured that the information that they shared would not be identifiable. Where whānau voice has been used in response to the evaluation questions the evaluators have ensured that this is non-identifiable by removing or changing identifying features. However, in some initiatives where the whānau are easily identifiable they were made aware that their identity would be identifiable and gave consent on this basis. All whānau who were identified were able to read the report before publication.

Several of the initiatives are developing social enterprises with their own intellectual property tied to the success of their innovation. The evaluation process was particularly sensitive to this and only captured what was required without compromising the intellectual property of the whānau.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu has taken a whānau empowerment approach to investment. The evaluation planned to support this kaupapa by building capability through evaluation; specifically ensuring that whānau were at the center of the evaluation, that the data was returned to the participants and that whānau could exercise control over their own narrative. These processes enabled whānau to retain ownership of their

kōrero and how it is presented in the evaluation. Photographic images have been used in this report to demonstrate the activity and achievements of whānau. Whānau who are in these photographs have given permission for their image to be used in this report.

Data Collection and Analysis

Five evaluators collected data from ten initiatives over a period of five weeks. Data collection included semi-structured interviews; as well as review of whānau surveys, documents associated with each initiative and produced resources. Where possible both whānau who were architects of the initiatives and whānau that had benefited from the initiatives were interviewed. In all cases at least two whānau were interviewed from each initiative, for larger initiatives focus groups of whānau were interviewed. Feedback was obtained from contract managers from Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu. In addition, the researchers analysed other data including whānau surveys and documents supplied to Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu so that triangulation of data was achieved. The data that was collected from monitoring whānau surveys was collected by Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and has been labelled as whānau survey.

All interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim and copies were returned when requested. All interviews were analysed using an inductive process to classify the interview data. This is a ground up analysis, creating categories from the interview data rather than imposing a deductive sorting method. This ensures that the findings are built from the voices of the whānau. After a full inductive analysis, the categories were sorted into responses under each of the report headings.

To distinguish roles in this report whānau who were leading the initiatives are referred to as kaimahi, whānau who were involved in the initiative as recipients or volunteers were referred to as whānau. Analysis took a strengths-based approach, focused on identifying the aims of each project, the activities involved and the nature of impact in relation to whānau capability development and the positive outcomes achieved. The characteristics of impact and their alignment to

identified Whānau Ora outcomes are highlighted. Analysis has emphasised capability development as a process of progression as whānau were starting in different places, as to their knowledge of social enterprise. Each case study highlights the aspirations of whānau; the contract expectations and activities employed, as well as the types of impacts that were realised through the work. Key learnings are identified along with processes for sustainability. The case studies provide unique evidence of the different ways whānau have realised Whānau Ora and in doing so 'to lead the lives they value and have reason to value' across Te Waipounamu (Sen, 1999 cited in Dalziel, 2018).

The following case study tells the story of one initiative funded through the Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu Wave 7 Whānau commissioning round. This case study presents a snapshot of the social innovation approximately 7 months into the funding period.

Background

In order to respond more effectively to mental health issues, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation, the PS Haitana Whānau Trust aimed to establish a whānau safety network, ensuring more awareness and responsiveness towards these issues. Whānau Trust member, Jenny Reneti described the impetus for this work. There were two major motivations. One was the discovery that whānau had issues with anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation. The other was that a much loved and respected kaumātua in the whānau was very ill. Knowledge of his condition propelled whānau members to prepare in ways that could strengthen whānau resources to cope with his potential tangihanga. The loss of such a beloved member would be traumatic enough and whānau were already anxious about his health. In addition, many family members had not participated or hosted tangihanga on a marae. Jenny explained, that “the whānau were in crisis”. So, she and her sister talked about the help their tamariki needed and older cousins were involved in discussions about what would be helpful for the whānau.

Together they identified that the whānau relationships were stretched, and they needed to create moments of positive and productive connections, particularly for rangatahi. As one of the rangatahi explained;

“Tangi for us, for our whānau has been above and beyond the normal trauma of just somebody dying. There’s always somebody dying, somebody being taken by CYFS, somebody who’s come out with an experience of violence. There are always these really urgent things, so it’s really hard to prioritise our aspirations.” So, motivation was also sparked by young people in the whānau, who wanted to take action and to design a new future for their whānau; achieving Whānau Ora in the process.

Through their discussions, rangatahi emphasised

that the wānanga needed to acknowledge and address intergenerational trauma through a decolonisation process. Whilst it was important that whānau, and particularly rangatahi, came together to talk and learn about the tangihanga process (including pōwhiri, whaikōrero, waiata and whakapapa) it was essential that this was a participatory and healing process; enabling participants who wished to participate to also gain a better understanding of intergenerational trauma, structural violence and the impacts of colonisation. So, the proposal for a participatory wānanga was developed and the PS Haitana Whānau Trust applied to Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu for funding to hold a whānau wānanga.

“the whānau were in crisis”.

Aspirations

Rangatahi in the whānau had identified an urgent need to address whānau connection and wellbeing. The kaupapa has the future health of mokopuna at the centre and is being led by the mokopuna of PS Haitana. The older whānau members were supporting rangatahi to design and deliver a wānanga, and to imbue it with tāonga tuku iho. A major aspiration for the trust is for whānau to manage healthy lifestyles through wairuatanga, whakapapa, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga. One of the whānau members described it like this;

“This is our moemoeā, this is what we want for our people. It’s about understanding who we are, so we have our feet on the ground. We belong to a wider whānau, we’re not just isolated by ourselves and we can support each other. So, we wanted whānau to be able to strengthen each other and manage each other, help each other, be there for each other and to know it’s okay, so those values of whanaungatanga, teaching our children how to manaaki each other. We wanted to help them feel like they could experience wairuatanga as well, you know, just get in touch with how they’re feeling about themselves and life and being able to feel that they have a safe place to talk.” (Whānau)

There was acknowledgement that whānau members were starting in different places in terms of their own mental and physical health needs, and their knowledge, confidence and experience within te ao Māori.

“We also had this kind of very baseline goal of knowing that my uncle might pass away soon, and we wouldn’t be able to participate at the marae because we don’t have any whaikōrero, or we don’t all know a waiata to sing, you know. There’s some of us who have deep knowledge, especially the women and then there’s this big gap, and there’s this huge group of people who have never been to a marae. There’s some of us who lived on the marae so, part of

it is we’re just like removing the first barrier of being in a Māori space.” (Whānau)

‘Mokopuna led, tūpuna informed’: A focus on intergenerational healing

An important aspiration for younger members of the whānau was intergenerational healing. It was acknowledged that some whānau members had high levels of anxiety and depression and had experienced significant trauma in their lives. It was important to develop a way of talking about such things, in an environment that was safe and supportive. One of the aims was to spark connections that increased whānau and individual protective factors and enhanced a flourishing whānau by drawing on cultural knowledge and existing expertise. The whānau saw rangatiratanga as an essential part of the initiative, being able to decide how they would go about improving their own wellbeing collectively, rather than conform to someone else’s ideas.

“It was still hard work but having the opportunity to do it in a Māori space with the permission to have full control. It’s allowed us to do what we believe we needed to do, because there wasn’t any kind of feeling of having to tick boxes or appease another organisation’s idea of what wellbeing is ... it would have been too hard and this, it gave us resources to be able to participate together.” (Whānau)

“This is our moemoeā, this is what we want for our people. It’s about understanding who we are, so we have our feet on the ground. We belong to a wider whānau, we’re not just isolated by ourselves and we can support each other.”

Contract expectations

The contract outcomes were 'To develop a safety network as a whānau with strategies to deal with mental health issues, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation, including training in suicide awareness and responsiveness'.

To achieve this the whānau decided to run a decolonisation wānanga that inspired whānau to share the harm caused and move forward by healing through their cultural identity. They planned to hold regular participatory wānanga with a rangatahi focus to address intergenerational trauma and structural violence along with the impact of colonisation, in relation to a sense of belonging, cultural identity and resilience. This would be supported through an online forum for regular and immediate communication, support, whakapapa kōrero and learning. That in turn would be supported through wānanga workshops to address whānau aspirations to be 'pōwhiri ready'.

Project activities

A number of interrelated activities were developed and undertaken. It was essential the work was collaboratively designed. Younger members took the lead, using technology to bring others together to co-create the process. Discussions were held over Skype and the work was informed by the collection of whānau views through a survey and informal discussions.

As a result, the trust produced several documents including the 'The PS Haitana Whānau Trust/Wānanga Intent Statement' and the development of their own 'Whānau Ora Framework'. The PS Haitana Whānau Trust/Wānanga Intent Statement The Wānanga Intent Statement was informed by extensive consultation with whānau members, and rangatahi taking the lead. It explains the intent and aspiration of the wānanga, the motivations of whānau and what they intended to achieve as a result. These include:

- We will be able to confidently participate in pōwhiri and tangihanga
- We will have collaboratively created a physical, or online resource, of whakapapa information, waiata, haka, and kōrero
- Whānau feel more connected with each other
- We have a long-term whānau plan going forward
- Whānau can describe the impact of colonisation

A whānau Facebook page

A whānau Facebook page was organised so family members could communicate with one another and spread the word about the initiative. The page enabled whānau to outline their whakapapa and acknowledge links with different iwi. Whānau members who lived far away could stay connected

with each other, contribute to the work and share their news. This was seen as another way of strengthening whānau connections.

The development of their own Whānau Ora Framework

A key activity was the development of their own Whānau Ora Framework. It outlines and explains the seven pou as well as the five stages of understanding necessary to track progress and measure outcomes. A whānau member explained it like this;

"We had a planning committee with the cousins and uncles and aunties, and we decided on the things we needed to work on, and we worked together to do things, like we made our own wellbeing framework. We looked at the pou and we broke it into those sections, and this was all done through Skype, so it was about us making this together. We thought about the stages of knowledge or understanding. The goal is ora and we actually thought about, 'well what does each pou look like for us?' We had to start right at the beginning - so most of the wellbeing goals are like 'tino rangatiratanga' and 'whānau are confidently participating in te ao Māori'. But for us to come together, first we had to start with, 'we feel safe with each other and can converse with our whānau' and then 'we can recite our pepeha and don't feel overwhelmed by pōwhiri'. So, this is a progression of development or stages. Once we achieve this then we can move to, 'we feel connected to our whakapapa and can express this connection through waiata, karanga and whaikōrero', and 'we feel a positive connection with our whakapapa' and then we can move to other stages. This is person centred, it is whānau centred and it is acknowledging, for some of us, we are going to be starting from the beginning. So, although the aim is for whānau to be flourishing, the first step is

we see that, 'we are valuable and unique', and so this is much more a progression of development. We need to feel worthy, to see our place in society and then there's the kind of aspirational things which we are seeking out and taking opportunities to fulfil our aspirations, but we recognise we don't yet have the skills to be aspirational, let alone completely express our agency and grab hold of opportunities. Just at the moment lots of us don't yet have the skills to say, 'I have a dream'. We really needed to start here, yes, and not see these as failures, but just that we are on a longer journey together." (Whānau)

This quote explains the importance of taking the Whānau Ora Pou and making them relevant for their whānau. Acknowledging that they want to achieve ora as a whānau and were on a journey to realise this.

"We had a planning committee with the cousins and uncles and aunties, and we decided on the things we needed to work on, and we worked together to do things, like we made our own wellbeing framework."

Two-Week Wānanga at Marahau

The 'Whānau Ora Framework' and 'Statement of Intent' were used to plan and guide the two-week wānanga at Marahau. The framework enabled whānau to design sessions delivered in the wānanga. Although the wānanga was only two-weeks long, the organisation for this took a lot longer than expected so the committee was required to set up and clean up the camp - this meant being there for a month. The venue had limited facilities. Therefore, the whānau needed to bring everything in, including tents and accommodation needs, ensuring the right kai was available (catering for special dietary needs of participants) and other resources so whānau could attend, and that the wānanga was adequately equipped and catered for. Being able to receive funding was significant as many whānau who had to come from other places could not afford to travel and participate without support. It was important that key activities addressed everyone's needs and that resources were available to complete the plan. They required additional planning and time for the clean-up to ensure everything (including all the resources and the month worth of rubbish) was taken out again.

Impact for whānau

The wānanga involved about 38 whānau members and there were significant impacts for those involved, achieving these were described as both empowering and challenging. The impacts described by whānau were strengthened relationships, re-establishing trust, improved communication, increased participation in te ao Māori and realising Whānau Ora.

Whakawhanaungatanga (Strengthened relationships)

One of the most important impacts was improved and strengthened relationships. The wānanga enabled whānau to come together in new and productive ways that were supportive and safe.

“Being able to actually have a place to go and be together was transformational. We came together with the focus on first just being exposed to each other and building relationships in a place that’s not hostile.” (Whānau)

The Whānau Ora Framework that was developed guided the wānanga activities. As an example, one of the sessions was ‘Whānau are cohesive, resilient and nurturing’ and so the first step was purely about whānau having fun together.

“This was huge, because sadly some of our older people said they’ve never experienced joy before.” (Whānau)

The whānau Facebook page also had an impact, improving relationships and connections. One of the whānau members described the impact this was having.

“Cousins who we didn’t even know existed have joined because their dad was in it so we’re capturing new

whānau, and some of those weren’t necessarily at the hui but are looking at it on Facebook now. Success is having the whānau page so we can communicate with each other and our children are running it... you know the next generation.” (Whānau)

Re-establishing trust

Whānau members emphasised that the development and re-establishment of trust was an important outcome of the mahi and was helped by whānau participating together in the wānanga.

“Because you were in the kitchen doing things together in that marae environment, lots of what you were doing was about relationship building, you were re-establishing how relationships work... so somebody can ask you something and you can fulfil it and that’s how you build trust. And we made those moments happen in a safe way. By me and him cooking a meal together or playing bullrush we could remember that we were just little kids for the first time after experiencing some quite large trauma... so just playing games together allowed us to build trust again. It’s so simple, but the biggest barrier was communicating to him that he was going to be safe there and so getting him in the door, and really for me personally it restored that relationship, it also built a sense of connectedness with my cousin and my generation. A sense of strength and like a sense of seeing that we all have skills, that we all have a desire for things to change and so I came away feeling like ‘okay, actually this isn’t all on me to heal our whānau, but we all have these amazing skills and the willingness, but we needed to ‘kanohi ki te kanohi’. It’s really opened the door, like we didn’t sit down and say, ‘oh let’s heal our whakapapa’... it was like let’s see each other’s faces, let’s be around each other.” (Whānau)

Other wānanga activities enabled the whānau to have fun together, which helped to strengthen relationships and build trust.

"You know we accomplished a lot of things. I mean things like waka ama, team building, you know where whānau are out there in a canoe of some sort, where they had to paddle together, work together to make it move But you know we had several groups that were able to go out, paddle together, learn together, talk together and trust each other, I mean it worked, and that was a blessing, you know whānau engaging in those sorts of things." (Whānau)

Improved communication and sharing

Another impact was improved communication skills and sharing between whānau members. These skills developed as whānau participated in games and fun challenges as part of the wānanga, as well as through specific planned communication activities. This was emphasised by different whānau members.

"The 10/10 for me was when we communicated with each other during the challenge, and we became closer." (Whānau survey response)

The sharing of important knowledge between older and younger whānau members was a real highlight of the wānanga; and the fulfilment of a dream for some.

"Before the wānanga I had spent many years learning about our culture at a Māori learning institution, at a Māori health organisation and through participating in hui on the marae. Helping my children to learn and be familiar with those things was a high priority for me. But I have had some very real health scares so I had a strong desire to share with my whānau so that I could pass on this important knowledge to the next generation. But I needed the space to do that. It was wonderful to have this chance to share with them one-on-one but also in the whānau hui. To be able to put together whānau resources that could prepare our rangatahi and tamariki for interactions with their whānau. These were highlights for me. It was also great to see our rangatahi step up in their

own knowledge and wisdom and connect with their peers." (Whānau survey response)

"The 10/10 for me was when we communicated with each other during the challenge, and we became closer."

The ability to explain and share personal feelings honestly with one another was an important first step.

"We can talk about things now, and it's not necessarily easy, but at least it's opened the door to be able to discuss 'I am feeling this way'. That's been very empowering for us and our children to be able to even just have that next step up, to be able to say they're not okay right now, give them some time and we'll get back to that for sure. So that's been a big journey." (Whānau)

It could be challenging to develop honest dialogue, in ways that were supportive and open to learning. Whānau survey responses highlighted how important, challenging and emotional this could be and not something that could change overnight.

"It was hard to gather honest kōrero from the whānau as no one initially felt safe, trusting or confident enough that their words would be taken in good faith. This meant a lot of time was taken going back and forth and 'guessing' about what people wanted. This was worked on in the wānanga. It was beautiful to see the freedom that came with playing games and telling stories when people were made to feel valuable and unjudged. We need to continue this work with more time together planning and communicating." (Whānau survey response)

"We can talk about things now, and it's not necessarily easy, but at least it's opened the door to be able to discuss 'I am feeling this way'."

Despite the challenges, analysed evidence highlighted the progress that whānau members had made, both in terms of their confidence to participate in wānanga activities and communicate

with one another in open and honest ways. Other related impacts included increased confidence to participate in te ao Māori. This is explored in the following section.

Increased confidence to participate in te ao Māori

Whānau members reported they were more confident to participate in te ao Māori as a result of attending the wānanga. As this whānau member explains;

"I can only speak for my children, they have felt more confident about going to kapa haka and going to pōwhiri because we have a whānau song we can all sing and it's appropriate for everything. It's taken away the anxiety about doing these things. So, my children, my daughter in particular, has stepped up in helping a local iwi to win the regionals for kapa haka. So now they've progressed onto getting ready for the nationals and it's a big deal for her." (Whānau)

Whānau survey responses confirmed the impact of the wānanga on each participant's confidence to use te reo and engage more confidently in te ao Māori.

"I used to get worried when Mummy would ask me to do something in te reo, except for blessing our kai. Now I can also help my sister karanga to the whole whānau to kai. We do it every day. I liked learning it with my cuzzies. It was so cool." (Whānau survey response)

"I felt unsure of how I could put my culture into practice, in an environment that wasn't explicitly Māori (like kapa haka or kura). I walked away seeing how it was the basis for all of my interactions and perspectives, and that felt good." (Whānau survey response)

Evidence suggested that this improved confidence led to improvements in other areas, including a move to become kaitiaki for whānau land. This was reassuring for the whānau; that they are moving forward and exercising rangatiratanga for their land as a whānau.

"One really tangible thing is we have this whānau land where I grew up, and where my tūpuna grew up, and the wānanga gave us the confidence to be real kaitiaki and that has developed into a kind of mandate almost, and that has been really important for my whānau because it has meant I can provide this really meaningful respite for my mum who has two whāngai kids. She's on the benefit, like it's tough, she's 55, it wasn't her dream to be a single mum at 55. So, this has allowed us to reconceptualise our relationship, and I think the biggest thing is that removal of hopelessness and that has shaped how I now interact with my whānau." (Whānau)

Evidence highlighted how interrelated the impacts were for whānau, even though whānau members were starting in different places in terms of their knowledge of te reo me ona tikanga and their confidence and skill level, particularly related to communication and developing relational trust. This progression of development and improvement is important when evaluating the impact for Whānau Ora.

Progressing towards Whānau Ora

All of the related activities were seen as contributing to improved Whānau Ora and wellbeing. The process of coming together as a whānau was the first step, that had enabled many whānau members to have confidence in the work.

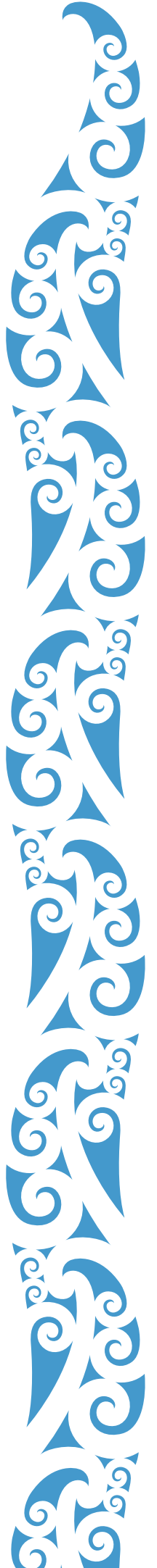
"Well for my own family I have seen a huge improvement in their health and wellbeing and their inner strength. So, for me, that was a huge difference. It's really important." (Whānau)

There was acknowledgement the whānau has started the work together and that it needed to be continued over time.

"The fact that some whānau actually turned up and stayed that's huge. That they came was in itself amazing. They came, and they wanted to be there. One of the nephews, who we didn't think we would see, he came for a couple of hours, and then he stayed overnight and then he came back you know."

So that was a great success. I mean it would be amazing if we did see all of them become strong and healthy by the time we'd finished, but it's a work in progress and it will take a long time to achieve that over-arching goal of Whānau Ora.” (Whānau)

Analysed evidence highlighted that whānau were progressing in their goals to be confident and address crises and challenges in ways that sustained whānau health and wellbeing.



Cultural connection

Being connected through whakapapa, whenua and a shared cultural understanding was at the heart of this initiative. For a whānau that had experienced significant trauma and was fractured, the first step was to provide some healing through a sense of connectedness, relationships and cultural identity. The aim of the work was to transform what had been a negative trauma whānau identity to a strong resilient whānau that supported one another.

Whakaruruhau

The importance and impact of being within an environment of shelter and safety was emphasised in the interviews with whānau. It was essential to nurture whānau and for them to feel safe and supported within the wānanga space.

“For many of us that was the only time we’ve been able to be in the environment, to have that kind of spiritual connection with the environment and the rest that comes with that. One of the issues we have as a whānau is with sleep. Like there are huge sleep deprivation issues related to trauma and wellbeing. Having the opportunity to have some respite from everyday pressures was huge.” (Whānau)

Holding the wānanga enabled whānau to connect in a safe place, out of the pressures of everyday life, with a purpose of coming together to focus on wellbeing. For the Haitana whānau, the wānanga was about connecting with one another, engaging in the process of sharing and reflecting on the past in order to make decisions for future success and whānau wellbeing. While it may appear a simple process, for a whānau that has experienced significant trauma and loss through colonisation, the process needed to be led by whānau, supported and safe. The work put in by the whānau to structure the activities and to guide the process provided the sheltering necessary for the healing to begin.

Empowering and normalising cultural identity

The impact and power of connecting to a positive cultural and whānau identity could not be overstated by the whānau members. Coming from a place of strength and acknowledging that all whānau members were valued, broke down barriers and addressed feelings of inadequacy. It was necessary to emphasise the normality of being part of the process and building positive connections through te ao Māori, particularly for whānau members who may not have been brought up with tikanga Māori.

“When you learn that you’re not a little isolated pea on a plate, but that you are a part of a wider whānau, that feeling of belonging is really important, and I think breaking down the barriers that come when kids get whakamā. Breaking down those preconceived ideas has been a huge, huge thing for us you know. And culture, culture is just who we are. I think that was a big part of it too, because a lot of our whānau are really fair and haven’t been brought up with Māori culture in their lives, so actually being immersed in that and being normal, you know it’s just what we do. I think it’s taken away the scariness of something we don’t know about and just made it feel normal. This is what this means when you say karakia for the kai. This is what we’re saying. ‘Oh well that’s what I say in English’. ‘That’s right. It’s not something weird or scary, it’s just it is what it is’. And the songs learning about the waiata and the wairua that are written, and who they were for, and how you can use it in a pōwhiri experience makes it normal.” (Whānau)

Whānau members were encouraged to ask questions about their whakapapa and how they related to other tribal members. The process of the wānanga was to reclaim knowledge and

identity for many of the younger whānau who had been disconnected for some time.

“To have our extended whānau come in and grasp where they come from because we had our whakapapa wānanga and to be able to ask the questions about what iwi are we from? and what’s our marae? and how do we fit into that? which line is it from? is it from this way? no it’s from this way. That in itself was huge, so they could know their iwi and their whakapapa. It’s a big deal.” (Whānau)

The activity of engaging in learning and performing waiata may have appeared simple, but it helped to form the first steps of trust and a sense of belonging. This was an important part of whānau bonding, particularly if whānau members had felt isolated or excluded in the past, and lacked pride in their own identity, as ‘Māori’. One of the whānau members explained it like this;

“We know that the feeling of trust in other people and the feeling of belonging is probably the biggest

contributor to our core wellbeing. And the importance of waiata is literally being able to feel you can contribute to the whole group and experience the beauty of that. We belong together, and I know the rules of engagement so I can participate in this, and it’s really about actioning the group behaviour, that we are a group and we all know this song therefore we are a group and a Māori group. Being able to express our Māoritanga brings this sense of identity and joy and belonging ... and if you have been squeezed by internalised racism or the impact of isolation in whānau, that feeling of being of low value, having the ability to participate together in something beautiful and something Māori is transformational. It also removes the fear, this is just, let’s learn a song and then we do it in 10 minutes and then we perform it and ... like that’s all it is but it can have profound impacts.” (Whānau)

Lessons learned

Working on, and through the wānanga resulted in important learning for whānau members, particularly those who planned the initiative.

The importance of health literacy around intergenerational trauma

A key learning was the need to develop Whānau Ora literacy, a type of health literacy and language to understand that trauma was intergenerational, and its effects could be far reaching. This was a work in progress and not something that could be achieved through a two-week wānanga.

“The first thing I realised was how much you need that kind of literacy, because one of the issues for us is this feeling of hopelessness, because as a whānau we have this whakapapa of pain. If you don't have a way of talking about it and understanding it, then it's a barrier. It's incredibly hard to start talking about healing if we don't even have literacy around conflict resolution or basic communication skills. We need to understand the impact of trauma, of sexism and racism on how we think about wellbeing. We need to understand that trauma impacts individuals but also generations. When we first talked about this some people didn't believe that somebody's childhood trauma could affect how they are now. So, there's this health and wellbeing literacy that could be an incredibly powerful lever to kind of switch on, and that happened in little pockets. For me, I realised the power of that and then for our future work, the extent to which that shapes our relationships because we have older people who are exhibiting very clear PTSD behaviours and then the younger generations are interpreting it as purely those people's individual morals or personality traits, as if they are just mean or angry and that is turning the cycle ever further. Then whānau feel even more isolated and feel less

connected and then that is a trauma in itself and then that creates these behaviours that we can see have been passed down to our babies. That connection between the wellbeing of the older people and those of our young people – it's interconnected. We hear about the need for health and wellbeing for at risk young people, but for my whānau it's going to be incredibly difficult to shift that if we don't also intervene with the wellbeing of our older people. With one of our whānau she's experienced so much trauma, and when situations trigger her, she just shuts down and it's like it comes across as if she doesn't care. But it's not that, she feels 'I'm so unvaluable and unloveable' and she is having her own version of an anxiety attack, but it doesn't look like that from the outside. So, the big learning was that we need to really work on those base skills and that's really empowering.” (Whānau)

It's incredibly hard to start talking about healing if we don't even have literacy around conflict resolution or basic communication skills. We need to understand the impact of trauma, of sexism and racism on how we think about wellbeing. We need to understand that trauma impacts individuals but also generations.

The whānau learnt they needed to learn new skills to communicate positively through the trauma and hurt that had been experienced if they were to make changes for their mokopuna. This process led by the whānau for their whānau began at the two-week wānanga. The whānau learnt the realisation of Whānau Ora for their whānau was going to be a long-term activity that needed continued whānau commitment and further resourcing and investment.

Sustainability

Sustainability of this work is important for whānau members and for realising their aspirations towards Whānau Ora and health literacy. There is recognition of the progress made from the first wānanga and a collective commitment to continue the work.

Intergenerational capability-building

At the conclusion of the wānanga there was expressed desire amongst whānau to continue the journey together and a recognition that this needed to involve young and old alike. The work could only be achieved through continued whānau capability building around health literacy and that whānau members needed to 'step up' and take responsibility for ensuring the work continue. The Facebook page is active and continues to support whānau connection. The conversations amongst the whānau have progressed and there is significant hope for the future, as this whānau member explains:

"With some of the cousins, we're now having these conversations about it that we didn't have before. We're on the same page. We're the oldest and so now we are able to be intentional about how our whānau is going to work. I think I realised that our generation needs to take the reins, which is a bit scary because we're still quite young and we don't have that middle group. There's like this 20-year gap, but by being involved in this process, it's given us permission and to be like actually let's try a new route. Our goal is to be able to communicate and heal from trauma, so we are able to participate in te ao Māori because we gain so much from this, we gain so much confidence, self-esteem and meaning from that." (Whānau)

For one of the younger whānau members it had inspired her to undertake her PhD focusing on

the process to achieving whānau wellbeing as she describes here;

"This is now what I'm focusing my PhD on, especially that relationship between the wellbeing of our older adults and the wellbeing of our young people... what is the actual impact of an older adult's wellbeing on a younger adult? Because I think it's easier to focus on young people because it's easy for people to empathise when they can say it's not their fault. Child poverty, youth suicide, but for us we can't achieve child flourishing if they're living in poor whānau and whānau poverty. I really want to interrogate that link. One of the things that came out of the wānanga is to ensure my research is actionable and one of the conditions I have is it must be written in a way that whānau can access it. So, one of my new theoretical frameworks is that it has to be useful for my whānau." (Whānau)

This work, and the interest of the younger generation in changing patterns of trauma will support continued positive activity for the PS Haitana Trust whānau.

Whānau Wānanga

PS Haitana Whānau Trust

The purpose of this initiative was to create a whānau strategy to support re-connection and healing for a whānau that had endured intergenerational harm and trauma. The PS Haitana Whānau Trust members knew their extended whānau, particularly rangatahi, were experiencing continued harm and disconnection and sought to create a healing process of ongoing strength and cultural connection. The wānanga provided a meaningful context for strengthening the capability of whānau towards Whānau Ora.



Outcomes

- Whānau have increased independence to be self-managing through goal setting, mentoring and education planning.
- Whānau report increased wellbeing, improved mental and physical health and living healthy lifestyles.
- Whānau are developing cohesive, resilient and nurturing relationships.
- Whānau and families report increased confidence to participate in te ao Māori.



Impact

- Whakawhanaungatanga (Strengthened relationships)
- Re-establishing trust
- Improved communication and sharing
- Increased confidence to participate in te ao Māori
- Progressing towards Whānau Ora



Future plans

The initiative created by demonstrates sustainability through;

- Strong leadership of the PS Haitana Whānau Trust.
- Clear purpose and vision of the Trust for enabling whānau to progress towards Whānau Ora as identified in the PS Haitana Whānau Trust Outcomes Framework.
- Intergenerational focus to build capability in health literacy, increasing the likelihood of future success.

