

2023/24

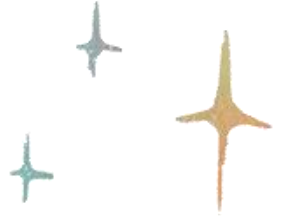
Early Years Community Innovation

Key insights from year two*:

- What's making a difference for whānau?
- How to enable whānau centred health promotion.
- How systems enable whānau centred health promotion.

INVEST IN A
TRAUMA-FREE
FIRST 1000 DAYS,
FOR THE NEXT
2000 YEARS

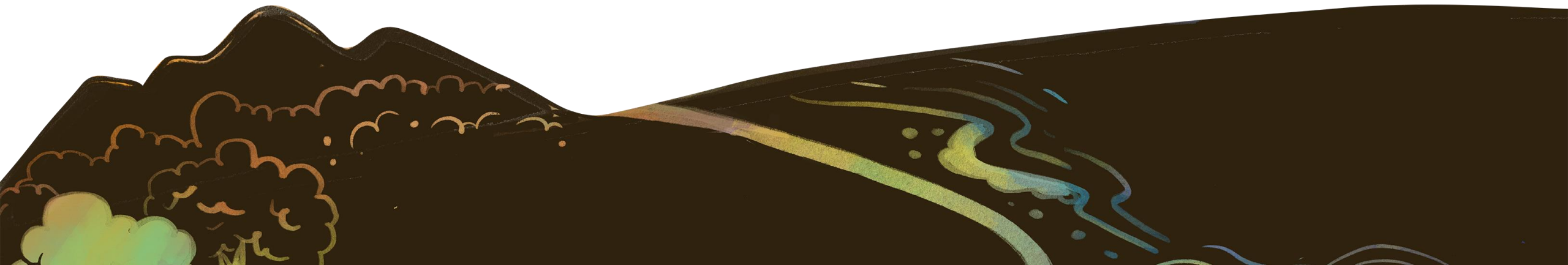
* Close out reflections on activity July 2023 - June 2024. (Grants from May FY23).
The final report for year one (2022/23) can be found here: [Doc ID#1302929](#)



What's making a difference for whānau?

When it comes to understanding what's working for whānau, we noticed several themes and commonalities across 12 kaupapa partners.

The following slides summarise these insights and build on insights from year one (see appendix for year one insights).



Who runs these activities makes a difference.

"This ain't
no 9-5"

"We are whānau"

"Our relationships from tupuna, kuia and koro are now reaping rewards. ... We have mana in mahi and our whānau name [is known] in the community"

WE ARE
BOUNDLESS.
WE ARE MORE
LIKE WHĀNAU
THAN A SERVICE

Kaupapa partners:

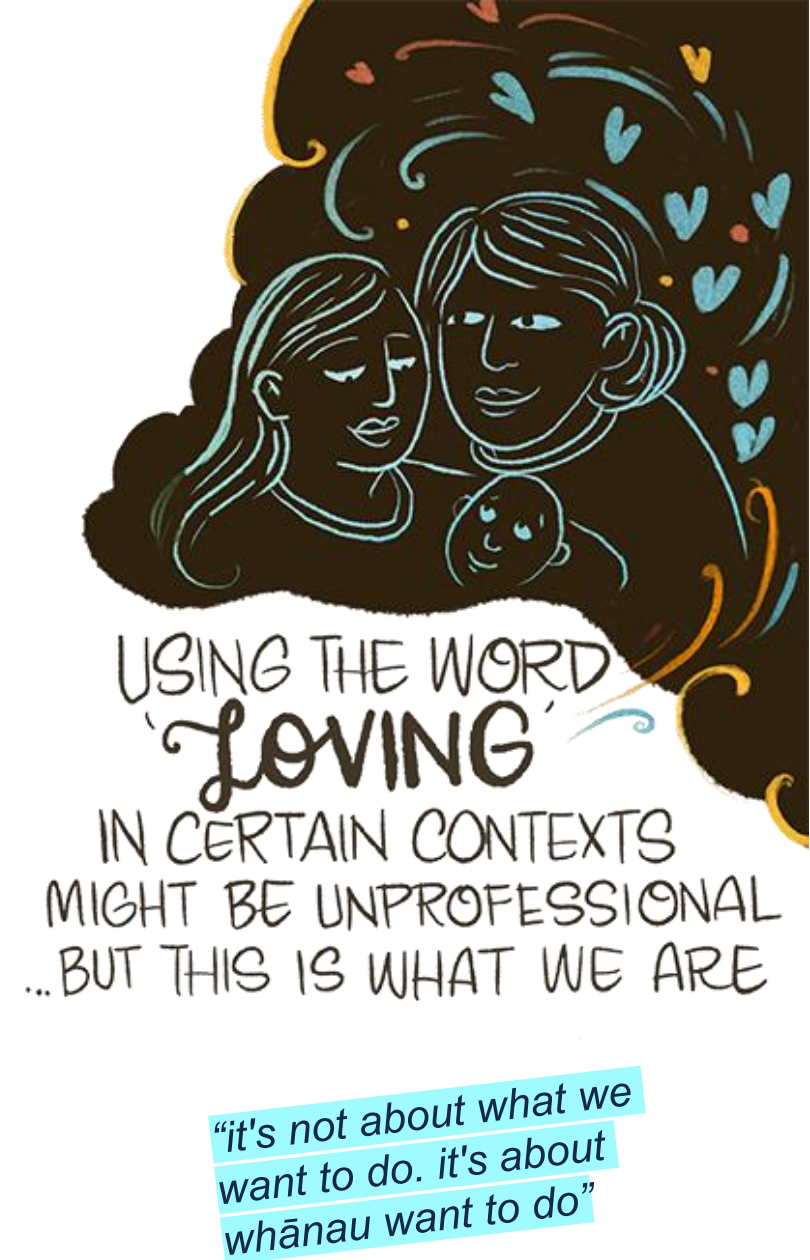
- Often have close connections with place (eg, marae, whare, aoga amata); they often have links to community at a whānau level.
- Celebrated the connections they have with whānau that walk through the door. They introduce themselves as māmā first and foremost and share how their own experiences inform the work they do.
- Spoke of taking on the role of whānau, and role modelling what being a whānau looks like. They are connected and loving. This leads to a safe environment and an unwavering commitment.
- Shared that sustained positive relationships are especially critical in rural communities.

Enabling responsive design makes a difference

Kaupapa partners:

- Pivoted their approach as they needed to, for example to explore the role of wider whānau. This meant their planned activities changed to meet the most pressing needs of whānau. This was enabled through responsive design and high trust commissioning.
- Felt empowered to respond to anyone who walked through the door. Some shared that this approach supported them to better meet the diverse needs of rainbow whānau, and whānau with disabilities.

High trust funding practices enabled innovation and the design of effective solutions that are created with whānau, for whānau.



Working with entire whānau is making a difference.

Many kaupapa partners facilitated healing, connection, and growth for entire whānau, creating intergenerational impact.

Kaupapa partners:

- Used art and / or other tangible activities to engage pāpā in pregnancy and birth.
- Noticed that helping pāpā and whānau to have a specific role or 'job' in pregnancy or birth (no matter how small), helps them feel honoured, connected and responsible for pēpi throughout their life.
- Helped parents from different backgrounds to navigate decisions about raising children with mixed heritage.

"If you have a role in a birth - even any role - you feel connected to that baby. The more connection there is around a child - the more protected they are."



YOU CAN'T WHAKAMANA
THE PĒPI IF YOU DON'T
WHAKAMANA THE WHĀNAU

Healing and connecting creates space for learning.

By starting with connection and healing, kaupapa partners cultivated space for whānau to engage with health promotion messages or skills.

- Many whānau that engaged with kaupapa partners had difficult past experiences of racism and discrimination. These whānau were ready for advice and support **after** trust was rebuilt. Deep whakawhanaungatanga must come first.
- This work created foundations for intergenerational healing.
- Building cultural connections is a powerful vehicle for healing.
- Creating art was often used as part of the healing journey.
- Looking back into whakapapa and ancestral stories builds confidence, self determination and a drive to help others.

Kaupapa partners told us that high trust commissioning enabled them to take the time needed for healing and connecting.



"I don't think people would come, if we said 'come talk about your trauma.' its too confronting." But we find at the end of the day, people have been most vocal and most thankful for the opportunity to connect, unpack and heal"

“Some people aren't ready to be tuakana because they don't believe it yet. We kōrero about transformation and coming into their knowledge and power as māmā”.

“This mahi helps me to help others”.



The answers are in the room.

Kaupapa partners:

- Empowered māmā to identify the skills they already had.
- Encouraged whānau to share their experiences for the benefit of others, enabling whānau to see themselves as experts.
- Dream of doing themselves out of a job where in the future, knowledge and skills will be held and transmitted within whānau.
- Talked about returning mātauranga to whānau.

There were many stories about participants shifting from the role of teina to tuakana at wānanga. Māmā discovered they held expertise, which was healing and empowering.

SHINE
YOUR
BEAMIES!



LIGHT
OF YOUR
TUPUNA

This generation
is GOING to
CHANGE the
NARRATIVE

BY

LOOKING
BACK INTO the
GREATNESS of OUR
WHAKAPAPA

WE TOTALLY
HAVE the POWER
Within US * OUR OWN
WAY OF DOING

SCIENCE IS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE
BUT IT IS NOT THE SOURCE

Ripple effects from this mahi can be seen throughout community

Kaupapa partners:

- reported that there is reciprocity between them and the māmā and whānau who attended the sessions
- shared that some māmā returned to lead sessions either as volunteers or as kaimahi
- noticed how engaging and supporting whānau created a ripple effect out into community
- encouraged whānau to share their learnings widely, resulting in community-led health promotion with trusted faces in trusted places. This approach is reaching people that government struggles to, for example, pāpā in gangs
- collaborated with community organisations and NGOs to support māmā.

“We know people are spreading the mātauranga in their own contexts. Independent evaluation identified this.”

“We become a whānau. Once you come to a wānanga, you become part of Piripoho whānau”

“A mum was support at a hapu wānanga and said “this wānanga enabled me to be a support person” because her own birth was traumatic”

Empowering whānau to choose how they birth and raise their pēpi

Kaupapa partners spoke of:

- reconnecting parents with the birthing and parenting practices of their tupuna
- improvement to whānau understanding of clinical approaches
- supporting whānau to advocate for their needs in clinical settings
- repairing trust and building confidence of parents to engage with health services, including immunisations
- empowering whānau to seek support that is respectful, fair and dignified from health practitioners, Oranga Tamariki and Work and Income
- empowering whānau to draw on both clinical and cultural approaches to inform their birthing and parenting journey.

"[We] reclaim and reinforce the gentle, respectful and loving whānau relationships that were practised by our tūpuna."



Reorienting local health and wellbeing systems to improve care.

Kaupapa partners spoke of:

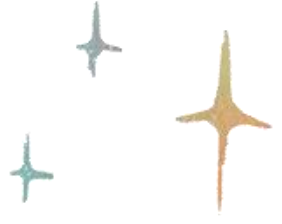
- supporting health services to develop culturally safe practices
- providing workforce development opportunities to midwives, clinicians other health kaimahi
- working in rural regions to build capacity to offer culturally grounded solutions.

Pacific kaupapa partners talk about mafana and alofa being brought into the Western system.

"Some people aren't receiving any antenatal education, but they are attending wahakura wānanga. Māori midwives attend to deliver antenatal education and to be there to answer questions as many [māmā] only have hospital midwives."

"our approach as always been the village approach"

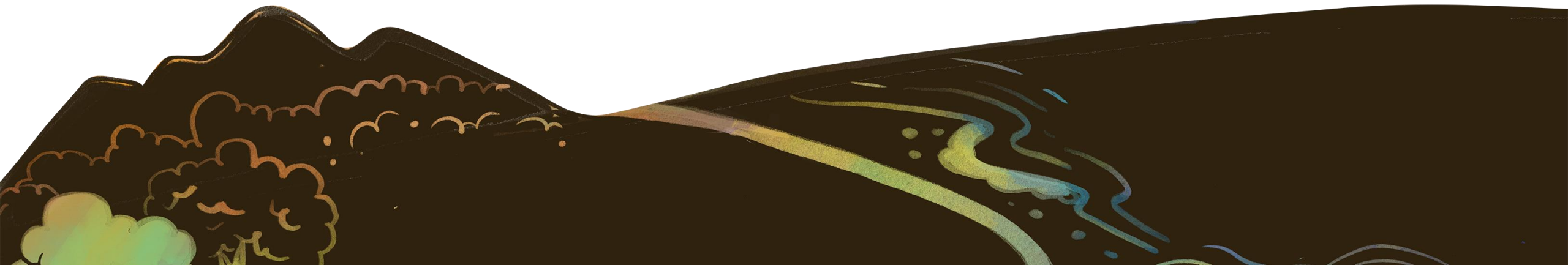




Insights gained about the practices needed to do this work.

We are improving approaches and systems to enable whānau centred solutions.

The following slides summarise these insights and build on insights from year one (see appendix for year one insights).



Nurturing the Vā.

"This is the future of working in partnership with the crown"

*"The Vā is a space intertwined with our values. When we apply our values in our relationship, we are nurturing the Vā".
(NPHS Ways of Working doc)"*

*YOU GUYS
HAVE MADE US
feel Really
SAFE*

We are using concept of the Vā to think about relationships. Nurturing the Vā remains one of the most important ways we strengthen relationships with kaupapa partners. For us this looks like:

- Creating a space of openness and learning. This has helped us to manage real and perceived power dynamics.
- Spending time with kaupapa partners. This has demonstrated commitment and enabled us to build alignment and trust. The ability to fund kaupapa partners for two years has strengthened the relationship we have and enabled them to build a community and sustainability in their mahi.
- Shared internal reflection sessions which inform contract management practices.

Nurturing the Vā requires time, reciprocity and shared accountability.

Supporting new team-members to work in this way requires intentional learning, and unlearning.

Our relationships are informed by previous interactions. Historical relational missteps by the Crown are still fresh for many providers.

Being Te Tiriti-dynamic.

Māori kaupapa partners describe our relationship as Te Tiriti honouring.

Kaupapa partners:

- described our approach as reciprocal
- reported feeling heard and trusted in relationship with us.

Kaupapa partners described the difference in our approach:

- We funded as though we believe that solutions exist in community.
- We were reliable, honest, authentic and transparent therefore built connection, mutual respect and understanding.
- Kaupapa partners felt autonomous.
- We removed obstacles that usually made funding inaccessible to community-led kaupapa.
- We used Māori models of evaluation and spoke through successes.

"Thank you for trusting in whānau. This is the way Te Tiriti was supposed to be. I want to acknowledge your service and your mahi. I want you to share that with your boss. especially the bit about te Tiriti."

"You are THE partnership story. You enable us to do the work that we do. We're not politicians, data people. You help us to navigate those systems"



Relational commissioning unlocks potential.

Most RFP processes aren't accessible to community innovators.

A relational approach to commissioning enabled the outcomes we have seen. When we removed administrative burden from kaupapa partners we noticed:

- time was freed for them to do more of the important mahi to support whānau
- access to funding was available to more grass-roots, whanau-led kaupapa.

What *relational commissioning* looks like in practice can vary between projects and between years. Common values and practices are:

- trusting community partners to know what's needed and to deliver what's needed
- shared accountability and reciprocal practices
- striving to understand the impact of our actions and processes through reflective sessions internally and with kaupapa partners
- striving for multiyear funding to provide consistent supports within communities and enable kaupapa partners to engage in sustainable hiring practices.



Measurement and communicating outcomes.



Figuring out how to communicate approach and impact is a team priority.

Adopting Kataraina Pipi's Strategies Evidence Success (SES) evaluation framework has worked well for partner catch ups and sense-making. We have found that it:

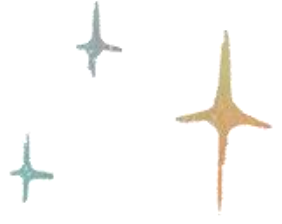
- is relational and enables kaupapa partners to determine what success means to them
- creates a trusted consistent measurement and reporting framework across kaupapa partners.

Measuring and communicating outcomes is an organisational priority. There are tensions to demonstrate return on investment while still:

- measuring what is meaningful to whānau and not just what is easy to measure
- ensuring that "success sits in the whānau" and that we are accountable to whānau first
- capturing the intergenerational and broad impacts of a holistic wellbeing-based approach with whānau.

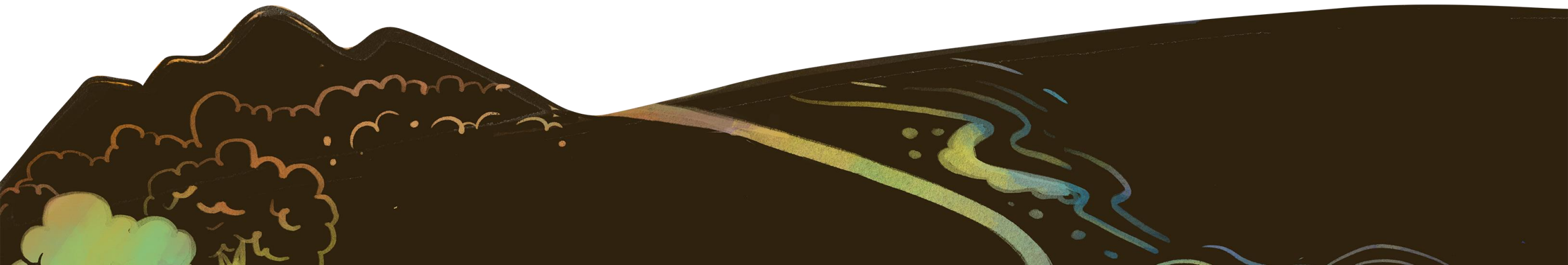
Some kaupapa partners are exploring new ways to measure their work:

- Mamia (Hastings) are developing software to measure impact.



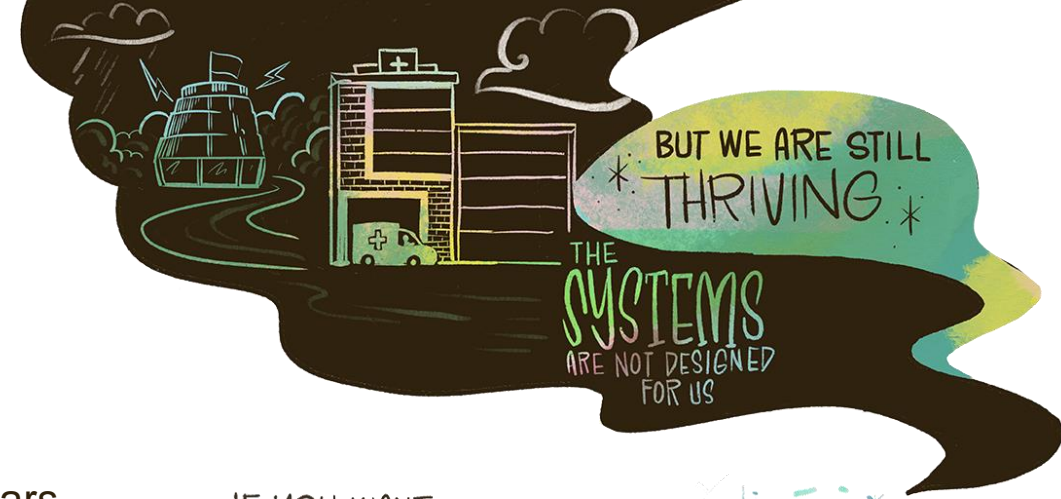
Our role in the system?

Insights from this work are influencing the definition of what 'best practice' looks like for early years wellbeing.



Māmā ki te Ao: influencing the system.

- This mahi generates important insights around the role of early years health promotion in NPHS and how we describe what 'best practice' looks like.
- Several health and other government agencies have invited us to share lessons with them. We celebrate these opportunities to centre wāhine voice and community perspectives about what works, and why.
- Increasingly, some kaupapa partners want us to include them in system change interventions. They want to invite decision makers into their spaces, and they want to be invited into decision making spaces.
- Kaupapa partners tell us that they feel 'seen' when we share their insights and reports. This is especially valued by partners in small regional centres, as they feel that their lived experiences are often missed.
- Our story telling for change videos were well received by leaders across government. These videos have enabled us to share how kaupapa partners create space that feels safe and healing for community, and demonstrates what could collectively be invested in.



IF YOU WANT
TO DO the BEST FOR
OUR MĀMĀ— GIVE
US the PEN!

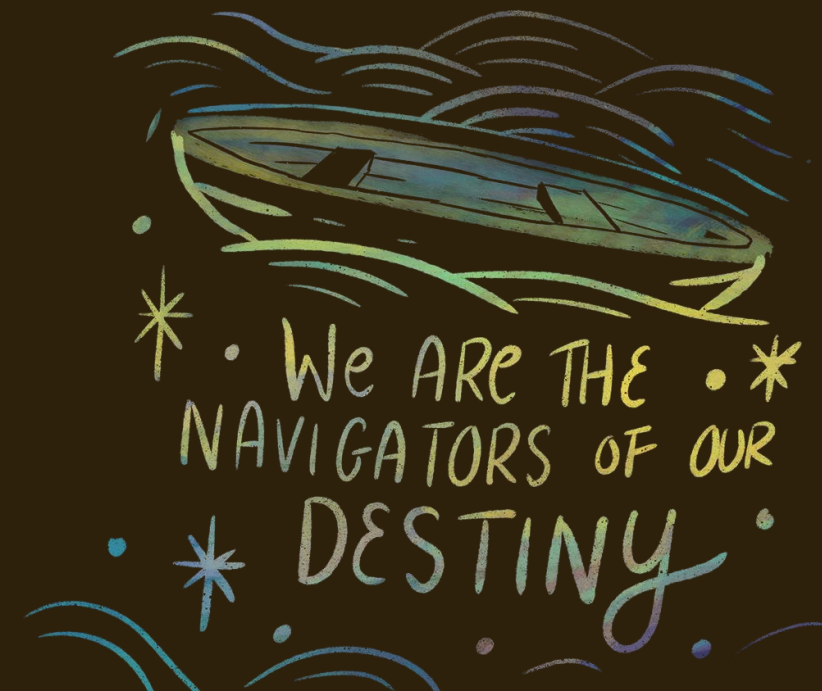


"[This is a] starting point for finding the voices of the Pacific. The voices are there and can be brought together and into government"

Holistic wellbeing responses are a crucial part of the comprehensive approach.

- To achieve the government's health priorities, solutions must be resourced proportionate to need.
- There are communities that the government has long struggled to serve, and complex issues we have struggled to solve. Most often, these issues do not fit neatly with any one issue specific team or agency.
- Over the last two years, we have successfully demonstrated how health promotion can work in partnership with communities to design solutions to these complex challenges.
- Wellbeing place-based responses are an essential part of the wider comprehensive health promotion approach.
- Community initiatives that lead with mātauranga and Pacific worldviews are often holistic by default, and do not usually fit into a neat issue specific box.
- Partnering with regional health promoters provides an opportunity for us to develop deeper relationships more meaningfully measure impact.

*"We don't bound out role.
Anything you need us to be,
we can be".*



Primary prevention in action: holistic wellbeing approaches prevent mental distress.

Primary prevention means supporting the wellbeing of māmā and whānau through the ups and downs of parenthood before distress occurs. Kaupapa partners spoke of:

- the open and welcoming spaces that reduced stigma and enabled whānau to explore what additional supports they might need
- accepting and supporting people where they were at and wrapping support around them
- shared spaces that allowed whānau to connect and set goals while inadvertently addressing loneliness and isolation.

There is irrefutable evidence that actions to support whānau in the early years has a significant social return on investment (13:1). The fund continues to demonstrate the critical role of supporting wellbeing initiatives for whānau to avoid burdening specialist mental health services.

Internal silos between teams were broken down to support whānau who have been underserved by the system as part of a comprehensive health promotion approach.

Providing funding that enabled kaupapa partners to be aspiration focused, not deficit (issue-specific) focused naturally addressed many “issue” based topics.

“We have clear insights around mental health. A lot of causes of mental health has been not having the community/village of islands and being away from big cities. This has caused isolation.”

*INVEST IN A
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What have we learned about our role in the system?



Communities

- Support communities to design the solutions for their own wellbeing
- Advocate for holistic wellbeing solutions across Te Whatu Ora and across government, as part of comprehensive suite of responses.
- Learn our way into a new national/regional role.

System change

- Share insights from kaupapa partners into system redesign opportunities.
- Tell the story with evidence and impact.
- Convene and connect across the system to consider cross-government wellbeing approaches.

Tool and Resources

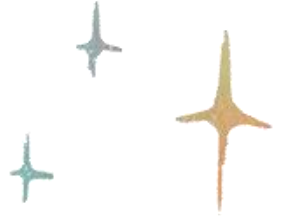
Respond to priorities identified by communities and provide whānau and those supporting whānau with access to online information and guidance.

Storytelling for change

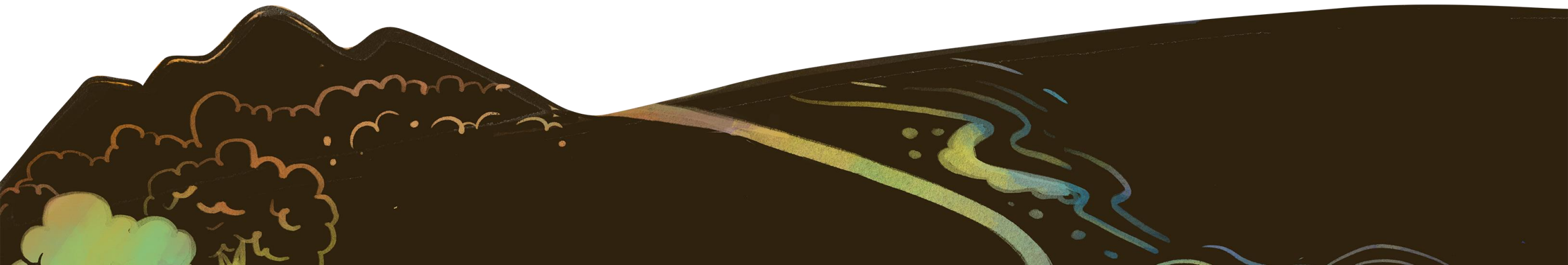


Storytelling for change - highlighting community innovation and wellbeing approaches for maternity and early years for generations to come

Three videos showcasing some kaupapa partners.



Appendix 1: insights from year 1



WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT WHAT'S WORKING FOR WHĀNAU? ☀️



Providers are helping whānau to navigate two worlds.

"[We are] melding and blending the footsteps of our tupuna into this modern age."



High trust funding creates space for innovation and culturally-grounded approaches. This means providers can respond to what really matters to whānau.

"We love the opportunity for flexibility to respond to what community wants."

TALANOA AND CONNECTION



Fostering connection in a safe space is powerful.

"We should be doing ourselves out of a job, helping people live into their rangatiratanga. Build the capacity to love and care into the communities."



Spaces have a role in facilitating connection, healing and wellbeing.

"Whānau say they love the space and appreciate the option to just come and be."

"We hope that we aren't just reconnecting māmā but so many generations to come."

RESPONSIVE DESIGN



Design should respond to the day to day realities of whānau. Ordinary people (not just experts) create a village of learning.

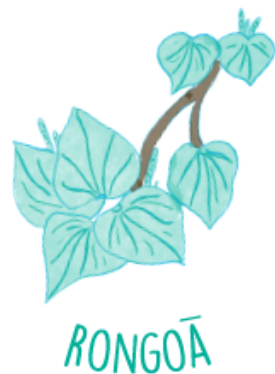
"People in community are the ones to define what they want, and what they can offer... We're learning together in a village of learning ... We believe we don't have all the solutions, or all the right questions."

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT WHAT'S WORKING FOR WHĀNAU? ☀️



Life right now is hard and gets in the way of nurturing.

"Nurturing back home is different to nurturing here, the rush of life here makes getting good food hard."



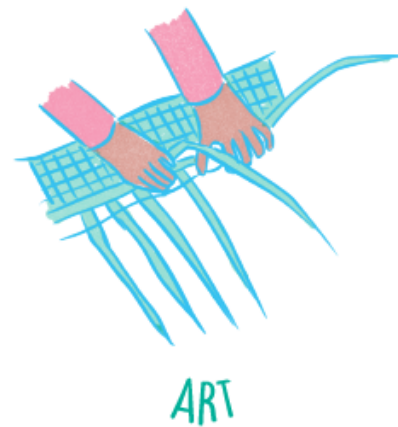
Our partners are moving beyond approaches that focus on knowledge transition; they are creating spaces of healing, connection and rongoā.

"The 'first thousand days' that I'd like to be spending with these babies is a 1000 days kura of rongoā."



Community partners are creating comfortable spaces for dads and demonstrating the specialised skillset this requires. Culturally-grounded approaches are exploring pre-colonial roles of papa.

"We had one pāpā attend - he even came on his own one time. And now, even though they [the couple] have been through rough patches, they've decided to move, found a house. She said she "can't believe how far we've come. Baby is due in a couple of months and we are really looking forward to settling down together"."



Collective efforts to restore and revitalise cultural / ancestral art forms are playing an important role in building connection and belonging.

"There are many parents who don't have access to language and culture.... [Fala Pepe] is wrapping our children in the spiritual connection from the ancestral lands...it's about restoring connection and revitalising identity and ties."

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT THE PRACTICE NEEDED TO DO THIS WORK?

OVERCOMING ADMIN BARRIERS

Playing to strengths and reducing unnecessary admin is better for everyone.

"I get heart palpitations at the idea of doing application forms."

FLEXIBILITY AND TRUST

Tightly-defined service parameters constrain potential. Changing course is a sign of learning and improvement.

"Organisations like yours will trust us and empower us to do the things we talk about but don't often get funded to do."

"Really awesome to see you guys trying to work in a different way. It works for us to work towards what we want to achieve. It's not always the case. This is amazing."

RELATIONAL APPROACHES, VA

Creating space to focus on relationships rather than process is an ongoing challenge. We are building our practice in open, supportive and reciprocal communication.

We welcome frank, open conversations but we feel that perceived and real power imbalances sometimes hinder this.

VA

The relational space between provider and funder is still hard to navigate.

We are being intentional about how to create the Va with fewer power dynamics. Many relationships are strong but for some we need to do more to connect.

'Most funders don't ask...perhaps they think that they are doing it right if there is no feedback. I truly feel this is one of the few interactions I have had in the 11 years of working in Māori health promotion space that the funders have had such open and frank discussions, Ngā mihi nunui ki a koutou.'

BUILDING ALIGNMENT

Ensuring that our strategic direction aligns with provider and whānau aspirations builds reciprocity and trust.

LESS REPORTING, MORE LEARNING

Moving reporting away from a tick box to a two-way learning approach is benefiting providers and us. But this needs to be resourced.

'Usually we do what whānau require us to do for them, then at the end of the contract we have to make our reporting fit the contract outcome requirements.'