Kaiparahuarahi

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Exploring Mana Taiohi: our national youth development principles for a new season

A collection of perspectives

AraTaiohi
Peak Body for Youth Development

EDITED BY NIKKI HURST, ROD BAXTER AND JANE ZINTL

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Ara Taiohi, PO Box 6886

Marion Square
Wellington 6141
Aotearoa New Zealand

Phone: +64 4 802 5000
Email: **admin@arataiohi.org.nz**

Designed by Bo Moore **bomoore.net**

The Process

These Youth Development Principles of Aotearoa inform the wider ecosystem that supports young people in Aotearoa to thrive. They are the result of a review of the principles of youth development previously expressed in the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa (2002).

In order to encompass the range of contributions for the Arotake (review) of the YDSA, and to reflect calls for a kaupapa Māori and Treaty-based concept, a Māori framework was developed.

The Kete Kupenga framework features a loose diamond weave which starts simply and develops into an intricate knot where double strands meet. The four double strands feeding into the knot represent components of intersectional youth development:

Te Ao Māori (Māori world)

Taiohi (young people)

Kaimahi (workers: people who work with young people, including a Pacific fono) and

Mātauranga (knowledge, research).

The knots themselves represent key points of whakapapa in those intersections such as events or publications. The space between the weave represents wairua, time and place.

Through this comprehensive review it was clear that while the existing six principles of youth development were sound, they needed to be updated to reflect youth development in 2019 and the rich cultural heritage of Aotearoa.

To inform the new look principles engagement was as follows:

- the voice of over 1000 young people (*Ngā Kōrero Hauora o Ngā Taiohi* and *Strengthening the Youth Development Strategy*),
- over 700 people (*Review of Principles: Kaimahi* report) who work with young people, including 10 regional hui,
- 7 Māori caucus (*Voice of Kaimahi Māori* report),
- a Pacific fono (*YDSA Pasifika* report),
- a youth development ecosystem report (*Centre for Social Impact* report)
- an Aotearoa based literature review (*He Arotake Tuhinga*).

These inputs were synthesised, and checked with a focus group, as well as receiving linguistic advice from a translator accredited by the Māori Language Commission.

We then sent out an online survey requesting feedback on the principles. Feedback was summarised and reported to the focus group, then designed and printed.

We launched these new look principles, now referred to as Mana Taiohi, at our AGM on 22 October 2019. You can read the principles here: **www.bit.ly/manataiohi**

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Dedication

We dedicate this to the contributors to the original Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA), the Ministry of Youth Affairs as author of the original principles, and to the movement of youth workers who took the principles out of a government strategy and used them to transform how we work with young people.

Editorial

A New Journey Begins

Recently, the youth development sector has been on an epic journey, reviewing the principles of youth development previously expressed in the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa. The project was led by the Ministry for Youth Development, the Vodafone Foundation, and Ara Taiohi, a partnership between government, philanthropy and the sector. Involve 2018 was a significant milestone, as the conversation kicked into high gear, became real, and we brainstormed on glow-in-the-dark beach balls, bouncing them around the Michael Fowler Centre. Typical youth workers!

The journey has been timely, challenging and rewarding. There was a strong desire to retain the essence of the existing six principles of youth development, whilst updating them to reflect the rich cultural heritage of Aotearoa, and the reality for young people in 2019. The resulting refreshed principles, Mana Taiohi, have been rapidly embraced by the sector.

This issue of Kaiparahuarahi is long overdue (we note the first issue was released in May 2017!). This reflects the reality for youth workers, that the important is often outweighed by the urgent/important. The launch of Mana Taiohi at Ara Taiohi's AGM in October was a catalyst, resulting in the development of this second issue.

As editors and kaitiaki for Kaiparahuarahi, we invited a bunch of practitioners to share their thoughts on each of the principles, and how they manifest in practice. We have been inspired by how each author has responded (in a typically tight timeframe) both professionally and personally. We are blown away by the depth of understanding, reflection and beauty present in each of the contributions. We thank the contributors for the taonga they have gifted to our youth development community. There are so many more voices we would have loved to include, and sincerely hope (or possibly plan) that issue 3 is not far away, so that we can continue to capture the diverse voices and record our unique stories.

Our hope and aspiration for this issue of Kaiparahuarahi is to be an essential resource for practitioners to help us understand and live out the principles of Mana Taiohi in our mahi. Editing these articles has resulted in each of us reflecting on our own practice, and the impact Mana Taiohi has the potential to make.

In Jane's role as CEO of Ara Taiohi, she has been reflecting on how these principles look for the wider sector, and has more questions than answers. What do principles such as Mauri and Whakapapa look like for the entire sector? How do we Manaaki our sector? In a day and age where youth voice is turning up the volume, how can Whai Wāhitanga ensure participation is authentic? Challenging and inspiring questions. It has also highlighted the places and spaces where Mana Taiohi principles are being lived and breathed, and that these principles only put words and a framework around something that is the essence of Youth Work in Aotearoa. The contributions to this issue are from people who are in this category.

Nikki, as an educator has been struck by the deep sense of belonging each of the contributors already feels to these principles. The aroha and connection we felt to our YDSA shines ever brighter through Mana Taiohi and is reflected in each of these pieces. Our sector has always highly valued learning and these clear and beautifully written (my students are laughing) contributions reflect that. And as formal spaces for learning are facing such pressure the place of this journal becomes ever more important. The role of Kaiparahuarahi as a place to share our thoughts, our evidence base, our experience and our hopes for the future of Mana Taiohi in Aotearoa. I will treasure this issue as I have the first, both are inspirations for my practice, knowledge for my kete and a connection to others who just get it. A thousand times thank you to our contributors and a thousand times more to our readers and users.

For Rod, there are tangible themes resonating about our relationships, role and how these are both stable yet evolve over time. Current chair of Korowai Tupu, and embarking on a new journey as Director of Impact with Prince's Trust New Zealand, Rod recognises we change hats sometimes but our heart is consistent, and we continue to grow from, and with, each other. There's something about that with respect to the YDSA and Mana Taiohi. Essence feels familiar, and we're experiencing a significant upgrade. It's a bit like your favourite band or musician when they release albums over several decades.

We invite you to reflect within your organisations, with colleagues, supervisors and peers how you are allowing Mana Taiohi to shape your practice, and hope as you read this it supports this journey.

Jane Zintl, Nikki Hurst and Rod Baxter

Mana is the authority we inherit at birth and we accrue over our lifetime. It determines the right of a young person to have agency in their lives and the decisions that affect them. Enhancing the mana of young people means recognising what is right with them, as well as the reality of their world. Young people are supported to have a voice, work to their strengths and step into leadership.

This strength-based approach is core to a young person's wellbeing, and is fully realised when each of the principles are embraced.

Mana Taiohi – the journey, the destination.

Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe, me he maunga teitei

Aim for the highest cloud so that if you miss it, you hit a lofty mountain

Charmaine Tuhaka and Jane Zintl

As we start this article we want to acknowledge the mana of each other. This is the waka we row together. Being strengths-based and mana enhancing in our practice starts with us, and our relationship. Young people have the best bull$#!+ radars. If we are unable to practice what we preach, how can we expect young people be expected to believe us as we endeavour to support them. We'd like to introduce each other:

Charmaine Tuhaka (Ngāti Porou) is a trained youth worker and social worker who consistently works with the heart and practices of a youth worker, whatever profession she happens to be being paid for at the time! Her commitment to the rangatahi, whānau and hapori of the Hawkes Bay region shines, in both her words and actions. My recent connection with Char has been through her role (currently the Chair) of the Wellington Regional Youth Workers Trust, and as both Kaiārahi and Rōpū member of Korowai Tupu (the professional association for Youth Work in Aotearoa). She is a leader in our sector. Her passion for training and equipping Youth Workers, particularly to practice consistently with our responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, both inspires and challenges me.

Jane Zintl comes from the ancestral lands of Roseveare Island in Cornwall, however has roots in Ōtautahi, Aotearoa. With her stands her proud family. Jane trained and started her working life as a lawyer. When I started in youth work I went to a Code of Ethics workshop in Dannevirke and was amazed at the referencing to sub-clauses of clauses (even with a page number, like woah!). Jane is a champion and an advocate for ethical practice within Youth Work. The maximiser that she is (Clifton Strength's joke) is evident in the relationships she builds and maintains throughout Aotearoa for the betterment of the youth development sector. It is of recent times Jane, rightly so, holds the Chief Executive role at Ara Taiohi. It is a great privilege to work alongside Jane as she acknowledges and respects the whakapapa the youth development sector, and seeks to ensure its needs are met for youth workers, and more importantly the young people of Aotearoa.

From Strengths-based to Mana Enhancing

'*Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach*' is the third of six principles of youth development from the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa (YDSA: Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). '*A **strengths-based approach** seeks to shift the collective thinking about **young** people from being problem-**based** to **strengths-based***' (Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa 2nd ed, p. 33).

We have observed that strengths-based approaches are often practiced well, but not always fully understood by our sector. We have a number of models that are strengths-based (Te Whare Tapa Whā and the Circle of Courage to name a few). We have tools that help us to identify strengths (e.g., strengths finder or VIA). However, strengths-based approaches from literature are largely unknown.

This approach is about changing a mind-set. This change in mind-set is from deficit to strength, cure to care, one dimensional to holistic, from 'I know best' to 'you know best'. When the literature around strengths-based practice is considered some principles and concepts emerge; these are at the heart of strengths-based practice and have been clearly articulated by researcher Dennis Saleebey (1997 as cited in Thomas & Davis, 2005).

We've adapted these slightly as a lens to consider Mana Taiohi as an overarching strengths-based and mana-enhancing framework:

1. **All young people and environments possess strengths that can be mobilized**
2. **Young people are experts on themselves**
3. **Youth workers need to suspend their assumptions in order to truly hear young people and enable their strengths to be present.**

It is a myth that being strengths-based is about only idealistically focusing on the good stuff at the expense of the reality in a young person's life. We cannot do

this, and it is likely to cause more harm than good. Being mana enhancing is about starting with and having a lens that looks for what is right with a young person, and developing a relationship based on this. Usually this relational approach results in young people choosing to invite us into what is challenging or hard for them, because they trust us and know we care.

Mana is defined in Mana Taiohi as the authority we inherit at birth and we accrue over our lifetime. It determines the right of a young person to have agency in their lives and the decisions that affect them. Enhancing the mana of young people means recognising what is right with them, as well as the reality of their world. Young people are supported to have a voice, work to their strengths and step into leadership.

The links between strengths-based approaches, as outlined in the YDSA, and mana enhancing practices as described in Mana Taiohi are clear. Mana is broader, and more holistic, however they take the same approach of honouring the prestige, authority, influence and charisma of a young person.

Why Mana Taiohi?

The decision to frame our new-look principles of youth development around mana came as the synthetisation group started to pull together the four strands of our Kupenga Kete framework (young people, practitioners, Te Ao Māori and Aotearoa literature). Two key aspects led to the decision that mana was the overarching framework for our new principles.

Firstly, the literature team started by categorising all research and evidence under the framework of the existing six principles of the YDSA (Deane, Dutton & Kerekere, 2019). This quickly became difficult, resulting in the team reviewing Māori critique of the YDSA and identifying kupu (Māori words/concepts) that better reflected youth development in Aotearoa. These kupu are 6 of the 9 that now frame the Mana Taiohi principles. One of the reasons it was so challenging to categorise in to the previous YDSA principles was that while most of the research and literature was strengths-based, very little fitted exclusively into the strengths-based category, resulting in the strengths-based category being almost empty. There was a sense that a strengths-based approach flowed through every principle.

Secondly, as we engaged in regional hui people who work with young people consistently identified that while quality relationships are at the heart of Youth Work, practicing in a strengths-based/mana enhancing way is fundamental. It is defining for Youth Work. At our core we are one of the few professions that does not engage with a young person because they have a problem that needs to be fixed, and then close the relationship once it has been (or they consider it) 'fixed'. Youth Work skills and expertise are often required in compulsory relationships; however pure Youth Work doesn't start until the young person has chosen to engage with the Youth Worker. Until the point of engagement, it is more like 'pre-Youth Work'. It became clear that our new framework needed to reflect this aspect of who we are as a profession. At our core we honour, acknowledge, support and enhance the mana of young people. And this flows through all the other principles. The interconnectedness cannot be ignored.

Mana in our Practice

Over the years I (Char) have had the privilege and honour of having young people walk into my office, finally answer my missed calls, talk in 'sharing circles', have a chat in the car and legit climb mountain ranges with me. Together we have laughed, cried, moaned and celebrated past events, our surrounding worlds and the anticipation of the future. These awesome beings have helped to shape me as a youth worker. Equally important have been the eager students completing certificates in youth work or professionals that have participated in my trainings. There are big hearted youth workers and volunteers I have worked with to support them to do what they do best with young people in our community. No matter the age, size, values, beliefs or experience of these people what we all have is mana. We are here for a reason, it's our journey to seek and pursue this. As youth workers and contributors to the youth development sector it is our responsibility to maintain and enhance the mana of taiohi in space and therefore Aotearoa. We also maintain and enhance our own mana and that of others. As youth workers we are at the forefront of holding space for Mana Taiohi in youth development. This reflection offers insight into how we do what we do, working alongside young people and fellow youth workers.

Youth workers are staunch at 'meeting young people where they are at'. Young people cross our paths through drop in centres, community groups, clinics, classroom educational talks, crisis interventions, and within family homes. They maybe by themselves, with their crew or with whānau. They come with history, people and events - good and not so good - that have brought them to this point in time. The lens they view their world from may have parts that are clear or foggy, rose coloured or distorted, whole or broken at the time we meet with them. The role of a youth worker is to provide them with the ability to clean and adjust the current view. Whilst the world spins around the young person, there before us stands a person 'who knows themselves best'.

At times young people share common themes, "like I've heard this before". However, what was important for one person isn't necessarily for another. As youth workers we interchangeably work from our head, heart and gut. This approach allows for a young person and a youth worker to determine 'what is up and what is needed'. The old adage of young people paddling their waka can be a metaphor of mana in

action. As a youth worker shining light on a young person's whakapapa, their surrounding worlds (te ao), their 'level' of mauri and how they are or could be, we join and connect (hononga) with their relationships and support. This helps to highlight and remind us we are resource rich. These principles can be seen as the structures of the waka or what young people come with. As a leader of a waka you determine who makes up your crew, how to utilise your crew and where you are going. Whatever is on board can determine our destination. To get momentum from our waka there is a need for skills, competencies and abilities. This gives strength to the movement, however what fires it is still needed. Young people remind us it not just what's in their toolkit, it's also the fire in their belly. Youth workers need to turn the volume up on each young person's desires, passions and dreams.

Once a waka is ready to be sailed or be paddled it needs a body of water to navigate. The environmental factors just like life can throw challenges and obstacles or provide plain sailing. As we make our way through life, the journey is just as important as the final destination. Mana Taiohi reminds us of the supporting factors in engaging with young people. These principles help with the steering, redirecting or moving forward. Or, in this case, enhance and maintain the mana of taiohi. When we engage we need to identify the connections (whānaungatanga) and commonalities between us and their worlds. We 'start where you are, with what you've got'. Straight up though, relationships, people or support that can make or break us. What keeps it real is being able to manaaki others. Role modelling respect and reciprocity in our engagements. Young people then seek this within their relationships. There is a need to value mātauranga in all its shapes and forms. Being open minded and taking each situation as a learning moment is valuable for everyone. Being a professional youth worker means we do not jump in the waka and take the wheel. When we align these principles of Mana Taiohi, whai wāhitanga (participation) is facilitated.

I (Jane) recall a young person I worked with in a community based setting that highlights how practicing like this can make a real difference. He was one of our young leaders and we had a great relationship. He was mischievous and fun, reliable, always taking the lead in practical jokes, looked up to by many of the younger people, and occasionally needed to be challenged when he stepped over a line. He ended up being in trouble at school, and I supported him at a school Board of Trustees hearing, as he faced exclusion. As I sat there, it was like I was hearing about a different person. He was described as defiant, difficult and disrespectful to the point where he was answering allegations of 'continual disobedience'. It was good for the Board of Trustees, principal and school staff to hear that there was another side to this young person that their approach and environment had missed, lost, or squashed. It was also good for us to explore with this young person how important it is as a young leader to be consistent across contexts, and start to look at strategies to shift things at school. Fundamentally our mana enhancing relationship allowed the best of the young person to shine. We expected the best, and got the best. He is still a friend (20 years later) today.

Conclusion

As youth workers we stand before many 'lofty mountains' in our mahi. Whether it's to stand up for the contribution our profession makes in a young person's life, the challenges and aspirations we support young people with, or the demands of our evolving worlds, youth workers are on the front line. As youth workers we must support each other and young people to continue to aim high. The top of the mountain is our potential. Holding space for young people enables us to engage in the journey. We must 'check ourselves before we wreck ourselves' when embarking in the journey. When supporting a young person to climb a 'lofty mountain', we consider how high it is and the best track to take. We believe nothing is absent. We don't need to add things to make young people better or to commence this ascent up a mountain. What's important for them, shifts what needs to be important for us. This requires a youth worker to set aside agendas and meet young people where they are at. If we are able to do this in our engagements with young people and their worlds, then we truly honour them. We honour who they are, all that they are and what makes them, them. We invite those who create space for young people and who support the mahi of youth development and Youth Work to embrace Mana Taiohi. The principles of the Mana Taiohi framework come with young people as they are. We just need to provide the space and engagement to support their journey, thus enhancing and maintaining mana for the taiohi of Aotearoa.

Jane Zintl provides us all with amazing leadership as Chief Executive of Ara Taiohi.

Charmaine Tuhaka is invaluable in so many spaces not least as a Kaihautū, member of the Korowai Tupu Rōpū, and chair of the Wellington Regional Youth Workers Trust.

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Mana and Mauri with Matekino

A chat with Matekino Marshall

Jane: Let's start with you Matekino.

Matekino:

Ko Tainui te waka
Ko Taupiri te maunga
Ko Waikato te awa
Ko Waikato te iwi
Ko Ngāti Tahinga,
Ngāti Mahuta tōku hapū
He piko he taniwha
He piko he taniwha
Waikato taniwharau

He Mokopuna o Te Pūaha ahau

Jane: As Kaihautū of Ara Taiohi how do you see Mana Taiohi in the context of our responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the use of kupu in the framework?

Matekino: We realise that Te Ao Māori belongs to Māori. And so as an organisation we are being responsive to Te Ao Māori. We are not deciding this is our concept and this is how we framed it up in your framework. We try not to use colonised language. Letting Māori, and in particular Iwi own it if they want it, or disown it if they don't. Our mission is not to recolonise. Our mission is to be responsive to the call of Iwi Māori, which is to actually allow Te Ao Māori a place in our peoples' journey of wellbeing.

Jane: And in our case, for our rangatahi and our taiohi.

Matekino: Yeah. A lot of our (New Zealand) culture comes from poor languaging, like even when we talk about Mental Health, people talk about it like other people have it. But we are all on a continuum, and for so long when the focus has been on our unwellness rather than our wellness. I just had an argument with the DHB this morning, I said to them "I must have missed the hui when we decided that the clinician was allowed to lead my wellbeing. I must have missed that." Because they've just got a role to play, and I decide when they play that role. And that's what it's like for whanau.

Jane: Everyone is in a different place with their understanding of Te Reo and Te Ao Māori. How do you recommend that people who work with young people who are less confident journey towards being able to practice Mana Taiohi principles?

Matekino: I would reiterate the importance of using the resources made available through Ara Taiohi, and then applying principles according to the guidelines. This is Ara Taiohi's role as the support mechanism to achieving bicultural practice.

Jane: Our framework defines Mauri as the life spark or essence of all living things that has passed down from ancestors through whakapapa. Tell us about your view of Mauri from a Te Ao Māori perspective.

Matekino: Kaupapa Māori? I can only speak from my own Iwi perspective in terms of how we shape it up in my own rohe. I know that it means different things to lots of different people. Some people are more explicit about what mauri feels like and looks like. Our Iwi just refers to it being the essence of one's self being. We view it as when you're raising your children, you're investing in the growth of that mauri. So the physical learning and the spiritual learning lives within your mauri. So that's the kind of the wider context in which I speak about mauri from my own Te Ao Māori point of view.

Jane: When you first saw the framework you encouraged us to put Taiohi after the word Mauri. Can you outline the thinking behind this?

Matekino: Well, because your taiohitanga you only hold on to for a little bit of time. All the young people I work with are constantly reminding me that I have expired. It's quite funny I'll give you an example: Yesterday we had a hui at our local school, preparing for when NZ history is being implemented in schools. And so what we're doing is we're having a community driven feedback from the young people at the kura around what kind of things they would like to learn about the history locally, before we get the wider spectrum of NZ history. And so when I walked in the room there were all older people, and when I channelled in on the table where all the young people were at, and I'm like those are my people, I'm gonna go sit over there, hang out with them. So we were about half an hour into the workshop and one of the young people wrote something down on the paper and they looked at me and said "Matua, what do you think of this?" And I'm like "What, I'm like just a couple of years older than you, I'm sure." And when I

changed from being at that table to a table where my aunties were sitting and they kept calling me boy!

So in relation to Mauri Taiohi it was actually about fuelling the experiences you have as a young person through your own lens. And our role as your youth worker is to be responsive to your dreams and your aspirations. Rather than setting them out. So Mauri Taiohi was specifically about fuelling the life force, the life spark of that period in your journey. And it was talking generally about the mauri of young people. Young people have a culture, they're all a part of the same thing, but individualised, but they have a very similar view of the world. You can really see examples of that through this action they're leading against climate change. They seem really united on that front. That's the mauri taiohi that I'm talking about, that's the collective mauri of the young people.

Jane: Can you tell us a story about what fuelling Mauri looks like in practice?

Matekino: In our whānau when we have new babies come into the world and join us. Two activities that always happen, one is connection with mother, skin on skin, that's the physical. And kaumatua of the whānau always puts out a karakia. Physical wellbeing of the child is being looked after by touching, and the mauri is being looked after by the karakia process. So I'm thinking about being responsive to young people in the way of offering (where chosen) karakia to open a space that's a kind of a practice. Te Whare Tapa Whā has informed that for a lot of people. Offering, would you like to open with a karakia. Instead of just showing up and being a youth worker and saying, 'Here's our plans. You haven't done this, you haven't done that'. That's a requirement of my youth workers who work alongside me at Huakina, that we be receptive to their spiritual wellbeing on their terms. So that might be a karakia, this may look like a Christian prayer for some people, or karakia may look like a te ao Māori prayer. That's got our tohungatanga. Or for some people they just like a Word of the Day. We're operating in a spiritual and physical.

Jane: Thanks Matekino, this is beautiful and a great way to start the many conversations we will be having around mauri in the years to come.

Matakino Marshall is our inspiring Ara Taiohi Kaihautū and co-chairs our board.

We fuel the mauri, the inherent life spark of young people, supporting the development of their identity

Mauri is the life spark inherent in all young people. It includes their values beliefs, skills, and talents. Fuelling that life spark means young people are seen, recognised and valued for who they are. Young people are supported to follow their interests and passions, and to actively construct their own identity. Linked to their whakapapa, when their mauri is secure/solid, young people stand in their own truth.

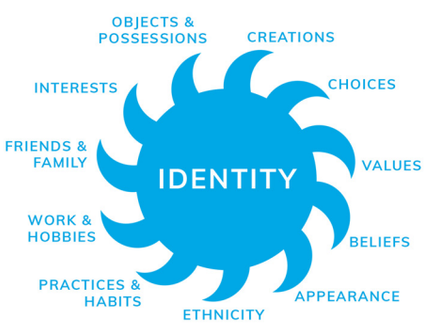
Mauri Identity Life Spark

Dr. Sue Bagshaw

Some would say that life spark begins with ancestors long ago, derived from heavenly being(s), others when egg meets sperm, others at birth. Many philosophers have pondered over how to answer the question "who am I?".

Erik Erickson (1902-1994) who was a psychologist, became famous for his stages of life theories. He described the time between 12 and 18 years old as one in which the young person discovers who they are. On the way they try on different roles and ways of being as they learn the impact of those on others. Between 1 and 3 years children learn autonomy and separation from Mum. "I do it" is a catch phrase whether it be feeding myself or dressing myself. Teens have almost the same catch phrase as they remain in the whānau but separate emotionally and developmentally from being a child to enter the adult world.

Many factors contribute to identity and "who you are": gender, ethnicity, culture, values, sexuality, whānau, friends, school, community, media as a "voice" of what society thinks, amongst many others. Identity affects what you do, how you do it and what others do to you, and in turn these events influence who you are.



Ethnicity and Culture

Ethnicity and culture are often confused (Bhopal & Donaldson, 1998). The term race is still around, especially in an insulting way, but in many studies of population using race like "white", "black", "brown" is not a term used much now. Should we describe identity using nationality? The term taken as meaning the country you were you born in. Many people now are born in countries they don't grow up in, perhaps it depends on where your parents are born?

So we turn to ethnicity and culture. Are they the same thing? Some would say that race is determined by genetic biology and ethnicity by culture defined by a whole group of different activities within geographic regions. Most agree that ethnicity is self-identified.

Does it matter? Well, yes. How you identify and who you identify with is a big part of who you are. Culture is so much of life especially the life of whānau, and bigger hapū groups. Contributions to culture come from reo, music, clothes, traditions, ceremony, dance even sport and icons whether they be people or object icons. When culture is shared by a large group then it could define ethnicity but there are many different groups that have a culture, defined by the group.

Thus there are those with different abilities which develop their own culture; sporting groups, professional groups, hobby groups and many others who come together, mostly for support and to develop their own ways of belonging. The power of self-help groups is big in helping to heal those that are discriminated against because they are different from the majority. Culture can be very helpful if it encourages belonging. If it is an excuse for exclusion it is not as helpful.

Values

Identity and culture are interwoven, and an important part of culture are the values of that culture. Value can be described as the importance of something to an individual or group. The Oxford Dictionary has nine definitions and that's just for the word when used as a noun. Some examples given are:

- something that is treasured - your support is of great value,
- value in terms of monetary worth – the value of a house is what it will sell for,
- standards of behaviour – they internalise their parents' rules and values
- algebra – a symbol is given a value
- music – the duration of the sound signified by a note
- linguistics – the value of the pronunciation

Te Reo has separate words for all these meanings according to Te Aka, the Māori dictionary:

- Wāriu – monetary value
- Whai hua – to have value, use, be worthwhile
- Whaipainga - to nourish, add value
- Whanonga pono – values as principles – standards
- Iti kahurangi – something aspirational of value

Values are usually what guides a person's behaviour as they are important and help guide

the development of identity. Neuroscience when considering the plasticity of the brain in recovery from trauma uses a whakataukī or memorable phrase "where your attention goes, energy flows and that's what grows" (Leitch, 2017).

Meditation, prayer, teachings from the Bible and many wise writings point out that what we value is where we give our attention - so take care of what you value. The reverse is also true, give it attention so that it grows. When young people take pride in their values and their culture they give themselves a platform a tūrangawaewae where they belong and from which they can grow. A whakataukī from a book by Peter Alsop and Te Rau Kupenga states, "E kore au e ngaro, he kakano i ruia mai i Rangiātea; I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in the heavens." (2016).

Religion and Spiritual Beliefs are also an important part of the development of identity and are tightly woven with culture and values.

Gender and Sexuality

Currently when many people talk about identity their thoughts are often trying to express the identity of gender and sexual attraction. To be clear about the difference between sex and gender is important. Sex is determined at birth by the appearance of genitalia. Gender is what you feel you are or identify as. Sexual orientation is who you are sexually attracted to and again is a self-identification and affects behaviour. Both are a range of identities ranging from Binary – male or female to Non-binary – neither one or the other; always having sex with the same gender or the opposite with a range in between including not at all. So gender and sexuality can be a spectrum of identity and behaviour. This article is not going to cover all the different terms nor the details of transitioning from gender assigned at birth to the gender you are becoming aware of during development about who you feel you are. The newly published guidelines are tremendously helpful and have based the model on Te Whare Tapa Whā which helps to provide context for identity development in Aotearoa (Oliphant, Veale, MacDonald, Carroll, Johnson, Harte, Stephenson & Bullock, 2018).

Gender identity is of great importance to overall identity. The concept of gender, like many things in our culture, is a minefield of stereotypes and truisms, from self-help books like "Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus" to blatant discrimination about the lesser value of women, which may not be as blatant in Western culture compared to others but the implications are everywhere. Parents who are having difficulty coming to terms with their children's developing identity often worry that it is the influence of these stereotypes or friends that is driving the motivation to change. They can be reassured that for most young people there is an internal drive of knowing who they really are, which is very real and not influenced greatly by the presence of stereotypes.

The most important way we can show respect to developing gender identity is to use the correct name and pronouns the person has chosen to use and identify with. If that is not clear – ask. The second is to provide recognition and to work against discrimination. The third is to provide plenty of support to parents. If parents are supported to support their child/young person the journey is much smoother. The research called Counting Ourselves, asking people who are gender diverse about their experiences leads to sombre reading when it comes to the difficulties they face but is highly valuable (Veale, Byrne, Tan, Guy, Yee, Nopera & Bentham, 2019). A young person who was transitioning said "when I transition many more people than myself have to transition with me; my friends, my whānau, my school and my community".

The WHO defined sexual health in 2006 like this: 'Sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence'. Their definition of sexuality in the same document is

> *"...a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors."* (WHO, 2006)

When we consider these definitions it is no wonder that gender and sexuality are such an important part of identity.

Ability

In just the same way as gender is experienced differently as part of development, having different abilities such as changes in the senses – sight, hearing, levels of intelligence and the motor system that so affects mobility are all part of developing identity. These might be inherited genetic effects that babies are born with or disease or trauma but they can all affect identity even if it is forced upon you by society's view of you. Minority discrimination and bullying is very destructive. To wrap a culture of different ability or illness that can carry pride in that identity can be very helpful provided it is recognised and supported by people with ability.

Psychological identity

Much research has focused on personality. A definition that appears frequently when googled is: "Personality development is the development of the organised pattern of behaviours and attitudes that makes a person distinctive". These ingredients develop and change throughout life. Personality as part of the development of identity has a big part to play. The balance of nature and nurture input to personality development has long been discussed and it is probably both with the key link being epigenetics which in essence is the way nurture can change parts of our genes. A very complex and biological definition was proposed in 2009 by Berger et al: "Definition: An epigenetic trait is a stably heritable phenotype resulting from changes in a chromosome without alterations in the DNA sequence."

The University of Otago cohort study following babies from birth in 1972 into the present provides much information about the interplay between genes and the influence of nurture. Professor Richie Poulton, taking examples from this study gave a simplified explanation during a presentation to school counsellors: – there might be a gene present when born for alcohol dependence or violence or depression, but if nothing happens to trigger that gene to be expressed in behaviour and function then being violent or abusing alcohol will not emerge.

Development of identity is not as simple as it sounds, especially when how it all happens in the brain is considered.

Influences and Opportunities

It is obvious that many people will have more than one identity. I quote Philip Patston, well known self-identified sit down comedian, who happens to have cerebral palsy, and was heard to say at a speech at the Involve conference "on the one hand I am quite powerful in that I am white, male and have a job, on the other hand I am disabled, vegetarian and homosexual." He is a leader in many different organisations representing diversity.

Major influences on the development of identity are of course whānau – both nature and nurture, genes and environment, friends, community and school. All provide opportunities to create a culture or environment of belonging, acceptance and respect. Parents of developing children and young people need to be taught about how identity is developed and how that can be guided and nurtured what can be helpful and not helpful, information about all the different aspects of identity would be important.

Schools are also an important environment for doing this. Education systems have been created to impart knowledge. More and more people are realising however that attitude and skills are just as important, not just with adults but from birth up; from early childhood education to tertiary levels. In other words, it is time society realised that the "business" of assisting the development of people in the first 25 years of life to go well so that they can truly thrive is the business of all of us – parents, whānau, schools and community, including how electronic media is used to influence.

The formation of identity is one of the most important that leads to that life spark that creates thriving. This can be done through programmes, wise use of media whether it be printed, film radio, platforms like Facebook, Instagram and other internet based ways we use to communicate our values, cultures, beliefs and attitudes.

"E tipi, e rea, mō ngā rā o tō ao, ko tō ringa ki ngā rākau a te Pākehā hei oranga mō tō tinana. Ko tō ngākau ki ngā taonga a ō tīpuna Māori hei tikitiki mō tō māhunga, ā, ko tō wiarua ki tō Atua, nāna nei ngā mea katoa.
Grow up o tender youth and thrive in the days destined for you, your hand to the tools of the Pākehā you provide physical sustenance, your heart to the treasures of your ancestors to adorn your head, your soul to God to whom all things belong."
Sir Apirana Ngata 1874-1950

Sue says she is a youth worker with a medical degree. She works in a Youth One Stop Shop in Ōtautahi, loves spending time with her seven mokopuna and really enjoys teaching whoever would like to listen.

Sue is incredibly humble and was recently awarded a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her work founding the Collaborative Trust, 298 Youth Work and so much more.

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With young people we understand and affirm their whakapapa

Whakapapa is the genealogies and stories of descendants and their connection to whenua (land) for all cultures. It acknowledges our shared histories and the impact of colonisation in Aotearoa. Acknowledging the whakapapa of young people means, in their own way and in their own time, exploring how these histories influence their lives right now. Young people are supported to embrace the journey to find their turangawaewae, their place to stand.

Whakapapa

Nikki Hurst and Annabel Prescott

"We are a story that has been told for millennia and centuries, we are the present manifestation of that story. The ability to influence the future of that story is the power a young person wields, however they themselves have been influenced by the story of the past. Love that whakapapa is identified and allocated a place of importance."

A contributor to feedback on Mana Taiohi

Openings

Whakapapa as a concept is almost too large to define. It has multiple meanings and interpretations, let alone before you consider the role whakapapa plays in our personal and societal lives. It is a part of who we are, the stories we hold and tell, and how we experience the world. It can provide us with connection, identity and empathy for others. It can also provide us with challenges, sorrow and grief. It acknowledges our shared stories and experiences. It is the map of where we stand. It is who we are ourselves and alongside one another. It is crucial in our mahi alongside young people - the whakapapa of the individual themselves, the places they stand and of their tīpuna.

Ko wai au?

As two Aotearoa born wāhine we share experiences, stories and history and own our individual versions of these. Our personal whakapapa overlaps in places and is distinctly separate in others. Annabel's whakapapa is impacted by colonisation, Nikki's whakapapa is that of the coloniser.

Annabel:

I have always felt fraudulent when it comes to a kōrero about whakapapa and my own lack of knowledge and inability to complete a pepeha.

Kāore au e mōhio ko wai tōku iwi, nā te mea e whāngaihia au ki te iwi Māori.

Ko te whānau Alexander tōku whānau whāngai, i tipu ake au i Tāmaki Makaurau

Nō Te Tāmaki Makaurau a Tara ahau

Kei Taupō e noho ana

Part of colonisation was to dehumanise indigenous people and block indigenous taonga like whakapapa. So when asked to write about what whakapapa means to youth work, I have to understand my whakapapa and a young person's whakapapa in the context of colonisation. I have to be cognisant of decolonising whakapapa for myself, my tamariki and young people that I work with.

Nikki:

Stories are important in my whānau, and I'm privileged to have been raised with the legends of my tīpuna and their deeds and doings ringing in my ears. We whakapapa back to Scotland, Ireland and England with the earliest arrivals in Aotearoa occurring just prior to te Tiriti being signed. We are firmly the coloniser.

The largest part of my maternal line arrived in the 1860's from Ireland, having fled Scotland after the final loss to the English at Culloden. As a group they settled in Pukekohe and Waiau Pā (South-South Auckland) and until recently most were farmers and market gardeners.

My son is 10th generation New Zealander and I continue to share with him the stories of his ancestors. Those who fought in the Waikato Wars, signed the petition for Women's suffrage and who started a white power group in early Franklin County. On this side I have a deep connection to what I see as my tūrangawaewae, Clarks Beach near Waiau Pā.

My father's side are more recent arrivals with stories no less interesting, but less well known. That side seem to be explorers and adventurers with few staying in one place for long. They were gold and coal miners, recipients of Queen's honours and all have petrol in their veins somehow.

I was raised by both sets of grandparents to hold and collect the stories of my tīpuna and to be my generations place for this knowledge to be protected, accrued and passed along. They grew in me a passion for the whakapapa of Aotearoa as a nation, and the impact settlers like my ancestors

have had and continue to have on our society today.

I firmly believe that knowing who you are, and where you have come from is an honour and a necessity even if (as in my case) some of it is deeply challenging.

Some pathways to understanding

From a youth development perspective, there are many ways to understand the whakapapa of young people and the impact that this has on our rangatahi in Aotearoa. Unlike many other social services, leading academics and researchers across Aotearoa see youth development and Youth Work as being underpinned by sociology and history (Beals, Foaese, Miller, Perkins & Sargent; 2018). In order to begin to understand the world of a young person we need first to clearly understand their place in society and the impact of the past on the present. Here in Aotearoa, whakapapa is the glue that binds.

Deane, Dutton and Kerekere (2019) argue that a helpful way to understand Whakapapa is through the old YDSA principle, "Youth Work is informed by the big picture". By this they mean the societal impacts on young people that have accrued over time. They also indicate that this relates to the big picture experiences of groups that young people may have membership in, for instance, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc...

Bronfenbrenner and his ecological model have always been a popular way to explore the world of a young person as are more individualised tools such as genograms (Derksen, 2010). How and why we experience our whakapapa is heavily influenced by the systems that surround us and the clear and not so clear influences on a young person.

These approaches connect to the work of Ware and Walsh-Taipata (2010) and Baxter and Caddie (2016) and the impact of pūrākau and whakataukī can have in our mahi alongside young people. Explorations of how narrative can play a part in mahi with young people has demonstrated effectiveness in relation to connection (Ware, Breheny & Forster, 2018). It's one thing to explore with a young person their broader context and the impact of historicity. But for that to be valuable, the young person needs space and agency to tell their story and to be invited to explore the stories that have come before. The above researchers show clearly how to do so, and the impact this can have for young people and those working alongside them.

For many young people, the stories and whakapapa of the groups that they identify with may be more immediately meaningful. Across time youth subcultures have emerged, grown and changed alongside our understandings of them (Woodman & Wyn, 2015). Regardless of the specific subculture, a clear part of belonging is in knowing the whakapapa of the group, even just a little. For instance, many young people in the rainbow community will be aware of the rich and challenging history of the slow emergence of their rights over time. From these stories they may gain confidence, connection and inspiration. They may also use the mana of those who have come before them to inspire the on-going fight for full rights.

Whakapapa is a part of who we all are, the stories we own and the connections and influences we make as a result of this.

Engagement with young people and their whakapapa

We asked a small group of rangatahi Māori in Taupō, "What does whakapapa mean to you?" This was then expanded to, "When you're with an adult, how do you want them to consider your whakapapa?"

Our young people were able to articulate that they wanted whakapapa to take into consideration that whakapapa is broad, particularly in a smaller town in Aotearoa. Our young people wanted youth-workers not to be discriminatory or biased if the kōrero of their whakapapa was negative. Our young people wanted to be held as taonga, to be viewed in a way that was aspirational for their futures.

Similar stories emerged through the media from the young people demanding a compulsory Aotearoa history curriculum. These young people fought hard to show their ownership of their learning, and the powerful mana that emerges from knowing your whakapapa and that of the place where you stand. Connected to this are the multiple reports from the Office of the Children's Commissioner that indicate on-going racism experienced by many in Aotearoa, particularly in educational settings (Office of the Children's Commission, 2018). Knowing and experiencing with honesty the stories of your place is a powerful foil to less evidence based narratives.

Similarly, those working with rangatahi who whakapapa recently to other nations will need to be very aware of this and open to learning about their journey and their tīpuna. Knowledge of the variety and differences in Pacifica, across Asia and the Middle East and their experiences here in Aotearoa are invaluable, but the stories of the individuals are the taonga.

Having the skills and knowledge to understand the societal impacts of the past on the present helps our rangatahi to understand one another, irrespective of the place a person has come from. History as a concept may seem boring, but the history of a person and the connections that emerge as we co-share this space is powerful.

The wero

There is a need to own and understand our own histories and places we stand. And to see where these overlap or don't with the young people and communities that we engage with.

Returning to the context of colonisation, we need to consider as youth workers how this influences our lens when engaging with young people. Is there any deficit view of young people I could be interrupting? What can I take to supervision and who can help me?

It means that the wero is for us to keep learning. Not simply the latest tools, tips and tricks at conferences and workshops, but to find ways to understand the history of the young people we work alongside. This may be the journey of Aotearoa, but equally it may be that of a far off land. It may be the history of a movement, or it may be the stories and understandings of a place or locality.

It can be taking the time to connect to elders in our communities and support creating intergenerational bonds (Caspar, Davis, McNeill & Kellett, 2019). It can be making space for young people to lead our education in this area, a powerful way for young people to experience their own rangatiratanga.

It can support the continuation and celebration of pūrākau, and creating new liminal moments, celebrations and rites of passage with young people (Beals, 2014). It is place-making with our young people, where we ensure that we awhi the place through knowing its whakapapa too.

Thriving looks and means different things to different people. It requires growth of our capacity to sit in our discomfort if it's going differently than what we had planned. And being excited by and energised by this.

Closings

Whakapapa is a call to us all to know and own our stories. To support and create alongside young people how they will engage with their whakapapa, on multiple levels. It provides us with a deep sense of connection. It is the woven heart of all of the other principles of Mana Taiohi. None can exist without the other and all require knowing where we have stood, what deeds we have achieved and committed and what this means for us now. Whakapapa fosters connection, the heart of youth work.

Annabel Prescott provides incredible leadership of the Anamata Cafe YOSS in Taupō as well as recently joining the board of Ara Taiohi.

Nikki Hurst is a Senior Lecturer in Youth Development at Unitec and hates to be left out so is also doing lots of stuff with Ara Taiohi and Korowai Tupu, is on the board of Sticks 'n' Stones, and is chief glitter-provider for the History Zoology Dinosaur Buildosaurus Club.

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With young people we understand hononga, identify and strengthen connections

Hononga is about joining and connection. Linked to whakapapa, it is about connection to people, land/whenua, resources, spirituality, the digital world and the environment. When we understand hononga we recognise all the connected relationships in a young person's world (whānau, peers, school, the community), and the places and spaces that support these. Young people are supported to identify and strengthen these connections. Strengthening hononga also means recognising the connection between the wellbeing of young people and the wellbeing of their social and natural environment

Hononga

Identify & Strengthen Connections

Fati Tagoai

He mihi tuatahi i te Matua Nui i te Rangi, ki tāna Tama a Īhu Karaiti me te Wairua Tapu. Tēnā koutou.

He mihi tuarua ki ngā awa, ngā maunga, ngā iwi o tēnei motu. Tēnāa koutou.

He mihi tuatoru ki ngā mate, haere... haere atu rā. E ngā rau rangatira mā, ngā kuia, koroua, tuakana, tuahine me ngā tēina hoki. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou tēnā tātou katoa.

Kei te mihi mahana ki a koutou.

In addition to my mihi, I acknowledge the predecessors who have gone before me; the Toa Rangatira of our sector and the Kaiparahuarahi of the first issue. Malo lava le tauivi, malo lava le faamalosi.

It has been a 'refreshing' experience thinking about an article for Kaiparahuarahi's second issue. It has forced me to truly reflect on our sector, my journey as a practitioner and my perspective of how I view our world. I think about a time in 2003. I was 18 years-old and I was employed as a young person for a Youth One Stop Shop (YOSS). As one of five Peer Support Workers (PSW), I was told that we were 'the hub and the core of the service', and that everything the YOSS did was 'with & for' young people – which was inclusive of PSW.

A part of my induction was to be trained in the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA 2002). Being the young Pasefika male that I was, full of passion and charisma, yet quiet and passive, I was overwhelmed by the jargon and pretended to understand the principles. Eventually, the principles made sense to me. Not because I recited the booklets or attended numerous workshops, but because the organisation was 'breeding' and 'living' the Youth Development Principles. At that time, I formed a belief that Pasefika and Maori needed to learn these principles, kinaesthetically.

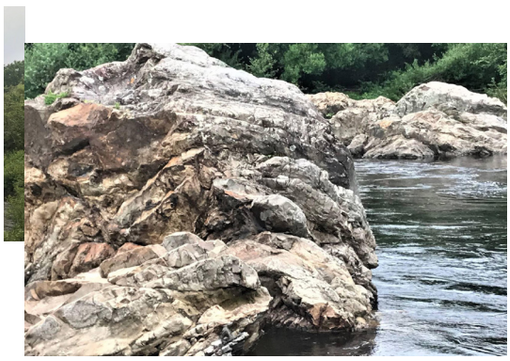
I found myself claiming to be a champion for Youth Development, a 'preacher to the non-converted' promoting the truth that Youth Development works within a Youth One Stop Shop context. Because I was a product of the YDSA, my presentations would vary between literature and my personal testimony. I would always favour presenting principles 1 & 2 of the YDSA, but the more I presented the more I realise that the delivery method was linear. Principles were essential and relevant, but its westernised context was always the blueprint. I acknowledge that the blueprint was a starting platform that enabled a discussion. The development of Mana Taiohi not only enabled the translation of principles to fit Te Ao Māori or New Zealand's context, but the translations can now be reciprocal. Hononga has elements of principles 1 & 2 of the YDSA. It is serendipitous that I am given the honour to provide a perspective on Hononga Taiohi.

To understand Hononga, is to understand and acknowledge that Hononga is a thread that is embedded within the other co-existing principles. Hononga is not just a noun, but a living term which can be described as an action or function 'to connect'; or the belief that we are connected to someone or something. From my perspective, Hononga Taiohi is to make connections with my own childhood and youth. And I compare my childhood and youth to a river rock, and its journey through the erosion process. Aroha mai to the professionals of the field, I am not a geologist, but my very small experience in year 13 geography has triggered my fascination for our local rivers.

I am from Te Awakairangi (also known as the Hutt Valley). As a people, community and district we are connected by the awa that flows from Upper Hutt to Lower Hutt. In Upper Hutt, the river rocks are sharp and jagged. Fragments of rocks roll down from the hillside and fall into the river. In Lower Hutt, there is consistency in the river rocks being round and smooth. Further downstream at the southern end of Lower Hutt known as Petone, the rocks are either polished or weathered into sand. As you deeply observe these rocks at the river mouth, you identify that the rocks had a journey. A journey where in its original form it was rough but know that it was a fragment of something greater. You recognise that each rock is unique, and has a story through its shape, contours and marking; but you know that its' strength was tested along the way. And finally, you realise that the rocks were freely exposed to all the elements, placed there by chance and evidentially becoming one of two options – 'polished rock' or 'sand'.

Identify: Connecting to whakapapa

There is a rich history in the formation of mountains, shaped by the environment through its erosion process. Fragments of the mountain break into smaller rocks, eventually making its way to the river. This is similar to how we enter into our world. The rocks are a rough, sharp and isolated from its home. But it has a connection to one of the mountains or the hillside, classified by its colour, make up and age. The fragmented rock connects to something greater.



I have strong connections to Samoa; my father is from the illustrious district of Aleipata – a village called Satitoa and my mother is from the beautiful island of Savai'i; a village called Vaega Satupa'itea. The history of Samoa is rich in aganu'u (cultural traditions), faalupega (genealogy) and tala anamua (legends).

My father's family are from a line of high chiefs, but recent generations state that they became ministers of the Christian Faith. As I walk along the beach on the white sands of Satitoa I look at the sea where stories are told of my father being a fisherman. Within view there are many small islands that surround the Aleipata district. Stories are told of the Aleipata Islands being the home for the Leper Colony. I learn from tales that my ancestors served on those islands as ministers. My mother is part of a lineage of warriors and high chiefs, the land they built their house on is called Tanumafili. Tanumafili literally translates to 'bury & enemies'. My mother's extended family also have their houses built on sacred grounds that have a similar theme of war. As I journey inland to the plantations there is a river called Uli-a-Moa. The legend is told about 'Uli' and 'Moa' being siblings and the gatekeepers of the river. As you walk upstream towards the very beginning of the river; there stands two mountain rocks patrolling the flow of the river. The two rocks are called Uli & Moa.

When I look at my parents I only see fragments of their history. For some people, their parents (or fragments) are the only starting points of their history. Others may not have that same access, but the important factor or question to ask is "where does my whakapapa start"? "Can I have a meaningful connection with it?" When I identify my starting points of whakapapa, I am blessed to realise that I connect beyond my parents. Those connections enlighten what is within me today. I have a deep connection for my faith, I have a love to serve people by being a 'Fisher of Men' and I am a warrior for growth and development. I connect to elements of my whenua, my rivers of Uli-a-Moa and Te Awakairangi and I have a knack to speak in analogies. The young people we interact with today have that Mana, no matter where the starting point of their whakapapa lies.

Connecting to Te Ao

As the river rocks make its journey downstream, the rocks start the abrasion process of being shaped by its surroundings. There is also the understanding that the rocks will continue to be shaped by 'riding' or 'spectating' the flow of the river. An unconscious participant of the abrasion & erosion process. The rocks are free to the elements and will weather all four seasons. The rocks may or may not reach the river mouth; or rocks may be pushed out to a different river channel. The destination of each rock may have been a result of 'chance' or 'fate'.

I was born in Upper Hutt, raised in Petone and then lived the rest of my life back in Upper Hutt. My earlier years while living in Upper Hutt I was strongly connected to my mother's side of the family. We were active members of the Methodist church, we lived like a village, and we were raised in fa'asamoa protocols and traditions. My childhood memories in Petone I had strong connections with my father's side. We were active members of multiple churches, we also lived like a village, but with a focus on sports achievement, academia and entrepreneurship. As I grow older I realise that I have two older sisters from my mother's previous relationship, and then blessed again to have a baby brother. A couple of years later, my father passes away to lung cancer, my brother is adopted out and we relocate back to Upper Hutt to be close to my mother's family. I could go on and on and write my life story. But the main point to consider is that throughout my entire journey, I am a witness and an unconscious participant to life's successes and milestones. But I am also a part of life's realities of pain & despair.

When connecting to Te Ao, it is important to reflect on a time where our lives were unconsciously 'riding' the river. We were not in control of what rock mountain we broke from. We were not in control of the weather, we were not in control of our river channels and we were not in control of the co-existing rocks that either shaped, polished or scarred us. Whatever shape or form that our rocks (or our bodies) have become from this unconscious journey, we should take the time to reflect about our connection to these influential factors. What or who are my

'shaping' influences? Am I at peace with my scars? Am I satisfied with my polish? What influences do I maintain a connection with? As we process those connections, we are therefore in a position to make an informed choice on the next part of the river flow.

Connecting to Mauri

At the river mouth, polished rocks are everywhere. Each rock has a nice 'finish' but you can identify the abrasion that the rock had to endure. Amongst those rocks is a blanket of diminished rocks and sand. You raise questions about its journey, 'Was it strong enough'? 'What was the main cause of its destruction'? 'Would the rock have been safe in another river channel'? 'What if the rock had a conscious to make an informed decision about its destination'?

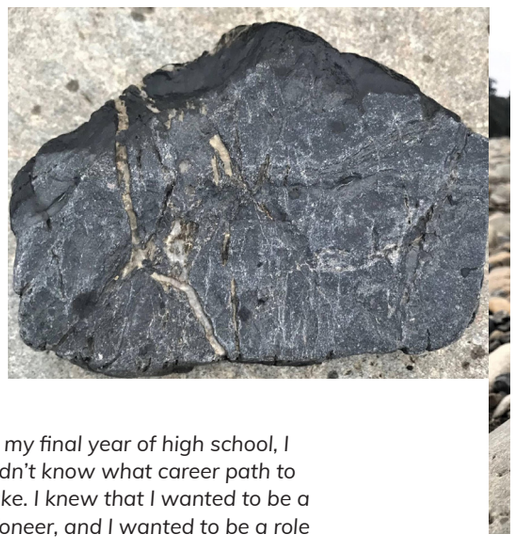
As a child and teenager, I was always taller and bigger than my peers. I would socialise with people a few years older than me to fit in, and I tried to be involved and have a go at everything. I feel uncomfortable in saying it, but I was naturally talented in most things. Throughout my teenage life I was uplifted, praised and told that I was going to be amazing. I have heard comments of being "the next Jonah Lomu", "the school's Head Boy" and at one point "the next Mayor of Upper Hutt". They were all really nice comments made by my peers and significant adults, but none of them excited me. I also remember the disappointment that people had with my non-excitement, comments of "a waste of talent", "laziness" and even "arrogance". However, I do recall that people observed me as a role model. Initially it wasn't exciting, but the epiphany of knowing I was a role model, was the result of a sad story.

In year 10, there were periods where I conformed to being a school bully. I would use my size and stature to show dominance, especially to the senior students. One day, a boy with red hair kept staring at me. I took the stare as a challenge, walked up, towered over him and swore like an American gangster from Tupac's "Hit'em up" track. I provoked him for a fight, but he stared at me in silence not saying one word. A teacher intervenes and yells at me saying that the boy has Special Needs, and that he usually stares. I recall feeling like a "(Ahem)". Upon further reflection I realise that my year 9 friends were also doing the same thing. I realised that I was a role model regardless of whether I wanted the title. Humbled and convicted by this experience, I wanted to pioneer, and role model a positive way of being.

With young people, we can have some great successes in exploring their belief systems, identifying their strengths or shower them with praise and positive affirmation. But there are times where we as practitioners may have to wait for a significant event to spark a young person's awareness and ownership of their strength. That spark is the awakening of what a young person has to offer to the world.

Strengthen

I try to visualise the type of rock that would reflect my journey; and I picture that my rock is a black jade that represents my foundation in Aotearoa. My rock will have blue and green speckles that shows my fusion of Pasefika traditions or even creativity. The rock will have deep markings to represent times of challenges and struggle. It will also have old chip marks to portray the loss of loved ones. The rock will have smooth edges to represent people that raised me. Some areas will be polished to display achievements or closure, while other areas will be rough to represent room for growth. The rock will be solid to signify years of endurance, and it will have a square frame to symbolize strength, mana and mauri.



In my final year of high school, I didn't know what career path to take. I knew that I wanted to be a pioneer, and I wanted to be a role model that had a positive effect of others. It dawns on me that I have strong qualities of engaging with people. Working with people becomes my profession at a YOSS. It also leads me to higher education in tertiary and university. I was successful in gaining further part-time employment or contracts through sports agencies, fitness industries and other social services. It becomes evident that my entire employment history has been connected to one theme – my passion for growth and development of people.

In the river analogy, rocks do not have the awareness to make an informed choice about their destination. But when you work with a young person, and bring awareness to what they are connected to, they have the power and control to decide on what they would do next. And when the connections are strengthened, young people become independent and self-sustainable.

As I have mentioned earlier, to understand Hononga Taiohi is to connect to my youth. My story is a reminder that not so long ago, we were young people once. Once upon a time we were like the river rocks that journeyed through the erosion and abrasion process. Maintaining that process keep us accountable. My rock continues to flow down the river in its new form, ready to shape and connect our future generation.

I am a Toki (Adze)

An adze to create new opportunities

A tool to enable, equip and enhance

A weapon for youth and social development

An instrument to shape others

A pounamu to the world

Fati Tagoai

Team Leader Youth Service

Ministry of Social Development

Fati Tagoai is currently a part of a team that is full of passion, heart and purpose. Charismatic public servants for the Ministry of Social Development, delivering Youth Services in the Wellington and Whanganui regions. A husband (and sometimes a case study lol) to Adolescent Mental Health Nurse – Alicia Tagoai, and busy parents to Mya, Danii and Tia.

With young people we explore Te Ao

Te Ao Taiohi is the world of the young person. It is impacted by big picture influences such as social and economic contexts and dominant cultural values. It includes Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the effects of colonisation in Aotearoa, local, national and international legislation and policy that impacts young people. Awareness of Te Ao Taiohi ensures actions are not judged purely on the surface, but with an understanding of systemic influences that affect young people. Young people are supported to engage with the dynamics in their changing world.

Te Ao: Afghanistan to Aotearoa — A journey from guilt into gratitude

Bilal Nasier

You know those films you study in English at high school? The ones that your teacher makes you watch over and over again to analyse every scene in detail? Well, in my Year 11 English class we watched Slumdog Millionaire. I still remember that movie vividly, more than 8 years after watching it at school. The protagonist in the film, Jamal Malik, experiences a series of tumultuous life-changing events throughout his childhood and adolescence that inadvertently give him the knowledge he needs to answer every question in the TV show, 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?'. The culmination of these events, which seem unrelated at the time, led Jamal to success. For the audience within the film, the success is Jamal winning the grand prize of 20 million Rupees. For Jamal himself, it is finding his long-lost partner, Latika.

Looking back now, in many ways my early life can also be described as a series of tumultuous life-changing events. My family escaped Afghanistan – infamous for its reputation as one of the world's most dangerous countries – to get to a safer country. Each day for four months, my parents risked their lives and freedom while a human trafficker smuggled us from country-to-country. Every new day gave rise to a new set of questions: how would we get out of Jakarta where we were put into a hotel with drug smugglers for several nights? Where would we eat while in Kuala Lumpur? How much longer would we spend in Port Moresby after having been stranded there for one month already?

Understandably, the biggest question constantly at the forefront of my parents' minds was when would we be caught and sent back? Or even worse, become stranded in a transit country with nowhere else to go? The unknown haunted them every day of the four gruelling months and as more of the people who were being smuggled alongside us got caught, the less hope they would be left with that we would make it to safety.

Thankfully, when we were eventually caught, it was inside Wellington Airport. A group of Afghan refugees seeking asylum in Aotearoa made newspaper headlines. Among this group of refugees was me, a 4-year-old boy. Like any toddler, I was oblivious to the world around me. I was oblivious to the turmoil we had escaped from and until very recently, oblivious to the extent of sacrifice my parents had made, and were prepared to make, to ensure our safety.

One chilling story that my dad recounted for the first time only a few years ago was my family's experience of crossing the border from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Hidden in the cabin of a cargo truck was my family – a young couple with their toddler and new-born baby. As the truck approached the border, my father placed his elbow in my newly born brother's mouth, a desperate attempt to keep him quiet while the truck was inspected. They sat absolutely still and hoped for the best.

My dad told me that my brother was only seconds away from suffocating when the border inspector slammed the door shut and told the driver to move along. The sense of relief my dad experienced in that moment was unlike anything he had ever felt before. Hearing this story of my dad being forced into a position no person should ever have to be – needing to take the life of a new born child to save the rest of the family – was one story among many that allowed me to begin to comprehend just how much my parents had sacrificed for our futures.

Upon our arrival to Aotearoa, after months of uncertainty and anxiousness, my family's case for asylum was accepted and we were granted refugee status. This was the beginning of a new chapter in our lives. My family could finally stop running. Coincidentally, almost exactly 18 years later in the very same city where I first set foot as an asylum-seeker, I returned to as a young adult to attend a professional development (PD) festival hosted by Ara Taiohi. It was here where I stumbled into Mark Freado, a psychologist from the United States who had come to present.

He spotted the Rīpeka Whero Aotearoa (NZ Red Cross) badge on my shirt and initiated what I now consider to be one of the most transformative conversations I have had in my life. We went through brief introductions, the usual small talk, what my role as a Resettlement Youth Worker entailed. He and Marty, his wife, told me they were very impressed with the work my colleagues and I were doing alongside newly arrived former refugee youth.

As they asked about my personal life, I began to reveal a little more about my past, something I was unaccustomed to doing at the time, given the stigma around being a refugee. We discussed how my family's experience of escaping Afghanistan and arriving into Aotearoa informed my work through a lived experience approach. I then divulged something that I had only ever thought to myself but never said out loud. I told Mark and Marty that I often felt a sense of guilt. This guilt seemed to stem from having the privilege of making it out alive with all my family around me. Here I was living a comfortable Western lifestyle travelling across the country to conferences and mixing and mingling with colleagues at fancy venues. At the same time, my own family members were still stranded back home in a conflict zone. In my work, my privileged lifestyle continued to contrast those of the young people I journeyed alongside. Some had lost their parents at a young age. Others felt isolated because they were forced to leave their friends and extended family behind. Most had a difficult time adjusting because their English speaking skills prevented them from participating in mainstream society.

After I finished describing this inner-conflict I had been having, Mark explained to me that my guilt was not doing me any favours. According to him, as long as I felt guilty for having the privileges I have, I would be debilitated. His advice was that I instead needed to mobilise my privilege and turn that guilt into gratitude. With this mind set I could appreciate my life while also being able to make a positive impact on the lives of the young people I journeyed alongside. It was the first time I had heard this perspective and although I didn't immediately take to the idea, I spent that night mulling over what he had told me.

The following week I returned to my work. Only now I had a different outlook and a new principle to guide me. Guilt into gratitude.

It wasn't long, however, until the guilt crept up again. This time, it was following the terrorist attacks in Christchurch on March 15th, 2019.

I felt guilty because I hadn't been going to jumu'ah prayers as often as I should have. I felt guilty because I hadn't experienced what the worshippers inside the two mosques were going through, yet I was still grieving. I felt guilty because I wanted to help but didn't know how.

Then it kicked in. I actively began on transforming my guilt into gratitude. Once I had made some progress on resetting my perspective of my situation, I decided to take up an offer to travel down to Ōtautahi. Since then, I have been lucky enough to be involved with running community mental health workshops alongside a group of incredibly passionate and skilled Muslim psychologists.

I continued to mobilise my privilege of not being directly affected by the attacks - rather than be consumed by it – to connect the young Muslims in Ōtautahi with organisations and agencies who wanted to offer their support. It was only through this active process of recognising the same feelings of guilt I had experienced earlier in my life and then working on reshaping them, that I could begin to serve others. My guilt had once again turned into gratitude.

Reflecting on that chance encounter with Mark, I realised that I had struck my own million-dollar moment. Like Jamal, a series of apparently unrelated events had taken place that resulted in a moment that would forever change my life. My journey from Afghanistan to Aotearoa had led to my role at Rīpeka Whero Aotearoa. While there, I was granted access to the world of youth work that ultimately resulted in my conversation with Mark. And it was through my conversation with him that I learned how to overcome what was holding me back. Although I didn't win the grand prize of 20 million Rupees, I did 'win' an invaluable life lesson. I learned how to transform my guilt into gratitude and most importantly, to utilise that gratitude to serve my community.

Bilal lives among the beautiful native bush in Tītīrangi where he is tucked away in his granny flat listening to vinyl records and spending probably a bit too much time behind his computer screen completing his doctorate in Clinical Psychology. When he does occasionally get out, Bilal supports young people from refugee backgrounds through Empower Youth Trust and sits on the Ministry of Youth Development's Partnership Fund Board.

With young people we prioritise whanaungatanga, taking time to build and sustain quality relationships

Whanaungatanga is about relationship, kinship and a sense of family connection. It relates to all relationships in a young person's life, including those in the digital space. When we prioritise whanaungatanga we invest in high trust relationships that are reciprocal, genuine, authentic intentional and mana enhancing. Young people are supported, with a strong foundation of belonging.

Whānaungatanga

Jono Harrison

He kokonga whare e kitea, he kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea.
A corner of a house is visible but a corner of the heart is not.
He hono tangata e kore e motu.
A strong bond that will never break.

The two whakataukī above are both whakataukī of whanaungatanga, the essence of people being strengthened by their relationships. "He kokonga whare e kitea, he kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea" refers to having limitless appreciation and love for all the whānau. "He hono tangata e kore e motu" referring to togetherness is strength, and being together creates an unbreakable bond.

Whanaungatanga is about developing and maintaining quality relationships with all young people and encouraging young people to build to that – Whanaungatanga – consistently building a wider whānau network.

Quality relationships are built on the foundations of whanaungatanga through making and acknowledging the inter-generational connections to the community we live in. Connecting with young people through whakapapa, knowing who they are and where they come from.

Rural communities come with many advantages, such as having the ability to actually connect with people and knowing the people you are connecting with. The culture of whanaungatanga in a rural community stems differently from that of the busy life of a big city.

I interviewed 10 different people - some youth workers, some young people and our youth leadership group. I asked each person to answer **"Whanaungatanga to me is..."**

"*What you do at the start of meeting with somebody, showing manaaki, aroha and respect that impacts on the rest of somebody's life.*"

"*Whanaungatanga is acceptance, warmth compassion and togetherness. It's the waka that holds all relationships.*"

"*Whanaungatanga is compulsory, it's what you are born into in communities like ours.*"

"*Whanaungatanga is the connectedness that keeps communities alive.*"

"*Whanaungatanga is care, endless love, support and guidance.*"

"*Whanaungatanga is about whānau being there supporting each other. Loving each other through the good, the bad, the ugly. The working togetherness of more than one person to help achieve the same goal. A happy family, breaking it down and everyone doing what they can do to help them reach their goal.*"

We can all agree that whanaungatanga is simply what you do, one's everyday life would revolve around whanaungatanga, just being present in young people's worlds' is whanaungatanga. Having formed quality relationships and connecting young people to other agencies, services, young people, places this is all creating and expanding a young person's pool of whānau.

Whanaungatanga is the crucial component to every young person's journey, giving young people the ability to have somewhere they can stand and stand proud. Their own place of belonging, their connection to the whenua, to the people, to the world.

Whanaungatanga is having the ability to go to the people and asking for support. Having the recognition as a professional but more seen as a person, as an aunty, a uncle, a friend, as whānau which gives us an advantage when working with young people.

Often in rural communities we are left out of service development so rural communities have services that tend to do a lot more than what contracts allow, adapting to the needs of our communities and our young people. This all helps support the connectedness of whanaungatanga.

Nā,

Jono Harrison and the team at TCYS!

Poipoia te kakano kia puāwai.
Nurture the seed,
for it will grow.

Jono Harrison and the team at Tararua Community Youth Services are incredibly busy doing amazing things with rangatahi in Dannevirke.

With young people we uphold and extend manaakitanga, nourishing collective wellbeing

Manaakitanga is expressing kindness and respect for others, emphasising responsibility and reciprocity. It creates accountability for those who care for young people, relationally or systemically. When we uphold and extend manaakitanga from a distance, safeguarding collective wellbeing includes adequate resources and training for people who work with young people. Young people who experience strong manaaki have a safe and empowering space, and feel accepted, included and valued.

Manaakitanga 101

He kura te tangata.
Our humanity is precious.

Sharon Davis, Ngatiwhaatua and Ngāpuhi

A key dynamic to staying 'present', robust and invigorated in our youth work, remaining connected to our core values and ethics and giving the best possible awhi we can, to people with whom we journey, is by participating in and embracing Manaakitanga wholeheartedly.

Manaakitanga is an ancient value that sits at the heart of all Māori practices, philosophies and endeavours and remains totally relevant in our modern world.

You can see the depth of meaning, inextricably embedded in the word, when you look at the components of the word Mana-Aki-Tanga. I always find this process helpful when getting a personal definition of a deep concept.

Mana – Mana in a Māori context is a word that refers to power and authority bestowed, gained or inherited individually and collectively. Mana is dynamic and evolving. Our reciprocal actions 'enhance' or 'munch' mana.

Aki – is a word that means to urge on, encourage, challenge, exhort.

Manaaki as practical actions might include: to take care of, to support, give hospitality to, protect, look out for, to respect, to be kind to, to be generous towards.

Tanga – denotes action. Manaakitanga therefore is an action word. It's something you do with others, alongside others for the purpose of raising up, individual and collective wellbeing.

So **Manaakitanga** literally means **to intentionally care for a person's mana** (well-being in a holistic sense). Powerful, practical. Highly impactful.

Youth Work in Aotearoa, takes place in a range of diverse environments that are dynamic and evolving from marae to a street curb. The mindful practice of Manaakitanga enables youth workers to be ready to enhance the mana of others in the contexts that present themselves.

I remember at 18 years of age volunteering for a youth programme that worked with 'at risk' young people. I was keen, but not sure that I was bringing 'enough' to the youth work programme I was going to join. My whanau mentor looked at me and said "You have 2 hands, what can you do with those." It so happened that with those hands I could drive a van, play the guitar, prepare kai, play scrag, hug someone, clean up etc. A mentor operating in a Manaakitanga dimension opened up a space for me to realise that if I have 'head, heart and hands', I had personal resources to begin to provide support, kindness, care, awhi to taiohi and the other youth workers.

My youth work journey began there in that humble and tangible 'space of manaaki' and it transformed the whole direction of my life.

What is awesome is that simple actions of manaaki, executed with aroha, enhance the physical, spiritual and/or cultural nourishment and caring of individuals, whanau and communities. I've personally witnessed the transformative power of manaaki in taiohi (and wider whānau) over and over again. They come into a breakfast club hungry, they leave fed; they come in pregnant with no pathway, they leave enrolled with a midwife. They come in too scared to leap off the big rock into Waro Lake. Boldly they leave leaping multiple times. They come in not knowing their pepeha and they leave knowing who they are and where they come from; they come in shut down in their emotions, they leave expressing themselves creatively through dance.

In each little story, a caring youth worker created an 'atea' (a space) to uplift and enhance the mana of taiohi around them. Manaakitanga sets up the perfect conditions for taiohi to feel safe, accepted, valued, included and empowered through deeper relationships (whanaungatanga). Manaakitanga evolves their story. Manaakitanga uplifts their story. It strengthens taiohi. It is a truly marvellous thing.

Manaakitanga also extends beyond manuhiri, the stranger, or the guest. Manaakitanga calls us to be good to our own, to those who work with us and to recognise and enhance their mana. When we invest manaakitanga into our own people and it is reciprocated, it gives life to our community.

Manaakitanga practices that do this can be demonstrated through:

- Providing appropriate resources for youth workers professional development
- Programme policies and practice of engaging taiohi and their whānau

in programmes that upholds their mana

- Hosting with generosity to enable positive outcomes
- Upholding Maori tikanga and values.

How do we honour the people we work alongside and ensure that the systems we have are honouring of them and the very important mahi they have to do?

Let's take 'Upholding Maori Tikanga and Values' for example. In my work we value manaakitanga. We value the power of being a welcoming community. One way we know this, is because our work place has a clear and known Welcoming Process like Mihiwhakatau. The welcoming process actually happens for manuhiri and all staff are active participators in the various manaaki roles and tasks that need to be beautifully executed.

What's important about this 'way of being' and 'way of doing' is that youth workers who are part of those wider work and community processes, then take it into their contexts and outwork it with young people.

We provide spaces and opportunity for young people to practice manaakitanga in our youth work programmes. There is a manaaki flow-on effect. Thus at our most recent taiohi camp, our taiohi engaged in the whole powhiri process to welcome taiohi from other rohe (areas). It's an experience that is hard to forget because they engage all of their senses in this interactive manaaki process - they can see it, they can smell it, they can taste it, they can feel it and they can hear it. It becomes a transferable skill in their extended whanau. Manaakitanga provides us with immense opportunities to engage with young people individually and collectively and joyfully act in ways that uplift and enhance the mana of those around us.

I don't want to romanticise the process of Manaakitanga either. The reality is that the journey of Manaakitanga is not always comfortable. It can be demanding of your time, talents and resources, require you at inconvenient moments and connect you to people who seem difficult, ungrateful and 'too hard'. Manaakitanga however values 'going the extra mile'. It's something we become good at as we DO it with others.

Manaakitanga is not just something that is taught, it is 'caught'. I encourage you to have another look at manaakitanga and begin having korero (honest conversations) with others about strengthening your manaakitanga muscles. It is an action word, after all.

My top tip would be to tag along with someone who does manaaki well and learn from them in the contexts where they practice. Manaaki people are my favourite kind of people. You always leave their presence feeling more awesome. Watching their thoughtful actions and perpetual, purposeful and unrelenting acts of kindness towards others provides a wananga into 'how to best impact taiohi.' Manaakitanga is the tried and true methodology that they practice. It is tika. Manaakitanga is a centuries-proven art form of home.

I hang out with someone who loves to manaaki. His name is Lou. We go to a place on the coast in Whangaruru that has 2-bedrooms, blue ocean, white sand and few people. It is near the famous NZ Te Araroa Tramping Trail that traverses from Cape Reinga in the far North Island to the Bluff in the far South Island.

You can always tell a Te Araroa tramper from everyone else on summer holiday. They're the one with the heavy pack, passing our gate, looking sunburnt, weary, exhausted and starving. If Lou sees a tramper, he can't help noticing. He crosses the street to say Kia Ora and connects. He assesses their need and invites them in for kai, a hot shower, to sleep in a clean bed and to korero around the fire. Everyone accepts his invitation. Usually they are alone, have come from overseas, are young and adventurous, have mothers who are worried sick about them, have cool stories to tell and are very, very grateful. One time he brought home 15 people, on holiday from Wellington.

He told me he offers manaaki in our home because they are someone's tamaiti, roaming a foreign land, on a very long hikoi. That even though he will never see them again he feels he has eased their journey, filled their puku, shared stories, had a laugh and made them feel welcome in a strange land.

And that's the simple, mana enhancing beauty of manaakitanga. People feel affirmed and loved. And when people know they're loved, the narrative of good things start to happen more frequently in young peoples lives. Perhaps why manaakitanga is a proven way to deliver youth services to taiohi. It's the way that enhances their mana.

Sharon Davis provides aroha-led youth work and community leadership within the incredible Te Ora Hou Northland in Whangarei.

Acknowledging mana, whai wāhitanga recognises young people as valued contributors to society, giving them space to participate, assume agency and take responsibility

Mana is the authority we inherit at birth and we accrue over our lifetime. It determines the right of a young person to have agency in their lives and the decisions that affect them. It acknowledges self-determination, empowered citizenship and authentic learning. From this flows whai wāhitanga, participation. We enable young people to be empowered to participate when we allow all young people to navigate and participate in the world, rather than privileging the voices of a few. Young people are supported to choose their level of engagement in decisions that affect them.

Whai Wāhitanga

Youth Participation in Aotearoa: before 2020 and beyond

Sarah Finlay-Robinson, Rod Baxter and Hannah Dunlop

Introduction

Young people are awesome! We are three people who believe this and are passionate about youth participation. At our heart we are youth workers. It is a privilege to walk alongside young people in their journey. Part of that journey is enabling them to navigate and participate in their world, whether that is their own whānau, community, town, city, country, or an organisation they are involved with. As young people discover, embrace and grow into their mana, our role as youth workers/supportive adults/holders-of-power, is to discover and embrace their mauri and identity in a way that fosters their positive development. This also presents an opportunity for society to learn and respect the inherent wisdom that young people offer about the reality of their own lives, and their aspirations for the world they want to live in. We have a huge responsibility at our feet to honour and champion a world in which young people are supported to step into their mana, including the value and richness that they add to our world.

Have you ever?

- Heard of Hart's Ladder?
- Witnessed tokenism?
- Seen young people manipulated or forced to participate?
- Shared power in a decision with young people?
- Worked for an organisation scared to take risks with young people?
- Listened to young people tell you about an awesome project idea?
- Had your mind changed by a young person?
- Met with a youth council?
- Seen young people make adults cry?
- Been concerned about a young person's capacity and commitments?
- Seen a young person's voice transform an organisational structure?
- Read the youth participation clauses in the Code of Ethics?
- Underestimated the power and creativity of young people?
- Been completely surprised by young people?

We've recently written and facilitated a workshop, and we've translated it into this article, with an emerging understanding of whai wāhitanga. Therefore, we've retained reflective questions, activities and scenarios to help balance the many theories we refer to with practical application. We don't claim to be 'experts' in youth participation, rather are enjoying swimming together in the relevant 'expertise' of indigenous wisdom, global academics and community-specific examples, mostly informed by lived experience with young people wrestling with these ideas.

A chronology and whakapapa of youth participation theory

Our understanding of what it means for young people to participate and find their place has changed and evolved over many years of youth work practice. Early models rationalised 'what is' youth participation, alongside what it is not, and described participation in linear levels or stages. We are now in an era of citizenship where we move beyond rating or describing youth participation and youth voice, and its value to society. Foremost in our consideration are the ethics and practice of participation that considers a multiplicity of methods, approaches, avenues and settings for youth participation; illuminating opportunities and meeting the diversity of young people finding their place. We need to consider that models of youth participation practice sit within socio-cultural, political, and economic environments and contexts that in turn have shaped the way we think and practice. Our youth participation practice has been shaped by the times we live in.

Many youth workers today know early models of youth participation such as Hart's Ladder (1992), Shier's Pathway (2001) and Westhorp's Continuum (1987). In recent years we have also been attempting to answer the questions and challenges to traditional western youth participation theory around culturally appropriate youth participation that addresses both young people's right to participate in decision-making within diverse worldviews and cultural values. Alternative words for youth participation are now being used in the wider sector such as active citizens, service design and co-design (Finlay-Robinson, 2018a). These words are being used to gain momentum, and often get a broader buy in from organisations, and other sectors of society.

Fresh approaches are being used to enable young people's participation and influence in decision-making. However, there is a danger that the multiplicity of approaches and language means that youth participation loses meaning and transparency. Worse still is that without clear ethics and standards for youth participation practice young people could be exposed to unethical and harmful practice.

We need a deeper consciousness of why we use the models of participation practice that we do, and what is shaping our thinking. We need to look beyond linear and reductive participation models and consider how we are enabling good youth participation; our accountability to young people; and, the ethics and processes of our practice. We are approaching an exciting era of whai wāhitanga that requires us to embrace new and different models and approaches from the long adhered to models that initially conceptualised youth participation for youth work.

Titiro whakamuri, kia anga whakamua.
Look to the past in order to move forward.

To move forward in our practice, we need to understand where we have come from. Let's take a look at the chronology/whakapapa of youth participation models and theories and consider how the social context has shaped our youth participation thinking and practice in Aotearoa.

Traditional indigenous approaches (pre-colonisation)

Long before Hart's Ladder described youth participation in the 1990's, according to the ethnographic accounts about and by Māori, the practice of Urungatanga actively included young people in decision-making and leadership (Hemara, 2000). Urunga is engaging in 'education through exposure' (Baxter, et. al., 2016; Caddie, 2011; Hemara, 2000). For example, imagine a group of manuhiri attending a pōwhiri. The kaikōrero matua, shuffling along during the karanga, might suddenly feel that a particular taiohi needs to deliver the whaikorero on their behalf. He whispers to the taiohi and tells them they must speak imminently. The taiohi has little time to prepare for this, is given responsibility, trusted to succeed, expected to make mistakes, and learns in the moment through the opportunity. In this act the elders are sending a message about the value of taiohi, especially to the mana whenua at this marae.

Colonisation and civil rights

We cannot ignore the impact colonisation has had on participation (Kerekere, 2017). We must recognise that there have been dark times in our history when taiohi have been stripped of their voice, and that we are still dealing with systemic racism today. From 1867 the Native Schools Act came into being, and in 1894 the schooling was compulsory for taiohi Māori (Calman, 2012; Higgins & Keane, 2013). The schools focused on teaching taiohi Māori the English language, and preparing students for the Pākehā world (Walker, 2016). Later students were forbidden to speak te reo Māori while at school (Calman, 2012). Colonial society systematically excluded the diversity of voices of Aotearoa's taiohi and attempted to strip them of their sense of empowerment, for the purpose of assimilation (Walker, 2016; Higgins and Keane, 2013).

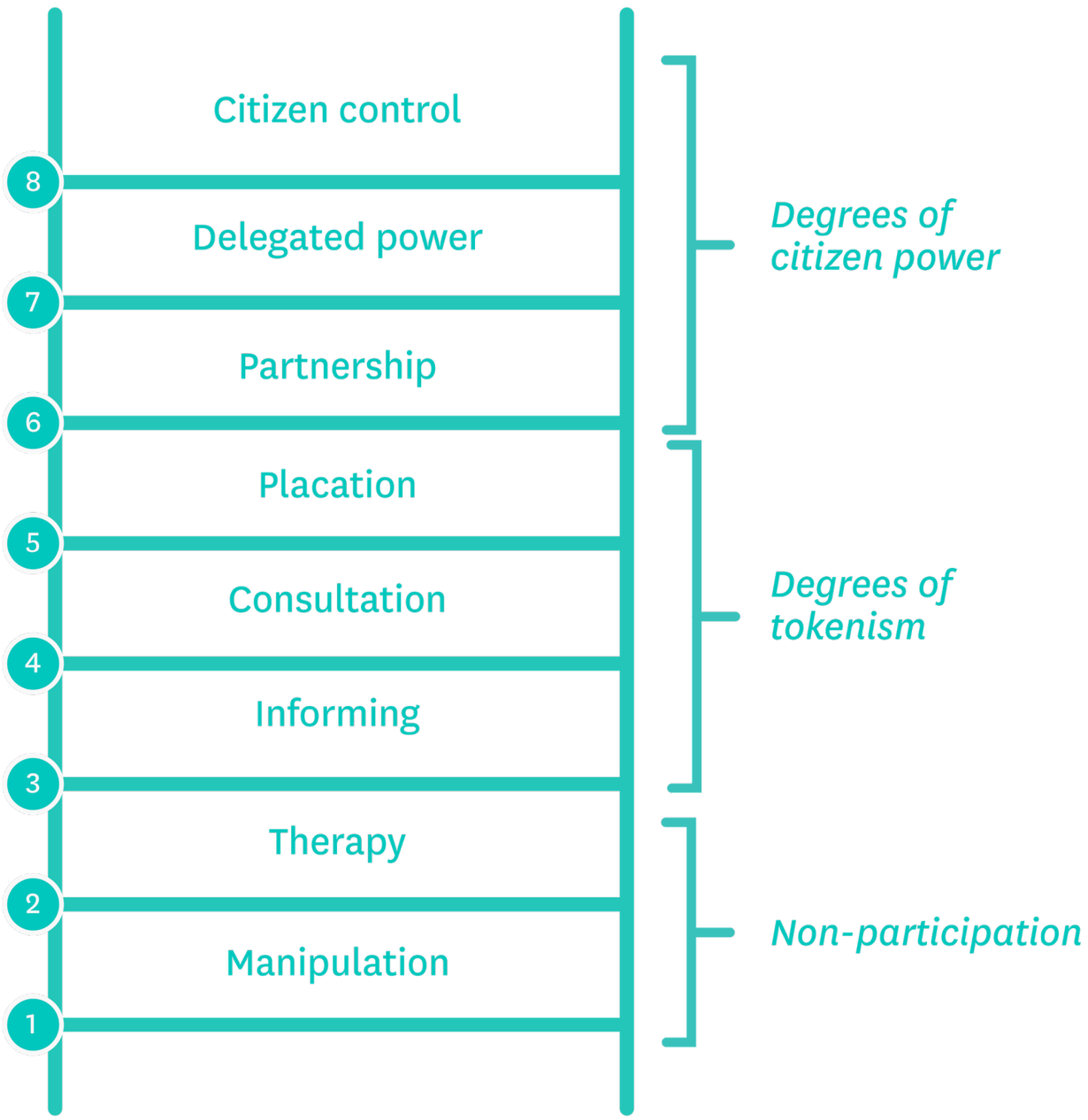
During the 1960s and 1970s Maori began to organise and protest in different ways. A group of young Māori leaders, Ngā Tamatoa, were influenced by Professor Ranginui Walker (Tūmanako Productions, 2012) and led protests about Māori land, te reo, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We benefit today from their participation in the occupation of Bastion Point, in the Land March led by Dame Whina Cooper, in advocating for Kohanga Reo, and establishing te rā o te reo Māori (Tūmanako Productions, 2012; Keane, 2012; Finlay-Robinson, 2018b).

This period also saw community and social services worldwide grappling with increased civic activism. Women's liberation, the civil rights movement and numerous cultural revolutions all saw an increase in citizen activism with riots and protests becoming commonplace in civil society. Town planners and policy makers became concerned with inviting citizen participation in planning decisions. The focus became engaging the voices of an awakened public to shape a social and political context that was not meeting the needs of a diverse and multi-faceted post-modern society. Society began to recognize that there was not one absolute truth or way of doing things, but multiple perspectives, ideas, experiences and truths that shape and determine the fabric of society (Marshall, 1994).

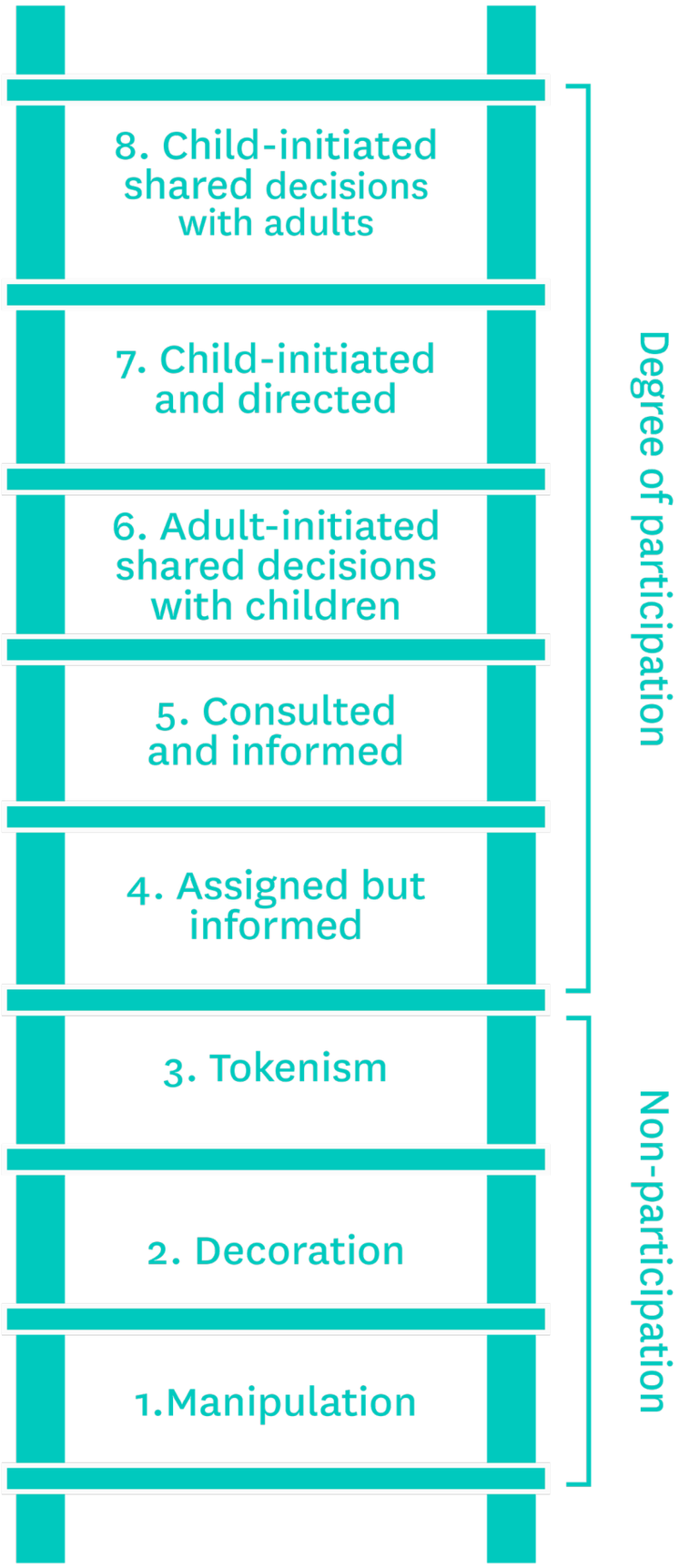
It was in this global context that Sherry Arnstein created the 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' in 1969. Arnstein's Ladder describes the ways in which all people might participate in decision making in civil society. The model was an attempt to offer a constructive description of the types of participation and what degree of power the public had in planning processes. Arnstein challenged planners and decision makers to drop exclusionary processes and create processes of equal opportunity so that those who had been marginalised by decision making processes are given power. Arnstein argued that this model described the means for how society could be transformed to benefit all.

Arnstein's (1969) eight rungs on the ladder were an attempt to simplify and define the debate around citizen participation. The bottom two rungs are clearly non-participation as manipulation and therapy describe situations in which others have power over the citizens. The next three rungs, informing, consultation and placation, are degrees of tokenism. While citizen voices might be heard by decision-makers, decision-makers hold all the power and this may result in no change to the situations or systems citizens are seeking to change. The top three rungs all recognise citizens possess power to bring change to the status quo through negotiation in partnership with decision makers, being given authority by those in

power to make decisions, or taking up decision making positions themselves. Arnstein's ladder shaped some of our later thinking around youth participation, most notably when Roger Hart adapted Arnstein's ladder for child participation in 1992.



1. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)



2. Hart's Ladder (1992)

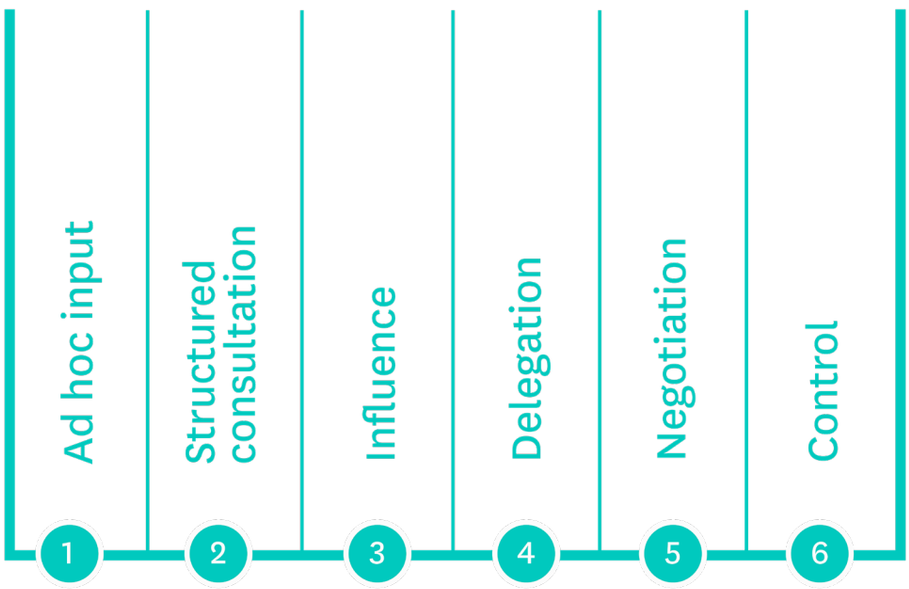
Increasing concern and moral panics

In the 1980s there was increasing concern about 'at risk' young people in New Zealand. While youth work had been active in the faith based sector, detached youth work became a strategy adopted by governments to work with unemployed young people and gangs. There was an increased focus on innovative youth work strategies to mitigate the issues young people were facing and the moral panic felt by society. The Children, Young Person and their Families Act passed into legislation in 1989 ensuring that children and young people receiving welfare and justice from the state were supported with whānau decision making, and community in a way that could be culturally flexible (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Youth work training schemes were implemented to train youth workers in engaging young people for their wellbeing and development.

Young people were at the forefront of change. They led and joined in protests. Young people marched and protested the Springbok tour in 1981, were central to the Nuclear Free Movement and led and participated in raising many other environmental and societal concerns. New Zealand society responded in moral panic.

With their increasingly amplified voice young people demanded spaces that were created for them, such as the forming of the Auckland City Youth Council in 1984 (Coom, 2010; Sleith, 2010). In this time early versions of youth representative bodies began to form enabling young people to speak within political systems.

It was within this context that Westhorp's Continuum (1987) was created in Australia for youth worker training. Westhorp's Continuum (1987) scales the stages of youth involvement or empowerment and indicates how adults can create partnerships with young people. It detailed a continuum of strategies for participation as options. Westhorp took the approach that no one strategy was better than another, but that different strategies suited different contexts. In the Australian Youth Foundation's 2002 reprint of Westhorp's Continuum, the paper asks a series of questions of the adult or youth worker to help overcome barriers to youth engagement and empowerment. In this presentation of Westhorp's Continuum we start to see the use of the term 'youth-adult partnership' (Australian Youth Foundation, 2002). Youth-adult partnership considers that the quality relationship that a youth worker has with a young person is fundamental for meaningful youth participation to occur (Australian Youth Foundation, 2002).



3. Westhorp's Continuum (1987)

UNCRC Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Approaching the end of the millenium

In the 1990s the faith-based youth ministries and detached youth work practices of the 1980s burgeoned. Along with it came the proliferation of school-based youth work practice, and statutory care services underwent an overhaul with the new Children, Young Person and their Families Act (1989). The Act sharpened the focus on the care and protection of children and young people, and the recognition and upholding of their rights as citizens in development. Within this movement to recognise the rights of children, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was created advocating internationally for the rights of all young people across nations (Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with Article 49). New Zealand ratified the UNCRC in 1993.

The UNCRC asserts the right of the child to non-discrimination (article 2), decisions made in the best interests of the child (article 3), the right to life, survival and development (article 6), freedom of expression (article 13), and the right to express their views, have them heard and be taken seriously in matters that affect them Article 12). Article 12 is often quoted as the right of the child to participate in decision-making. Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12 are general principles of the UNCRC and critical to ensuring that all the rights of the child are upheld as discussed in the 54 articles of the convention (UNICEF, n.d).

As part of the children's rights movement Roger Hart (1992) adapted Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969) to describe the process of participation as a right of children. Hart describes participation as sharing in decision-making that affects one's life, and that it is a "fundamental right of citizenship." Hart is an environmental psychologist who researched the importance of children's play in the environment, on their development. He describes the psychological development of children and specifically the development of their ability to empathise at a young age that enables them to work with peers and adults for the purpose of democracy and community building. Hart is interested in the socio-economic environmental variables that impede young people's participation (Hart, 1992).

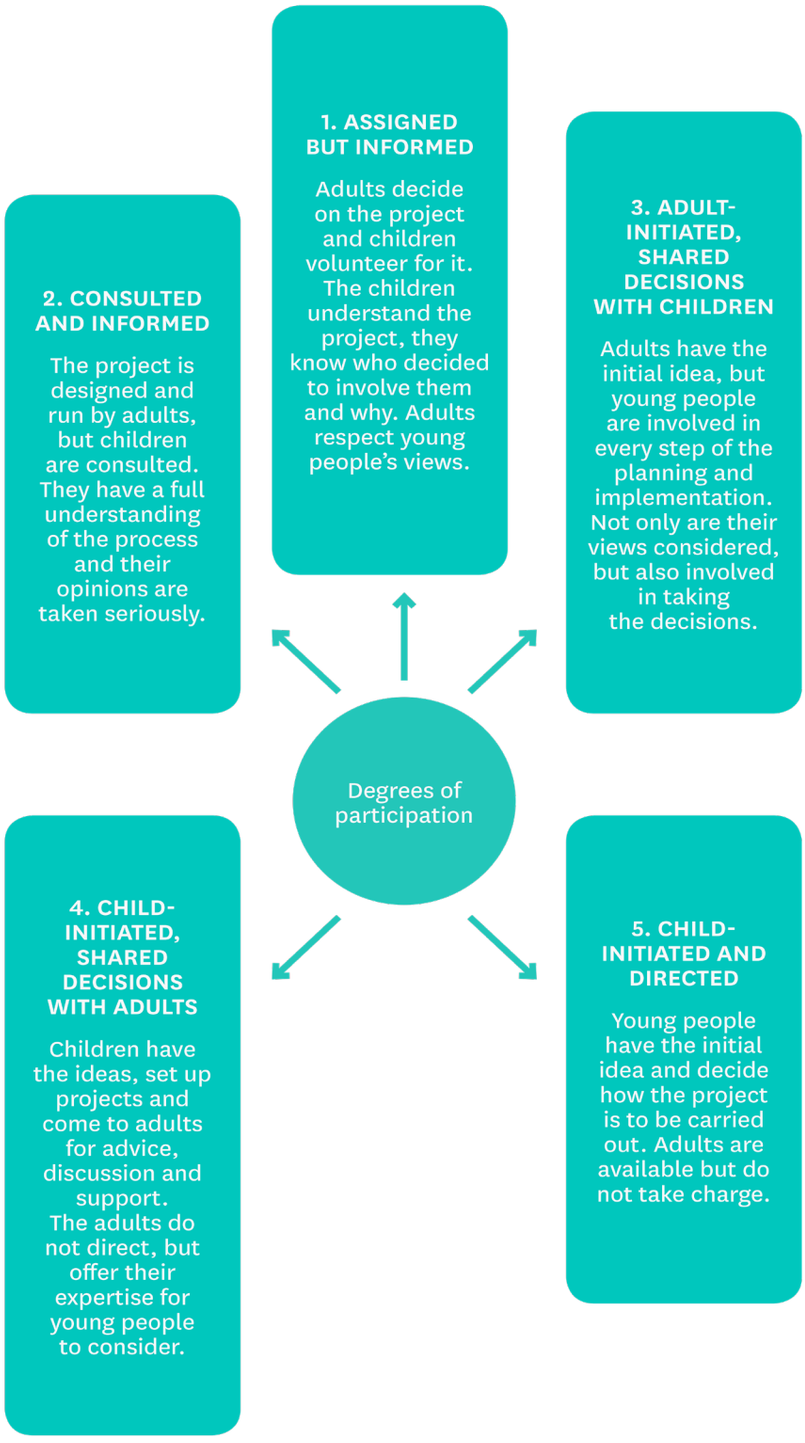
Hart (1992) argues that it is important that adolescents find positive ways to participate in community, or they will find irresponsible ways to participate. He argues that political self-determination is critical, in order for democracy to be flexible and responsive to a changing world. Participation is then a method that enables this positive political self-determination, as opposed to an indoctrination of political beliefs. In this context Hart's Ladder describes in the lower rungs of his ladder those aspects that are non-participation, and do not enable self-determination: manipulation, decoration and tokenism. Hart gives the example of manipulation being pre-school children carrying placards critiquing social policies that affect children. These pre-schoolers cannot cognitively fully comprehend the meaning of the placards they are carrying. In this time of galvanised action around critical issues in society, these lower rungs on Hart's Ladder are an important check for adults to ensure that in exposing children and young people to these events, that we are not manipulating their voice to amplify our own. Hart then describes the other rungs on the ladder as a continuum of participation, much like Westhorp. He makes the point that to reach the next rung, 'assigned but informed', young people need to have good information about the intentions of the opportunity, know who has decided their participation is important, and that their role is meaningful and voluntary.

Climbing higher, 'consulted and informed' refers to those instances where young people are fully informed and included in the decision-making process, being treated as consultants. This does not refer to consultation processes where young people have no idea of the outcome of the consultation. Hart describes 'adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people' as true participation in which adults work to engage young people in processes, and move outside those who are usually involved in such processes because of their access to power.

'Child-initiated and directed' is another example of true participation where children and young people determine for themselves the subject of their energy and participation in community. The top rung, 'child initiated, shared decisions with adults' is in Hart's Ladder the highest form of participation, where young people engage adults in supporting an initiative they have created. Hart argues that this is rare, due to the lack of listening and supportive adults.

Treseder's Wheel (1997) was one of the early models that began to delve deeper into discussing youth participation practice. Treseder moved away from linear typologies and continuums of participation, critical of Hart's Ladder and instead offered a wheel to describe the degrees of participation (using the upper five levels of Hart's Ladder). Integral to Treseder's Wheel are the steps to take before one can enable participation, which he adapted from David Hodgson's (1995) five conditions for youth participation (Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010; Karsten, 2012). These conditions help ensure that the participation opportunities are real, and are not tokenistic.

Too often in decision-making processes the importance of having a trusted independent person supporting young people is overlooked. Well-meaning planners, designers, and bureaucrats may not have the distance from the process to be able to see the ethical complexities for young people or may find their support or advice limited because of the nature of their role. Having a trusted, independent and skilled participation practitioner can ensure that young people can be self-determining, rather than having a particular outcome, decision or beliefs ascribed for them.



4. Treseder's Wheel (1997)

David Hodgson's *Participation of children and young people in social work* (1995):

1. Access to those in power
2. Access to relevant information
3. Real choices between different options
4. Support from a trusted, independent person
5. A means of appeal or complaint if anything goes wrong.

Beyond 2000

In the early 2000s there was a rapid development in the national understanding of youth development with the publication of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) which named youth participation as one of the six principles and four goals of youth development practice (Beals, 2007; Deane, Dutton, & Kerekere, 2019). Influenced by the development of international youth participation practice, and accompanying participation audits in the US and the UK, numerous agencies, networks, systems and contexts discussed what makes good youth participation practice here in Aotearoa. Youth participation began to be researched with young people, often within participatory action research methodologies. Young people became involved in developing youth strategies, plans, policies and programmes. Youth-adult partnerships became normalised in youth work practice. The number of youth-led initiatives naturally began to rise.

Reflective of this nationwide interest, the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) employed Youth Participation Advisors and published a booklet on youth participation practice called Keepin' it Real featuring Hart's Ladder. This was accompanied with training workshops around the country, and a series of case studies (McGachie & Smith, 2003). This MYD-led training may be why Hart's Ladder remains so well known in Aotearoa.

In 2009 MYD released an updated version of Keepin' It Real including Shier's Pathway (2001), and a checklist for practitioners. The focus was on eliminating barriers to participation, creating a dynamic two-way conversation between young people and adults, and looking at effective youth-adult partnership. A critical discourse also began about who was included and who was excluded from youth participation opportunities (Nairn, Sligo and Freeman 2006; Finlay, 2010).

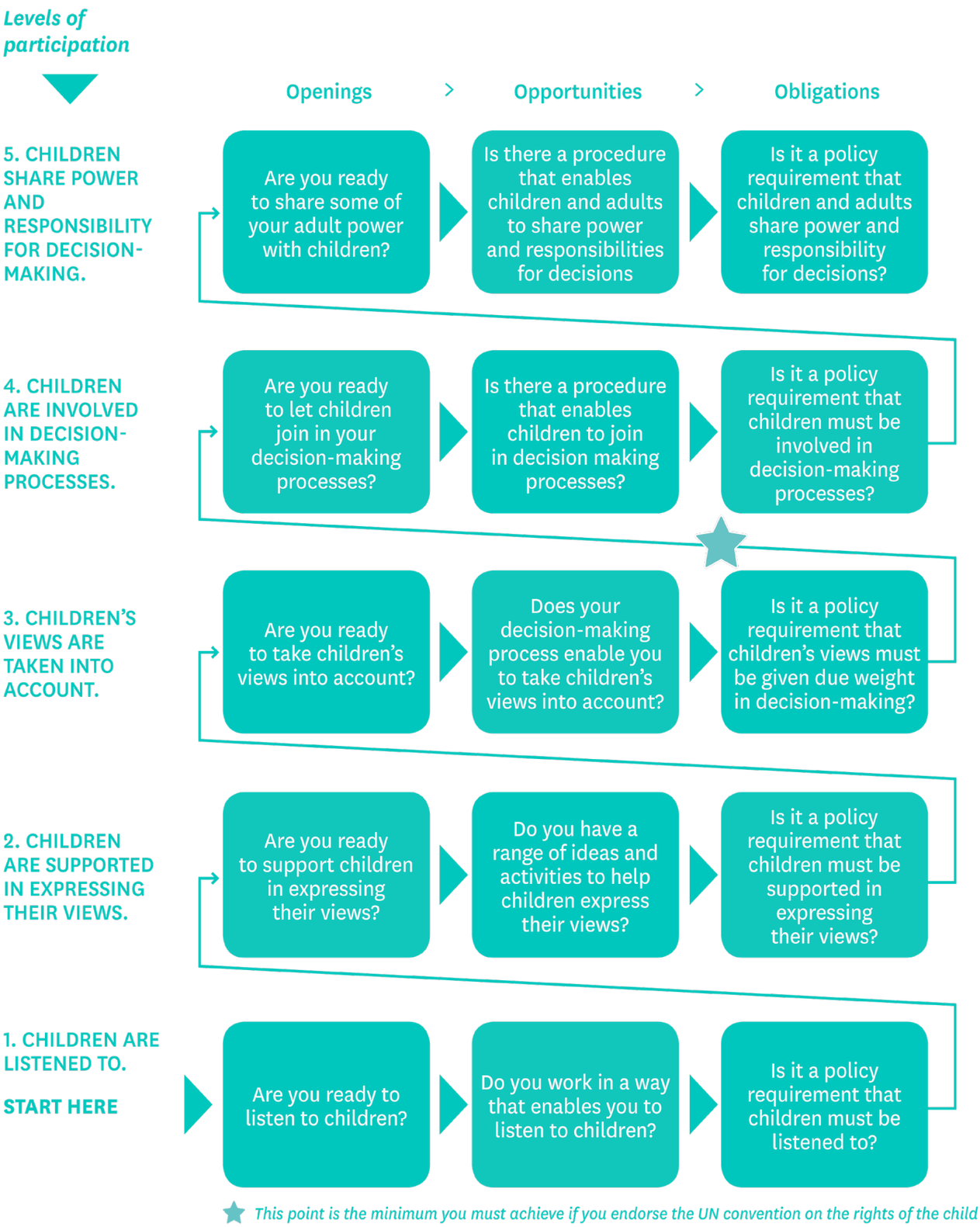
Harry Shier (2001) is a children's researcher and play specialist from Ireland, who created the pathway model to enable organisations to examine their level of commitment to enabling young people to have a voice, and in sharing decision making with them. Using the UNCRC as a guide, Shier examined the degrees of commitment by charting the levels of openings, opportunities and obligations organisations had in place to support young people's participation in decision making. Shier argued that unless organisations took young people's views into account, they did not meet the rights of the child as described in Article 12 of the UNCRC. This model is a helpful auditing tool for organisations and young people to assess the organisation's readiness to share decision making with young people. Young people typically want to share power in decision making with adults, and are still often facing criticism. Young people are seen as 'adults in the making' politically, rather than being competent social actors or experts in their own lives. This model clearly identifies that the onus is on organisations to create appropriate spaces for participation that are backed by policy processes, and supportive adults.

In 2003 Ani Wierenga engaged young people in a major piece of research for the Foundation of Young Australians, co-writing a model of youth participation and a toolkit for participatory practice. The model and toolkit arose from research undertaken to hear young people's voices about the experiences of being involved in decision making. Unsurprisingly this model places young people's interest in participation at the centre of the model's practice. However, it also offers a critique that many other models and approaches to youth participation are adult-centric.

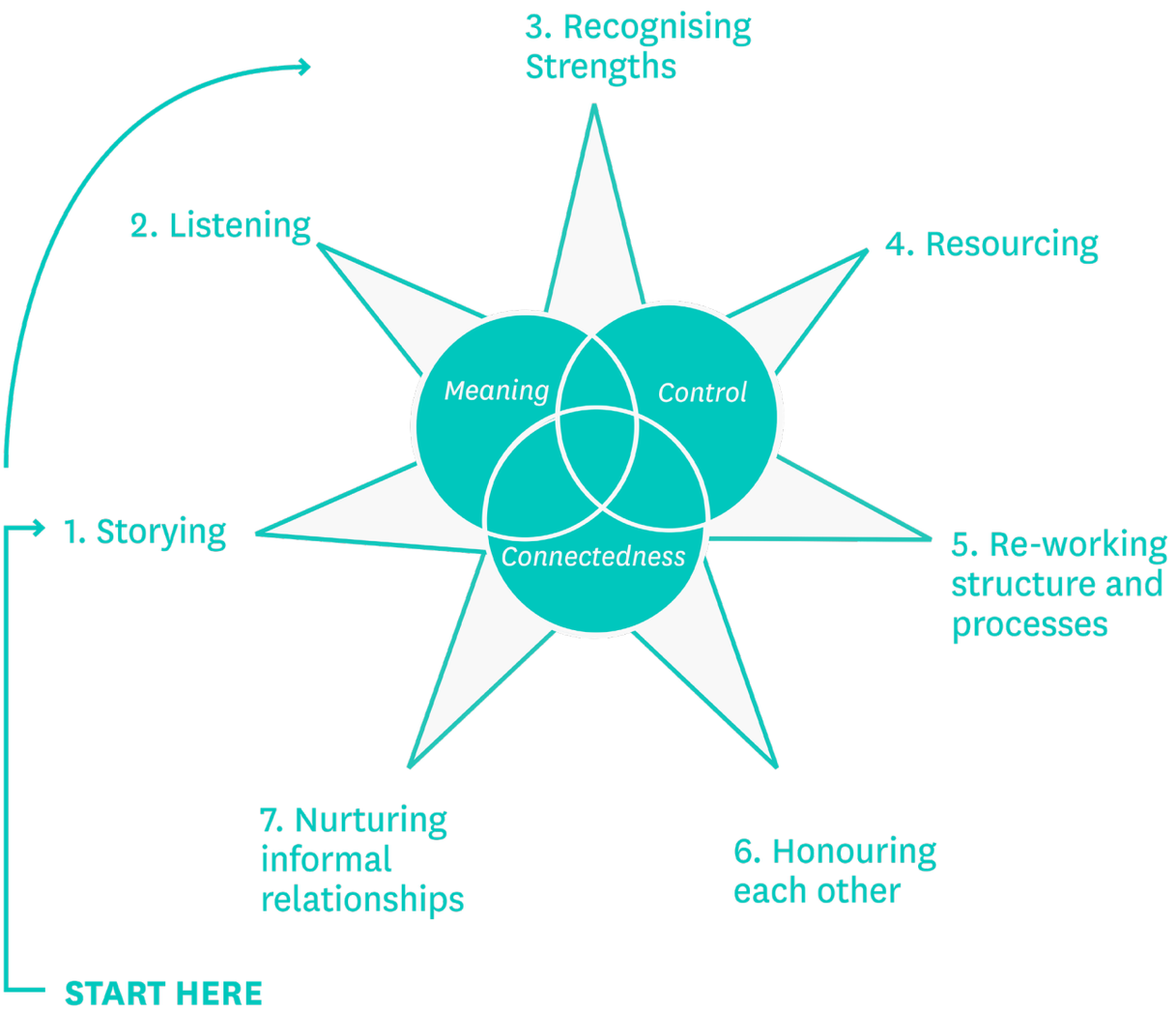
Wierenga's Star (2003) suggests that effective youth participation practice places meaning, control, and connectedness as central elements that youth participation opportunities must explore. Interestingly the model acknowledges the need for youth participation practice to transform the relationships of the young people involved to ensure the three central elements are met. This includes reworking adult structures and processes to more effectively work alongside young people. The toolkit goes on to provide practice examples, ideas and reflective tools for working through the model to help transform practice.

In the report, Wierenga and the youth researchers discuss the ideas of citizenship and youth development and debunk all of these as concepts that can limit young people's participation through adult perceptions of their capability. They prefer to focus on a capacity building approach, recognising that young people already have something to offer society, and already have a sense of agency. Capacity building recognises that education is useful to build skills further, but it does not need to be according to adult agendas nor fit within existing structures. A capacity building approach acknowledges that the process is collaborative and that there is mutual learning to be had (Wierenga, 2003).

Wierenga's Star acknowledges that young people want to have direct action and influence in the decisions that affect them. Too often policy change is slow, consultation does not enable meaningful involvement or co-design. It can be hard for young people to track their influence, and the story of their involvement in shaping decision making is too easily lost in restructures, policy development cycles and political agendas. Wierenga challenges us to address these issues in our practice, and keep young people at the centre of the process.



5. Shier's Pathway (2001)



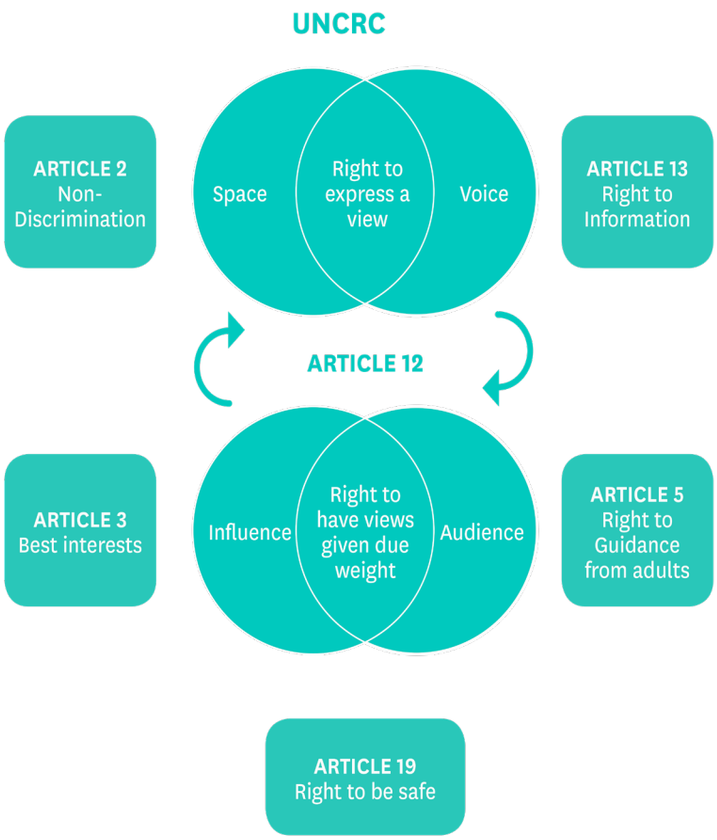
6. *Wierenga's Star (2003)*

Back in New Zealand in 2006, the collaborative and dynamic conversations with young people were starting to shape policies and legislation in new ways. With the support of Community Action on Youth, Alcohol and Drugs (CAYAD) and the Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC) young people were taking their voices to initiate community debates, and to discuss the impact of New Zealand's alcohol supply on them and their wider communities. As a support to the proliferation of community debates happening at the time, ALAC commissioned a checklist for engaging young people (ALAC, 2006). The checklist became a tool that was easy to use for practitioners who were thinking about engaging young people in critical discussions around community access to alcohol. Young people's concerns ended up an integral part of shaping the Law Commission's 2010 review of the regulatory framework for the sale and supply of alcohol.

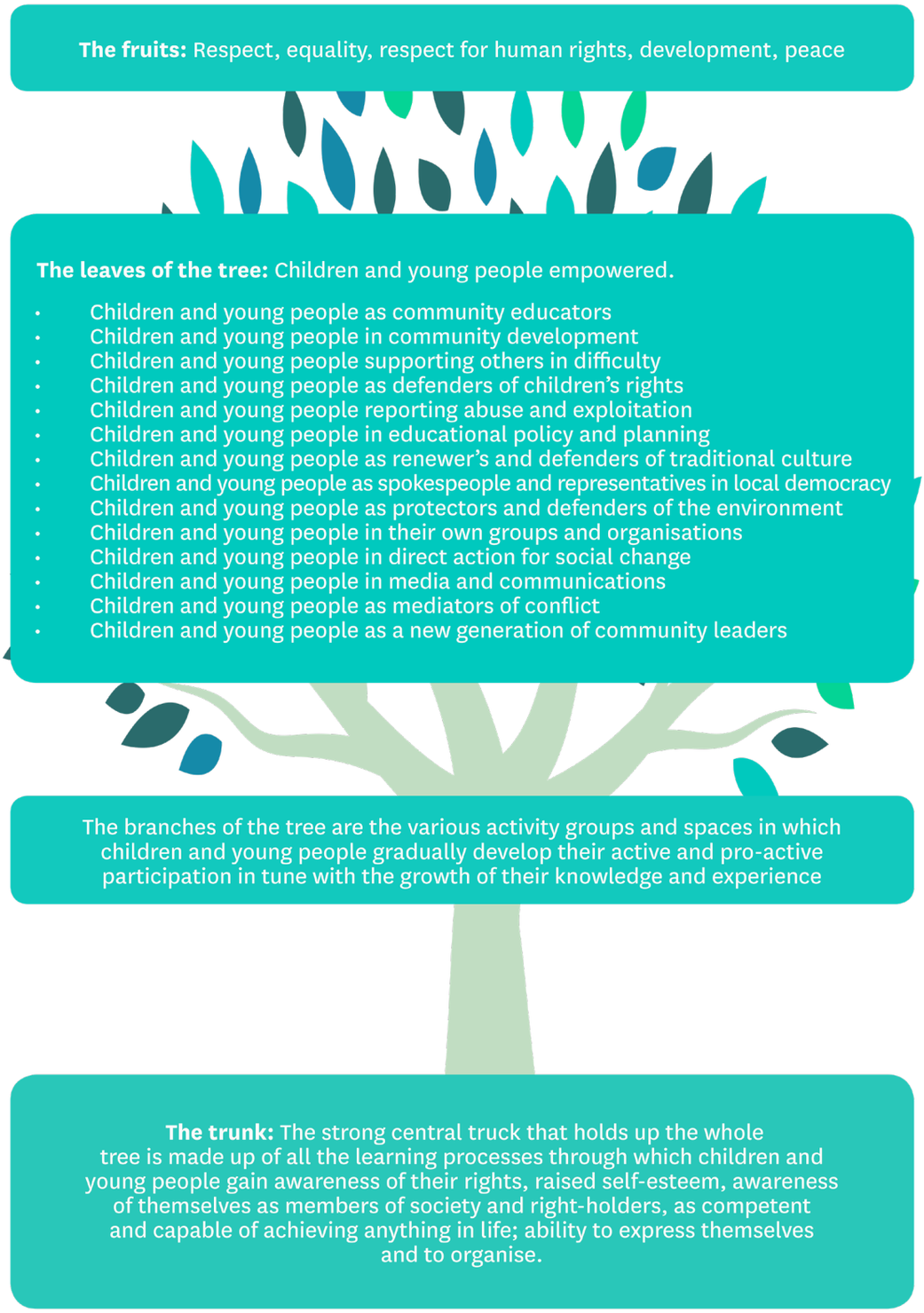
Internationally in 2007 Laura Lundy's 'Voice is not enough' model, conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC, gained wide recognition. Lundy is an international child rights expert and academic residing in Ireland. Her rights-based model of youth participation unpacks the wider intent of UNCRC and describes how rights relate to practice (Lundy, 2007). Her work is written primarily as a critique to participation terms that minimise the full intent of Article 12 (Lundy, 2007). The article draws on research for the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, that looks at barriers to Article 12 being applied. Lundy breaks down Article 12 into 4 overlapping and chronological parts: Space and Voice; Influence and Audience (Lundy, 2007).

Using the general principles of the UNCRC, Lundy describes how adults can create safe spaces that enable young people to express their voice, have it heard and influence decisions.

Lundy's model addresses complexities around who participates, through simply stating that all children have a right to non-discrimination. In placing Article 2 of the UNCRC firmly within her model, Lundy argues for participation to be a right for all young people, not just for a chosen few. Lundy uses the second part of Article 3 to argue that adults need to respect the 'ever evolving' capabilities of young people to participate in decision making. She goes on to argue that to limit decision making to tokenistic or decorative opportunities is damaging to young people's overall development. She argues for open and transparent policies and processes, and providing good information to young people that tell them how their voice will be used to influence decisions. Furthermore she argues that with young people's ever evolving capacity the support needed from adults will lessen. Lundy's model is a helpful conceptualisation of the UNCRC and can be used to develop strategies and programmes for organisations that ensure the UNCRC is being upheld.



7. Lundy's model (2007)



8. Shier's Participatory Tree (2009)

In 2009, Harry Shier further translated a model from his work supporting Children's rights in Nicaragua. Shier has spent substantial time in Nicaragua working with and researching alongside children on coffee plantations. The community context of Shier's work has transformed his way of looking at participation from his initial model. In Shier's Participatory Tree (2009) he takes a community ecosystem view of young people's participation and how they grow in their skills and their contribution to community. This is an organic look at participation inspired by a community concerned with nurturing and growing crops. What is unique about this model is that Shier orientates young people's participation starting not with organisational or community opportunities, but with the family of origin, and the opportunities to participate within the family and community that the family context affords (Shier, 2009). The seed then needs good soil that upholds young people's rights to be able to grow a seedling of participation that strengthens as young people participate in activities outside the home. As young people's participation experiences mature they are informed by both the range of opportunities to actively participate, and the learning that enhances their sense of awareness, agency and empowerment. In the leaves of the tree Shier presents one of the most interesting discussions on the variety of roles young people can take up as competent proactive participants in community. Shier's participatory roles challenge the view that participation is for the purpose of young people's development. In Shier's Participatory Tree, the purpose (the fruit) of participation is far more global: a respect for human rights, peace, development and equality for all.

USE THIS IN YOUR PRACTICE

UNCRC Committee General Comment No.12. 2009 – *The Right of the Child to be Heard.*

1. Transparent and informative
2. Voluntary
3. Respectful
4. Relevant
5. Child-friendly
6. Inclusive
7. Supported by training for adults
8. Safe and sensitive to risk
9. Accountable

In 2009 The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child wrote a General Comment on Article 12 out of concern for the degree to which the UNCRC was being implemented. They had specific concerns about the barriers to its practice and the diversity of young people who were still being marginalised or excluded from participation in decision making, and concerns around the quality of participation practice. This general commentary provides a legal analysis of Article 12, along with nine basic conditions for implementing the rights of the child to be heard. In 2015, Harry Shier visited Aotearoa and spoke at the Ara Taiohi wānanga 'Building Pathways' at Tapu te Ranga Marae, challenging the sector to consider how youth participation practice in Aotearoa met the nine standards of the UNCRC. Sadly, the nine standards are still not common knowledge in youth participation practice. If you take anything away from reading this article for your practice let it be these, the nine standards for implementing the rights of the child to be heard.

New decade, new diversity

Building upon the community engagement and capacity building of young people in the early 2000's, the second decade of this millennium saw a shift in Aotearoa: moving beyond youth councils and advisory groups to involve more young people in diverse participatory roles. Practice generally became more concerned about the diversity of young people involved in participation experiences (Finlay, 2010). Practitioners had experienced situations wherein a few young people had become 'super participators' and now actively ensured participation opportunities were open to all young people. Rebooted youth participation groups were as much young people from 'the street' as those with political and social capital that primed them to participate in traditional participation opportunities. We began to consider ethical issues around the amount of time and energy young people gave to participate in decision-making that benefited

organisations and ask, should young people be paid for their participation?

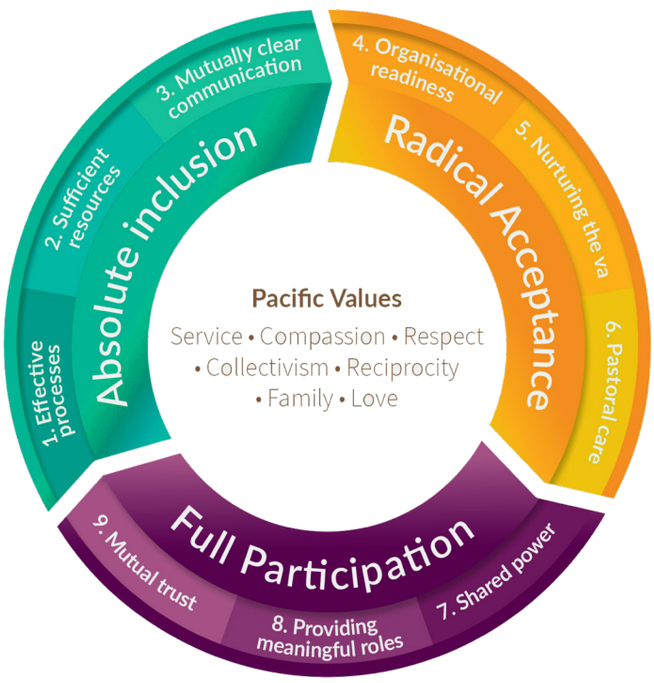
Up until the mid 2010's the Ministry of Youth Development and local government had been leaders in shaping youth participation in local and community democracy. Conferences like the Youth in Local Government conference had been a place for young people and council officers to discuss practice, celebrate advances and gain support for challenging processes to implement children's right to be heard. The critiques continued that traditional models of youth participation, such as youth councils, did not facilitate participation that is representative or engaging in an increasingly globalised and connected world.

Changes were made in 2012 and 2014 to the Local Government Act which has resulted in an explicit shift away from the 'four wellbeings' (social, environmental, economic and cultural) to focus on the 'core services' of territorial authorities as outlined in the Local Government Act 2001 Amendment 2014 (Kessaram, 2013; Salter, Laing and Hill. 2016).

This led to local government and statutory authorities examining methods for youth participation in decision making that are deemed effective and efficient within existing processes and structures, rather than looking to spark community democracy. Youth participation in local government has become more focused on policy than on youth-led responses to issues that actually matter to young people. It is important to acknowledge the tension between the child and youth participation agenda and the political forces that make meaningful participation difficult (Harris, 2006). These systemic changes have coincided with growing interest amongst young people in taking direct action on issues that feel real and relevant, rather than advocating for political and policy change alone.

More youth enterprise and social innovation incubators have invited young people to develop their own projects, ideas and responses to increasing global issues that young people are concerned with. In the gap that was left by the Ministry of Youth Development, and some local governments, other organisations and groups offered new perspectives on youth participation practice.

Le Va, a health promotion agency aimed at improving the wellbeing of Pasifika families and communities, worked with a group of young Pasifika leaders to develop a Pasifika Youth Participation Guide in 2016. This was a much needed resource that brought insight into how to conduct youth participation in a way that honors a Pasifika worldview. The Pasifika Youth Participation Guide places Pasifika values at the centre of practice of the Va (the relational space between) with three defining practice requirements: absolute inclusion; radical acceptance; and full participation (Le Va, 2016). Each of these feature a further three dimensions that describe the key attributes considered critical for organisations and practitioners to have in place to nurture Pasifika youth participation.



9. Pasifika Youth Participation Guide (2016)

10. Nga Uri Ō (2016)

LifeHack was one social innovation initiative that gained funding through the National government's Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project. It used co-design processes to address youth mental health through innovative ideas and pilot projects co-created with young people, organisations and community members. Emerging from one such collaboration between Lifehack, Sovereign, Youthline Manukau, and facilitated by Christina Leef, a model for collaboration and working together in co-design processes was formed (Lifehack, 2016). Nga Uri Ō... began as a way to set the culture of a group working together by exploring the diversity of cultural whakapapa of participants at the initial workshop, and acknowledge the place it happened. Nga Uri Ō... enables participants to explore their own whakapapa, and that of others through whānaungatanga, before forming a collective purpose and way of working together. This is a helpful model for addressing group formation in participatory experiences, emphasizing the importance of partnership and determining collaboratively with young people how might we work together, within a Te Ao Māori worldview. In an Aotearoa where young people are already taking action, taking time to develop good collaborative relationships and collective agreements for working together feels critical.

Why is this important right now?

Young people as activists? Not a new idea! If we look at many of the great historical social movements they have often been led by young people. Young people have a sustainable vision. Because of the nature of the challenges young people face they are able to look a long way into the future. Young people are also able to provide that fresh perspective because they come at things from a new and sometimes non-institutionalised angle; they can play the role of naive inquirer. Young people have everything to lose and nothing to lose. What do we mean by this? We've loosely brainstormed a handful of pressing social demands, and checked this with some young people Hannah works with:

Young people have everything to lose:

- They will wear the cost of today's decisions socially, economically, environmentally and culturally
- They are further burdened with the future costs of these current decisions, that they are not often engaged in or even in control of
- They are directly impacted by the uncertain future of work
- They might struggle to access equitable education
- They might lose access to nature
- They will experience the long-term impact of the determinants of health and wellbeing in society today
- They experience threats to personal security, including food, conflict, civic liberty and other fundamental rights.

Young people have nothing to lose:

- They don't have money or assets
- They have time and flexibility
- They don't have a brand/reputation to uphold
- They generally won't lose their livelihood.

The concept of intergenerational equity is based on the imperative that current generations need to ensure that the planet that future generations inherit is not worse off, and does not inhibit or infringe on the rights of future generations to meet their own needs. The whole principle of 'leave it better than you found it' is about leaving a positive legacy for those that come after us and is encapsulated in this whakataukī:

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri, ā muri ake nei.

For us and our children after us.

Greta Thunberg (2019) is acutely aware of the inherent responsibility connected to decisions that leave a legacy. Her words have directly challenged adults in positions of power and resonated with millions of people across the globe. Arguably the most well known 16 year old in 2019, Greta also embodies whai wāhitanga in action through her leadership, decision-making, responsibility, commitment, inclusivity, determination, and her reclamation of Asperger's as a strength and superpower. Locating Greta in the context of Mana Taiohi also highlights the support from her whānau, who have co-authored two books (*Scenes from the Heart*, 2018, and *Our House is On Fire*, in-press 2020).

Greta is not alone and is not the only example of this, as young people are currently participating in, if not leading, various climate change movements across the world. In Wellington, Micah Geiringer featured on the front page of newspapers defiantly yet hopefully wielding a flare during recent protests (Hunt, 2019). Micah was refreshingly honest about his original intent to skip school in the March 2019 climate strike, and that through learning from older role models he met outside the Beehive, Micah realised the potential power in his participation. It was no longer about wagging, it was about making a difference. Micah's discovery of agency also involved negotiation (and subsequent conscious betrayal) of both parental requests and Wellington High School's regulations.

Hayward, Salili, Tupuana'i, and Tualamali'i (2019) press the need to hear young pacific leaders on climate change, as there is much that the collective values of

pacific communities can teach the world in responding to and being resilient in midst of climate change.

> *'There are also still too few opportunities to hear directly from Pacific communities, particularly young leaders. Yet with support, and respect for the nuances of local values, the efforts of Pacific communities can inform far-reaching transformative responses to climate change'* (Hayward, Salili, Tupuana'i, & Tualamali'i, 2019, p. 5).

Irrespective of your own personal and political perspectives on these issues, there is much to learn from this current wave of young leaders. Pania Newton, kaitiaki and land protector, has pioneered an indelible contribution to our nation's journey with Te Tiriti through her leadership and service at Ihumātao in recent years (Misa, 2019). The media discourse of 'rangatahi versus rangatira' (Johnsen, 2019) was unhelpful, inaccurate (Aoake, 2019; Cooper, 2019) and actually betrays the principles of Mana Taiohi as it undermines whai wāhitanga and ignores relationships.

It may seem like the contemporary expressions of youth participation are all grounded in protest. Youth activism certainly has been less apparent since perhaps the Occupy Movement or Youth Wage campaigns (Beals & Wood, 2012), and is undeniably more visible now. However we believe that this is one component of participation, wherein young people are claiming their rights and balancing their responsibilities. This balance is infinitely more powerful than the inherently limited, adult-dominated and typically manipulative 'co-design' that Mana Williams-Eade was incredibly cynical of in his keynote at Involve 2018 (you can watch it on Ara Taiohi's Facebook page).

Mana Williams-Eade was one of the care-experienced young people granted a voice in the creation of a new system and Ministry for Children. He said in his keynote, "I realised: this is quite serious" and described "all this weight" he felt with the responsibility bestowed upon him in this particular expression of participation. Mana criticized co-design as a "trend" and challenged the 1000 attendees at Involve to ask "why are you involving [young people] in these decisions? Because what you're doing is creating an expectation they have some kind of power but then you take it away". Mana cleverly paralleled the participatory design decisions with the "massive decisions at age 5, 12, 16... I shouldn't have had to make" about his siblings and new parents. The weight young people experience in participation must be considered, particularly in relation to their whakapapa and story, which is another reason why Wierenga's Star (2003) remains relevant.

The stories of these young people, alongside their peers, with their whānau and social contexts, during this time and here in this place, are rapidly redefining our new appreciation of youth participation known as whai wāhitanga.

Reframing youth participation for 2020 and beyond: whai wāhitanga

Many of the kupu presented in Mana Taiohi are familiar to most youth workers - we practice whanaungatanga daily! However, this term whai wāhitanga will most likely be new to most of us, and therefore need some careful understanding etymologically and in terms of the underlying kaupapa. At this point we three need to acknowledge we are tauiwi, and therefore our perception or understanding of this whakaaro comes from our identities as Ngāti Pākehā and Tangata Tiriti. Treaty-based practice means we are guided by, and held accountable to, our biological whānau who have iwi affiliations and whakapapa to the whenua, colleagues and friends who live in Te Ao Māori, and the many kaumātua and kuia who have all been patient as we have stumbled through the messy legacy and reality of colonisation in attempts to better appreciate matauranga through te reo Māori. We also love maoridictionary.com and have discovered:

Whai:

(noun) pursuit

(verb) to chase, follow, search for, woo, aim at

(verb) be equipped with, possessing, acquire

Wāhi:

(noun) place, opening, portion, share, allocation

(verb) to break through

Whai wāhi:

(verb) to participate, take part, have a part

These denotations are incredibly powerful, relevant to the historical expressions of youth participation and actually lay a roadmap for future exploration. Defining *whai* as a 'pursuit' or 'chase' suggests youth-led empowerment, and possibly a joint discovery with others. The connotations of 'search' and 'woo' imply an active and ongoing journey. Furthermore, the extended verbs of 'acquire', 'equip' and 'possess' certainly evoke adults are relinquishing power, resourcing young people and developing their skills. Conceptualising *wāhi* as 'break-through' indicates innovation, and 'allocation' or 'place' suggests delegation and responsibility. The themes threading through the chronology of youth participation frameworks back into whai wāhitanga are evident.

Whai wāhitanga: *to chase a place = youth participation.*

There's a beautiful symmetry here, as whai wāhitanga conceptually and practically existed before any of the international youth participation theories, and is (re) discovering new relevance in contemporary times. We come full circle and are reminded again of urunga (Baxter et. al., 2016; Caddie, 2011; Hemara, 2000), the aforementioned traditional indigenous approach that translated for some as 'education through exposure', as young people were gifted responsibility, leadership and decision-making power, for the wellbeing of the collective. We note that urunga features in our Code of Ethics, with the clauses clustered under youth participation, and it is helpful to remember the educative power of participation through leadership and responsibility. As our terminology evolves, and future editions of the Code of Ethics align with Mana Taiohi, we do hope this traditional wisdom continues to be embraced under the new framing of whai wāhitanga. We can be world leaders in this space.

The United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child Article 12 states the young people have a right to express their voice, to have it heard and for their voice to be given weight in decision making. Whai wāhitanga is undoubtedly about involving young people in decision-making in all aspects of their lives. As practitioners we pay attention to power dynamics between young people, their communities and decision-makers and seek to act as change agents enabling young people to participate and find their place.

Redefining empowerment

Power lies at the heart of the youth participation conversation. Especially when we are talking about young people's participation in decision-making. Baxter and Haxton's (2007) model of participatory power talks about how we have shared power with young people, the point where our authoritative power as youth workers, overlaps with young people's autonomous power (which we might also call mana). In our role as youth workers and practitioners we have authority to facilitate participation, but not to dictate young people's participation. We recognise young people's mana to shape their own decisions and choices. Empowerment is not an action of the youth worker to give young people power, but an outcome of actions and processes that enable young people to discover their own power.

> *'Empowerment is defined here as a process by which people are able to gain or seize power (control) over decisions and resources that influence their lives'* (Laverack, 2009).

Laverack is not a youth worker, but his discussion of empowerment within the context of community engagement and public health is useful to understandings of empowerment in the youth work context. Empowerment cannot be given to people, they must seek it. Empowerment is young people's realization of their own power and agency. It is critical for people working with young people to recognise young people's inherent mana and power, and to create a change in the environment to nurture and nourish young people, enabling them to find their place.

Whai wāhitanga utilises education, exposure and reflective processes that enable empowerment.

> *'Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects that must be saved from a burning building.'* (Paulo Friere, 2014)

In our varied experiences, we have often discovered that young people have an initial experience of participation, that illuminates for them the multiplicity of opportunities for their participation, and the power of their voice. Paulo Friere's dialogical model is an example of the kinds of processes that enable empowerment. Friere's concept of 'praxis' is taking and then reflecting on their perception of reality, with the purpose of understanding and changing future actions. Through safe and well facilitated dialogue, young people can question their understanding and knowledge, and create new knowledge and understanding together. Conscientisation then happens as young people test and act on their new knowledge, and see changes in their environment as a result of their actions. In the process of conscientisation young people gain a sense of their own agency.

Scenarios

The following scenarios are inspired by our experience and observations in youth participation initiatives. We brainstormed these during a series of video calls whilst planning our workshop for Involve 2018.

The original events (ostensibly changed for ethical reasons!) occurred in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch (where we live respectively), or in communities covered by national youth organisations. We note that diverse geographic contexts present unique challenges.

We encourage you to consider these scenarios as a reflective exercise, integrating the chronology of youth participation frameworks with the refreshed understanding of whai wāhitanga, paying particular attention to ethical issues and power dynamics.

Political, personal and practical ambitions

A group of young people are involved in a local youth council. All young people have been nominated or elected by local youth to sit on the youth council. A couple of young Pākehā males in the group are known members of political parties, and are studying political science and law. They have a declared ambition to become politicians, and use the forum for practicing their political skills. Other young people are leaders who have been involved in their local community or school. They are more interested in practically making a difference. Some young Pasifika women describe that they feel intimidated in meetings by others and they struggle to find their voice and be heard.

Opposing voices in public forums

An 18 year old young woman has been involved in a national youth advisory panel for a government department for two years, is passionate about young people having a voice and very recently joined a political party. She is interviewed by local media in a good news story about the importance of youth voting. She becomes the target of nasty personal comments made about her by a politician on Facebook on a public community page. The politician comes from an opposing political party, to the one the young woman is a part of.

Cynical decision-makers

You are working in an organisation whose core work is not focussed on young people, however you are in a role that advocates for youth voice, participation and wellbeing. Your role is to develop youth voice pathways and genuine youth participation however the overall attitudes and behaviours of those in management, governance or other power positions are negative, deficit focussed towards young people. Examples include circulating articles via email that mock the younger generation, sharing derogatory opinions openly, and have been dismissive when concerns have been raised. Despite providing professional development and support to those in management and governance you feel uneasy about engaging young people into this space.

For each scenario, ask yourself:

- What are the ethical issues here?
- Which participation models are relevant?
- What are the power dynamics potentially present?
- How might you respond?

When priorities conflict

A group within a youth participation project has the idea to run an event. Initially the wider group is very supportive but then it gets way bigger than anticipated and takes a lot of staff time and funding and isn't core business. There is tension within the wider group on what should be the priority. More staff time is being spent on this event and other young people (volunteers) in the group are having to pick up the slack and the core business of the group is being neglected. The staff member is seen to be moving away from the priorities set by young people for the sake of this one event. The staff member sees how big the event is getting and doesn't want to see the young people fail under the growing pressure of the project.

Processes and limits of representation

Your organisation does an excellent job of including young people in decision making. You've had a young person on the governance Board for 20 years. The current Board representative, Ivy, was elected when she was 12 years old and she's now in her second year at university, aged 19 years. Recently Ivy has started some university clubs that affiliate loosely to your organisation's kaupapa, hundreds of students are signing up and you're uncomfortable with some of their activities. You're not sure if this lines up to best practice and Ivy is actively excluding you from meetings so this can be "student-led". An invoice has been sent to you to approve for the $5000 hire of a bouncy castle for a student event that Ivy organised without anyone else knowing.

When the boss has a great idea

A significant event is happening in the region soon and there is a lot of hype, particularly expecting that tourists will arrive en masse. A group of young people have an idea to publish a zine for foreign young people travelling with their parents, of free and cheap stuff to do that only local young people know about. A youth worker supports the group to research, design the zine and access some small, relevant and appropriate advertising to pay for printing. When the printer's proof is being reviewed by the youth worker and some of the group, the youth worker's boss joins the conversation and insists on several other expensive businesses be included, even though it doesn't fit the kaupapa. The youth worker knows the businesses are owned by family and friends of the boss.

Do something!

Adolescence is a time when young people are framing their identity and giving things a go to figure out what their 'thing' is, their strengths, what they enjoy, and where they fit. It's important when working with young people in the context of youth participation that they are unique individuals and not just bums on seats. Our role is to nurture and uphold a young person's mauri - their inherent life spark that includes their values, beliefs, skills, strengths and talents.

In the context of whai wāhitanga, our role isn't to extract an outcome out of young people, rather to be part of their journey of empowerment. If that includes civic participation and alignment with your kaupapa, that is a win. If not, then that is also a win because you have been part of that young person's journey, forming their identity by providing a positive and mana-enhancing experience. An intrinsic part of a young person's identity is their whakapapa, they bring with them a cultural narrative that is tied to their identity and how they come to stand in the spaces in which we encounter them. In youth participation environments where young people are sharing their voice, this is often grounded in their whakapapa. We can't help but think of many of the young people we have worked with, when they stand in a room and share their voice, we can sense their ancestors in the room. For example when rangatahi Māori speak about their tūrangawaewae, the whenua and the awa, it is with strong conviction and a oneness with both land and people.

If a youth participation initiative isn't working (for example you put the call out for young people to join your organisation's governance and you get minimal uptake) nine times out of ten it is likely not the fault of young people. Organisations and groups must take time to examine the structural and cultural barriers to participation. Work with young people to identify the barriers and be transparent and collaborative about how these barriers can be removed.

Ask yourself:

- Have we got the right people?
- Are we investing in training for both young people and adults?
- Have we collaborated with people who work with young people to either partner or advise?
- Have we taken time to understand young people's context (e.g. looked through Mana Taiohi?!)
- Have we figured out what power we are going to / willing to / able to share with young people?
- Is our organisation ready?
- Do you have champions in leadership that 'get it'?

The Mana Taiohi principles alongside whai wāhitananga are helpful to include in your youth participation approach:

Manaakitanga:

- How welcome and safe do young people feel in the environment you create for youth participation?
- Is everyone clear how participation contributes to collective wellbeing?
- How can young people welcome and support other young people to participate?

Whanaungatanga:

- Have you created time and space for people to get to know one another, connect and build positive relationships?
- How do you build relationships with young people and the others in their world?
- How can you extend relationships during every encounter, even the most boring meetings?

Mātauranga:

- Are young people given the information and understanding that they need to participate fully?
- Are their forms of knowledge and expertise valued?
- How can you all reflect on the many youth participation theories to assess your work together?

At the dawn of a new decade: Where to next?

As 2020 approaches, we have a sense youth participation is returning, full circle, to traditional indigenous approaches, incorporating the best bits of well-established theories, within the kaupapa of whai wāhitanga. Power has changed, and young people are challenging systems, and asking adults to adapt their practice. We are beginning to see the flexible democracy Hart once imagined in which young people take hold of opportunities to have their voices heard and given weight in decision-making, and challenging the system when they are not.

Since 60 people joined our first workshop about this kaupapa at Involve 2018 in Wellington, and a further 20 at 2019's Festival of Youth Development in Christchurch, we're noticing momentum to reclaim the potential of participatory frameworks and chart new territory for the next season of this principle. This will require youth development practitioners to wrestle with a series of challenges.

We need to be clear about what we mean by youth participation and what it takes to do this well. *He Arotake Tuhinga* (Deane, Dutton & Kerekere, 2019) is a groundbreaking literature review that celebrated the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa, integrated mātauranga and laid a future foundation. While whai wāhitanga wasn't a stand-alone concept in the review, much of what relates to this participatory principle was peppered throughout and mostly located under the section named "Mana". Deane et. al. (2019) offer

a range of recommendations, tensions and challenges when it comes to youth participation in practice. Based on the challenges laid out in the Arotake, and what we have covered in this article, here are some challenges for us all moving forward:

- Resources and training need to be made available to 'adults' when engaging in youth participation activities
- Adults need to relinquish power
- Cultural participation needs elevation
- "*Disseminate case exemplars of authentic and effective youth participation involving diverse groups of young people with clear best practice guidelines. Support organisations to make changes that will enable more frequent, widespread and genuine youth participation practices*" (Deane et. al., 2019, p6)
- The concept of civic participation in Aotearoa is reasonably narrow and often does not acknowledge that access to participation opportunities are often limited
- We need to acknowledge the wider ecosystems in which young people make their voices heard - acknowledging their whanau, their whakapapa, their lived experiences
- Consider the unique reality for rural youth and embedded community relationships
- UNCRC demands more from us all
- We need to redefine participation in Aotearoa as whai wāhitanga so that the diversity of young people are able to find their place, as we respect their mana.

Young people deserve our best and nothing less.

About the authors

Sarah Finlay-Robinson is Ilo's mum and lives in Auckland with her husband who is partially responsible for the hyphenated surname. An experienced youth participation advocate in local government, Sarah most recently taught on the Bachelor of Youth Development at WelTec.

Hannah Dunlop is also Hannah Williams since she married Steve. They live with their cat Blue near a beach in Ōtautahi. Hannah currently creates opportunities for young people to engage in decisions at Environment Canterbury regional council and supports a whole heap of youth work stuff that we can't even fit in here.

Rod Baxter lives in Wellington, isn't married and his partner wonders when this is going to happen. Rod started exploring youth participation as a rowdy teenager in the '90s when grunge was cool and everyone watched the X-Men cartoon. Somehow he became a youth worker through these experiences, and now works with the Prince's Trust New Zealand.

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Whai Wāhitanga Case Studies

The Office of Film and Literature Classification Youth Advisory Panel

Georgia Davidson

The Office of Film and Literature Classification established a Youth Advisory Panel in June 2018. Since then, the panel has become an integral part of our office. They have helped the Classification Office plan and execute youth-targeted projects, and have also shaped our direction of travel within a modern context. The panel is a diverse group of Wellington based young people between the ages of 16-19. During meetings, panel members express their perspectives on potential media harms that impact New Zealand's young people and how the Classification Office responds to those problems. Our meetings are great opportunities for collaboration – to innovate, solve problems, and make decisions. Some of their most recent work has been:

- Commercial Video on Demand policy: The panel met with policy analysts at the Department of Internal Affairs to share their perspectives and experience with video on demand content, and helped to form policy advice on the proposed changes to the regulatory framework for video on demand content, which will require commercial sites (such as Netflix and Lightbox) to display consumer information for online content. The panel received a letter from Minister Tracey Martin thanking them for their contribution.
- Ethical practice in sensitive media research: The panel advised the Classification Office on whether it should require parental consent for teenage participants in our upcoming research on pornography, and provided a small summary statement of their views. The summary was presented to an ethics committee and will be featured in our research report.
- Depictions of sex in media aimed at teens: The panel talked about depictions of sex in films and shows that are aimed at teenagers (such as Blockers, Riverdale, and Lady Bird). They discussed what the potential harms might be for young people viewing that content, and whether the harms we identified were still relevant concerns for young people today. They also discussed the language that the Classification Office uses in its descriptive notes around sexual and sexually violent content.
- Classification work: We regularly invite panel members to join us during classification assessments of upcoming feature films. Panel members helped us classify Once Upon a Deadpool, Boy Erased, Good Boys, Zombieland: Double Tap, and Booksmart. Their discussions are summarised in the classification decisions for those films.
- Public outreach: The Classification Office also collaborates with the panel on podcasts, videos for social media, and our Censor for a Day presentations.

Our engagement with our Youth Advisory Panel has changed the way we think about our work here at the office. Young people are often stereotyped and portrayed as a group that don't have much to offer because they are naïve and lack experience in the real world. Working with the Youth Advisory Panel has shown us that this stereotype is simply wrong; young people live in the real world and have huge insight into the challenges their generation faces, and they have the energy and ideas to make things better. It can be difficult to communicate this to our external collaborators without them seeing the young people in action and being treated as equals, but our collaborators are always impressed after working with them directly, and have told us that their time with the panel has made them more interested in engaging young people in their work in the future.

24/7 Youth Work Feedback Questions on Participation

David Goldsbury, Petone Youth and Families Trust

These questions were created for a bunch of Year 13 students finishing school. The idea came from supervision after a discussion about what youth work looks like for the young people in my setting of high school based youth work.

Looking through the youth participation section of the Code of Ethics, we came up with the following questions to start a discussion with our young people as they move on from school.

Clause 20 Personal Determination - Hiringa

20.1 - Youth workers will support Tangata Whenua to care for their rangatahi.

As you leave school, what support do you need before you finish school?

20.2 - Youth workers, with the involvement of appropriate others in the young person's community, will encourage and enable young people to identify their own strategies to deal with challenges and the direction of their lives.

What strategies do you have or need help with to deal with challenges or directions you may face in your life?

Clause 21 Empowerment - Hakamanatia

21.2 - Youth workers will use their experience and skills to ensure young people are equipped to make positive choices.

21.3 - Youth workers encourage young people to exercise genuine power to consider risk, make decisions, follow them through and to take responsibility for their consequences.

The power of your decisions could affect you in a small or major way.
What skills will use you to decide whether it is the best decision for the situation?

Youth Work Feedback Form

Gender:
Year Level:

Has mentoring helped you?	Yes/No/Maybe
Making decisions for myself	
Solving problems	
Communicating with others	
Managing or organising myself	
Understanding others	
Understanding myself (culture/identity)	
Feeling good about myself	
Developed your skills and strengths	
Feeling positive about the future	
Making friends and connections	
Feeling more confident	
Feeling independent	

What have you enjoyed about mentoring?

What have you learnt during mentoring?

Anything we can improve on?

i.Lead: New Zealand's First Ever Conference for Youth with Disabilities

Shona Ballinger, Yes Disability

I.LEAD was a monumental event. Not only was it the first ever Youth with Disabilities conference in New Zealand, it was also located in a very important place to New Zealand Central Government, being held at Parliament's Grand Hall in Wellington on the 3rd and 4th of September of this year.

The conference was a platform for young people with disabilities from across the country to come together to discuss their experiences with inequality and inaccessibility in New Zealand. I.LEAD provided the perfect staging area for these young people to voice the concerns they had, discuss barriers that they faced, and the hardships they endured. It also presented them with the perfect opportunity to present to important national decision makers solutions they have to help break down the barriers, change mindsets and ultimately destigmatize the sector, especially concerning thoughts and misconceptions about young people in the sector.

YES Disability lead the charge in the co-creation process, holding the space for the young people from their Youth Engagement Group to meet with Minister of Disability and Social Development, Hon. Carmel Sepuloni, and Director of Disability Issues, Bryan Coffey. They discussed what the young people of the disability sector were experiencing in terms of inequity and not having a voice, and from there, the concept of I.LEAD was born.

From its conception, I.LEAD was meant to be a safe space for young people with disabilities to not only voice their concerns and issues, but to also provide the means for them to discuss with Central Government and Sector decision makers on what solutions would best tackle these issues. This was one of the pillars of what I.LEAD stood for, and would culminate in the concept of creating a National Youth Advisory Panel that would work co-creatively with Central Government and policy makers to help implement these solutions.

Sonia Thursby, CEO of YES Disability, has championed this movement since even before its conception, stating that "YES is committed to the holistic development of young people with disabilities so that they can successfully navigate towards fulfilling lives. This is done through actively engaging in the workforce, meaningfully contributing to their family life, and confidently participating in wider community activities." YES is an organization that actively practices the use of co-creation, having supported their very own Youth Engagement Group (YEG) for the past 8 years. This has allowed them to hear the voices of the young people within their organization, working with them to help co-create and co-deliver many of the youth services they provide for the sector. It was only natural that this organization be the catalyst that helped to make this momentous shift in ideals.

The amount of support from Government was immense, with the Minister of Disability even offering the Parliament Grand Hall for us to host the event in. From there, the concept was taken back to the YEG to discuss logistics, such as who would be allowed to attend, what it would be and why it would exist, and how to involve young people from other organizations within the disability sector. Consecutive meetings saw them discussing the outcomes they wanted to come from this, as well as the name and its meaning. The name "I.LEAD" resonated with the team and their idea that this event, and all the outcomes, solutions and actions to come out of it, would be led by them as the young people of the sector. The concept of having their voices heard literally shaped the visuals of the logo, with the use of the iconic speech bubble being the main component. It is now a branding standard that is used in many of the communications and promotional material related to the I.LEAD movement.

The YEG also actively pushed the concept to open the floor to young people from other disability organizations to join in the creation of the conference, with representatives coming from Halberg Disability Sport, CCS Disability Action, PHAB, PHAB Pasefika and Te Pou. These young people, with the addition of some YEG representatives, formed the I.LEAD Organizing Committee. With support from the YES Youth Development Team, the committee held several meetings, utilizing the ideals of co-creation to determine the I.LEAD purpose, meaning, intended outcomes, participating criteria, as well as the format and programme delivery of the conference. One of the main components the committee wanted implemented early in the design process was that they would facilitate and

lead the discussions that would happen around the tables. They also determined that these table discussions would be themed around areas they found to have issues in through their personal experiences. The themes of Employment, Education, Housing, Health, Transport, Recreation and Sport were determined by the young people as major concern areas for them and their peers.

As discussed, members of the I.LEAD Organizing Committee lead the conversations that occurred around their respective tables. They held the space and facilitated the conversations to allow for all to participate, including themselves, and became a catalyst for the voices of the young people that surrounded them to be projected and heard by all. Though the task was daunting, they executed their role with poise, professionalism and compassion for their fellow peers. With the awesome support network established by and external MC, as well as certified Youth Development Specialists and Youth Workers, they succeeded in providing a safe place for them and their peers to speak openly and freely about their experiences with the barriers and challenges they face as young people with disabilities.

They also went above and beyond this role, with some of the committee members even taking centre stage to speak of their own experiences of barriers and inequities. Kramer Hoeflich, Chairman of the I.LEAD Organizing Committee as well as the YEG, was also one of only two key note speakers for the event. Kim Clark, a member of both the YEG and the I.LEAD Organizing Committee, stated in her speech: 'My biggest dream is to live in a world where all people with disabilities and impairments are seen as having potential; to live in a world where all people believe they have value and feel empowered to be all that they can be.' She also shared her experiences on her time in being part of the committee: 'I.LEAD has taught me so many great things and I've grown so much over the whole experience. It was amazing because I saw where I was before and I see how the experience has pushed me to do greater things. I look back on my life and can see how every little experience I've had, has led me to that moment of leadership.'

I.LEAD became a catalyst for empowering young people with disabilities who attended to become more proactive in their own communities. This was prevalent in the statistics garnered from the post-conference evaluation, with 95% of participants feeling they were part of a group of young leaders making change, and 86% of participants stating they were motivated to make change in their own communities.

Joshua Fuimaono was not only part of the committee, but also the Logistics and Youth Development Team that has come from YES to support the young people. Here was what he had to say about coming from both sides of the co-creation process: 'It was truly an honour and privilege to be part of such a monumental event. Not only in participating with all my peers in helping to create change, but also being part of the team who helped to create the space for those experiences and actions to take place. To be in a position to create this event to enable my other peers to speak confidently and loudly, and to see the mission fulfilled by the end of it all, made all the hard work behind the scenes worth the sweat, tears, and long meetings.'

From the very moment of conception, I.LEAD has succeeded in putting the voice of young people with disabilities at the forefront of discussions and conversations throughout the sector and the nation. 10 young people from within the sector becoming the catalyst for which their voices, and those of their peers, were presented to 30 Government and peak body decision makers. They led the charge in a movement to break down barriers, change mindsets and destigmatize the sector. Kramer Hoeflich, Chairman of the YEG and I.LEAD Organizing Committee, summed all this up in one amazing quote, saying: 'I.LEAD was an experience that was one-of-a-kind, from planning to end. It was humbling to be part of a first for New Zealand. I hope this way of working with young people with disabilities becomes the new normal. Our voices matter, and our choices matter even more.'

With young people we are empowered by rich and diverse mātauranga, informed by good information

Mātauranga refers to knowledge, wisdom, understanding and skill. It includes research, individual experience, customary and cultural knowledge, and the beliefs and ideals held by young people and their whānau. Good information is useful, timely, meaningful, honours indigenous thinking, evidence based and translated for the recipient to reflect on. We can strengthen mātauranga by weaving together these different forms of knowledge and making them relevant to the decisions facing young people and their whānau. Being empowered by rich and diverse mātauranga informs both young people and people who work with young people towards personal growth. Young people actively participate in making meaning of information and are supported to holistically make positive choices for them, and their whānau. People who work with young people are supported to actively reflect on their relationships and practice.

Mātauranga in Practice: Kaupapa Māori Frameworks in Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga – He Arotake Tuhinga

Dr. Elizabeth Kerekere, Dr. Kelsey Deane and Hilary Dutton

When we translate 'mātauranga' as a Māori word, it means 'knowledge, wisdom, understanding or skill' (Moorefield 2011). When we consider mātauranga as a concept, it means we draw meaning from a Māori world view that interrelates with other concepts such as whakapapa (genealogy/histories) and tikanga (protocols based on values and mātauranga).

This article explains how Ara Taiohi – as a Tiriti-based organisation – privileged mātauranga to create two kaupapa Māori frameworks. The first was developed for the overall review of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (YDSA: Ministry of Youth Affairs 2002). The second was developed to frame *Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga – He Arotake Tuhinga: A Review of Aotearoa New Zealand Youth Development Research* (Deane, Dutton and Kerekere 2019).

The following largely summarises our introduction to *He Arotake Tuhinga* (2019:7-14), where we look to Te Ao Māori youth development principles to produce a mātauranga-based framework for youth development policy and practice. Using the *He Awa Whiria – Braided Rivers* model (Superu 2018), *He Arotake Tuhinga* weaves mātauranga Māori with Aotearoa New Zealand-based research produced from other knowledge systems such as Pasifika and Western science. Once produced, *He Arotake Tuhinga* added to the mātauranga that helped shape the kaupapa Māori framework for the youth development principles of *Mana Taiohi*.

The YDSA & Building Strengths Review

The YDSA and its accompanying literature review (McLaren 2002), provided a common policy platform to guide policy decisions and initiatives focused on young people (12-24 years). The YDSA itself was informed by extensive feedback from young people, youth workers, youth policymakers and other youth development experts across the country. While it was originally aimed at government agencies and service providers, the YDSA offered a vision, goals and principles for the youth development sector. These principles provided the foundation for *The Code of Ethics for Youthwork in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Code of Ethics: Ara Taiohi 2011), and the competencies for accreditation by Aotearoa New Zealand's first professional association for Youth Workers, *Korowai Tupu o Ara Taiohi* (Ara Taiohi 2019). They have also shaped the core content of youth development education with certificates, diplomas and degrees requiring graduates to have knowledge of the YDSA. As such, they have provided a working definition of 'youth development' for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Nevertheless, the YDSA attracted critiques from Māori youth development scholars who argued it was Eurocentric in orientation with no visibility of mātauranga Māori (Keelan 2002, 2014; Ware 2009; Ware and Walsh-Tapiata 2010). This was particularly so for the research that informed the YDSA, because it focused on youth development from a narrow, Westernised and predominantly psychological perspective of individualised development. Youth voices and minority youth experiences were notably absent. The absence of a Te Ao Māori perspective of youth development was a glaring omission for a literature review meant to support the development of a strategy meant to be bicultural, and where the first principle highlighted the obligations we have to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), as the nation's founding constitutional document.

Kupenga Kete Framework for the Review of the YDSA

In order to encompass the range of contributions for the overall review of the YDSA and to reflect calls for a kaupapa Māori and Treaty-based concept, Elizabeth Kerekere (then Co-Chair, Ara Taiohi), developed the Kete Kupenga framework. She was inspired by the pictured kete woven by Gisborne artist, Toni Sadlier, which uses a kupenga (fishing net) weave. (reproduced in full from Deane et al. 2019:7-9).

The Kete Kupenga framework features a loose diamond weave which starts simply and develops into an intricate knot where double strands meet. The four double strands feeding into the knot represent the components of intersectional youth development, Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview), Taiohi (young people), Kaimahi (people who work with young people) and Mātauranga (knowledges, research). The knots themselves represent key points of whakapapa in those intersections such as events or publications. The space between the weave represents wairua, time and place. It builds on and contextualises the Whatu Raranga strategic framework of Ara Taiohi (Kerekere 2010) which features woven items to represent strategic goals: Rourou: connect the sector – whakawhanaungatanga; Kete: raise the standards – whakamanatanga; Korowai: champion youth development – taiohitanga; and Waikawa: promote sustainability – rōnakitanga.

Te Ao Māori strands are reflected in the use of te reo Māori and Māori frameworks. In addition to gathering Māori voices across all of the strands, *Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga – He Arotake Tuhinga* (roughly translated as "document review on the principles of youth development") is guided by Māori youth and community development models.

Taiohi strands are reflected in the survey that was conducted by youth-led organisation, ActionStation (2018), *Ngā Kōrero Hauora o Ngā Taiohi,* that engaged over 1000 young people and youth development professionals to examine what youth well-being looks like in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Ministry of Youth Development also facilitated a youth focus group (2019). *He Arotake Tuhinga* was informed by taiohi Māori critiques of the YDSA, and young people took part in the Pacific talanoa.

The Kaimahi strands are reflected in a national online survey and a workshop with over 300 participants at Involve 2018, the national youth development conference. In 2019, a series of regional consultations with young people and people who work with young people were held across the country. Alongside the regional hui, were specific hui for Ngā Kaihoe, Māori working with young people, with one talanoa for Pasifika youth practitioners and young people.

The Mātauranga strands are reflected in *He Arotake Tuhinga* and in the evidence review of the youth development landscape that was conducted by the Centre for Social Impact (CSI 2018). CSI's review reflected on the status and relevance of the YDSA since its introduction; characteristics of effective youth development programmes, such as early intervention, youth mentoring; and inclusion of whānau and community. The review also presented findings from Involve 2018, and a smaller co-design workshop involving civil servants and practitioners interested in child and youth well-being.

Developing a Framework for He Arotake Tuhinga

With a huge range of Aotearoa-based youth research available 17 years on, and awareness of the existing YDSA critiques, we enlisted a group of research-engaged youth development experts as sounding boards. Based on their feedback and critique, we agreed that the scope and structure of *He Arotake Tuhinga* feature:

- A Te Ao Māori orientation that engages with Māori youth development
- Attention to other diversity and equity perspectives (eg Pasifika, Disability, LGBTIQ)
- Aotearoa New Zealand research
- Multidisciplinary perspectives and qualitative research
- Direct perspectives of young people, marginalised young people, and people who work with them
- A loose organising structure based on the existing YDSA principles, while remaining open to additional principles or frameworks supported by research.

We then began categorising literature according to the existing YDSA principles, as recommended, while noting some of the challenges we encountered in doing this. In particular, we initially struggled to categorise young people's experiences of identity exploration and development within the contexts of family/whānau, peers, culture, sexuality, gender, programme and community participation, and a globalised world. The description of the third YDSA principle that "youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach" was also limiting with respect to categorising relevant research.

We saw that a strengths-based approach cuts across many of the YDSA principles and we considered that the organising frames used for *He Arotake Tuhinga* should collectively represent a strengths-based approach.

Inspiration from Ngata and Māui

The three authors then met to discuss these challenges and opted to set the YDSA principles aside. In a creative process, we began by reviewing the principles discussed in Māori youth development literature by Keelan (2002, 2014) and Ware (Ware, 2009; Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010) — researchers that have explicitly critiqued the YDSA from a tangata whenua perspective and challenged us to first look to Māori approaches.

Keelan's (2002) *Taiohi Māori Development Toolkit,* developed as part of a set of resources associated

with the YDSA and to inform a national youth suicide strategy, takes its inspiration from Sir Apirana Ngata's whakataukī – E Tipu e Rea. Keelan's full text on Māori Youth Development, Nga Reanga, draws on lessons from pūrākau (stories) of Māui, and inspiration from whakataukī and mātauranga Māori concepts (2014 pV). Her MĀUI model of youth entrepreneur development proposes that development stems from:

- Mauri (the inherent life force or spark)
- Mana (authority derived from relationships with others)
- Āta (careful reflection and planning) and
- Arataki (leadership).

Ware (2009) also used Māui pūrākau to identify constructs that were relevant to taiohi Māori and guide discussions about tikanga (cultural values) and āhuatanga (characteristics or qualities). Ware and Walsh-Tapiata's research emphasised the importance of:

- Mana (collective integrity and responsibility)
- Manaakitanga (collective wellbeing) and
- Whanaungatanga (relationship building).

Te Whare Takatāpui

We then considered Kerekere's research (2015, 2017a, 2017b) that discusses youth development from a takatāpui (Māori with divese genders, sexualities and sex characteristics) perspective. Her definition of takatāpui speaks to:

- Whakapapa (descent from ancestors with sexual and gender fluidity),
- Mana (authority and power to be who we are)
- Identity (claiming all of who we are – culture, gender, sexuality and ability), and
- Inclusion (unity across all iwi, genders, sexualities and sex characteristics).

Kerekere's *Whare Takatāpui* model (2017b) describes a place of well-being and safety that addresses the historical impact of colonisation on people with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics. It incorporates values of:

- Wairua (interconnectedness of all things in the universe particularly ancestors and atua)
- Mauri (life spark, identity choice and expression)
- Mana/Mana Wāhine (restoration of gender balance and the basis of eliminating homophobia, transphobia and biphobia)
- Tapu (maintaining safety and boundaries)
- Tikanga (processes based on sound mātauranga).

Maia Model

Te Ora Hou's model of practice with youth and whānau shares a great deal with the above frameworks. Their Maia model emphasises concepts based on Durie's essential principles for Māori whānau and community wellbeing, and the Circle of Courage, a well-known youth development model grounded in Native American principles (Baxter et al 2015; Brendtro 2014; Te Ora Hou 2011; Wayne Francis Charitable Trust – Youth Advisory Group 2011). The core of the model illustrates essential ingredients for identity, belonging and support of young people as embedded in whānau, hapū and iwi, including:

- Ohaoha (generosity and contribution)
- Pukengatanga (mastery and competence through elder-youth mentoring relationships) and
- Mana Motuhake (independence and mastery).
- These ingredients are nourished through Whakamana (empowerment and participation)
- Whakatakato Tikanga (future planning)
- Manaakitia (whānau care)
- Pupuri taonga (effective resource management)
- Whakapūmau Tikanga (cultural integrity and affirmation), and
- Whakawhanaungatanga (whānau consensus and cohesion).

A New Framework

Taking all of these models into account and considering the research we had already amassed in relation to the existing principles, we distilled a kaupapa Māori youth development framework for He Tuhinga Arotake that consisted of:

- Mauri (potential, passion and identity)
- Mana (agency, integrity and inborn value deserving of respect)
- Manaakitanga (care, generosity and investment in relationships where the collective responsibility lies with the side with greater power or authority); and
- Whanaungatanga (inherent need for connection, sense of belonging and positive relationships, particularly with those considered whānau)
- Interconnectedness is also represented through Whakapapa (systems that link cultural heritage,historical events, stories, and policies that have culminated in the here and now)

Finally, Mātauranga speaks to the importance of sharing the valuable knowledge we have accumulated from different perspectives and different sources over time to inform the way forward.

In this way, research literature, consultation feedback and the existing principles mutually informed the kaupapa Māori framework for *He Arotake Tuhinga*.

Whakamutunga

The six kaupapa Māori concepts: Whakapapa, Mauri, Mana, Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Mātauranga derived for He Arotake Tuhinga arose out of a kaupapa Māori process. Although the Mātauranga principle aligns closely with the sixth YDSA principle "youth development needs good information," they are not direct translations of the six existing YDSA principles. Instead, the concepts reframe the principles of youth development moving forward – now encapsulated in Mana Taiohi.

These concepts provide a framework for weaving together the rich, diverse and multidsciplinary research that now exists on youth development within Aotearoa New Zealand. However, there continues to be limited youth development research on the experiences of Asian, migrant and refugee, and Rainbow young people, young people with disabilities, those living rural contexts, and those who face compounding challenges due to their intersecting marginalised identities. We need more research on effective youth participation and on young people and the digital world, given increasing acknowledgement of the centrality of these experiences for young people today.

Big picture effects and trends are only one small part in the mātauranga of youth development. Young people in Aotearoa New Zealand are better served through mulidiscplinary, multi-method, and multicultural research that incorporates multiple stakeholder perspectives. As the Kete Kupenga framework, the Mana Taiohi principles and He Awa Whiria suggest, the outcome is strongest when we weave the information produced through research and evaluation with the mātauranga gained through cultural and practice wisdom, direct experiences and stories.

In developing 'Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga - He Arotake Tuhinga: A Review of Aotearoa New Zealand Youth Development Research' Dr's Elizabethe Kerekere and Kelsey Deane alongside PhD Candidate Hillary Dutton have gifted our sector a priceless taonga.

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This article uses Harvard style referencing.

Same young person, different descriptions

This resource from 1997 continues to be a useful tool for training in strengths-based and mana enhancing approaches.

Directions: One half of a group is only given the surface or negative description of Anita. The other half is given the full description. I use the activity by asking people to come up with a plan for Anita. As you debrief, start with the people who do not have the full description, before moving to those with the full description.

Debrief: As you debrief groups are always shocked at how the full description transforms their understanding and ability to connect with Anita. This activity is powerful to both encourage people to fully engage with the mana a young person brings (mauri, whakapapa, hononga and te ao), as well as to open up discussion regarding strength- based approaches generally.

CASE STUDY: Anita

Work from this report, the one below is for background info.

Anita goes along to the supermarket with her mother to be sure that her mother buys food rather than getting sidetracked and spending her money on drugs. Anita cooks and prepares meals for her brother. When there is not sufficient food to go around, Anita cuts down on her portion so that he will not go hungry. She insists that he attends school, even when she does not. Anita has woven a safety net for herself by cultivating a relationship with her Aunt Edith. It is to Edith's house that she goes with her brother whenever her mother disappears or brings home a man who is frightening.

BACKGROUND (from another report):

Upon entering high school Anita was immediately identified as an 'at risk' student. She was brought to the attention of the guidance office by her teachers who made the following observations: Anita is disruptive in class, frequently calling out and making inappropriate remarks. All of her academic skills are two to three years below grade level. Her school record does not indicate a home address or the name of her father. Her mother, who was a teenager when Anita was born, is addicted to crack cocaine. Anita is frequently absent of late to school.

Adapted by Jane Zintl

Shifting Paradigms: Easier said than done.
Wolin & Wolin (1997).
www.projectrelilience.com/article
check also: www.nesonline.com

Whai Wāhitanga Reflective Tool

Adapted by Rod Baxter from Ani Wierenga's (2003) *Sharing a New Story: Young People in Decision-Making*. web.education.unimelb.edu.au/yrc/linked_documents/WP23.pdf

	Meaning	Control	Connectedness
Storying	• What's your kaupapa? • What is your organisation's story? • Why is what you do so important?	• How are young people's voices heard in your place? • Who really knows what's going on? • Who gets to have a say?	• Where did your organisation come from? Where are you going? • Do you share stories and interests with anyone?
Listening	• How come you're involved in youth development? • What are your concerns? • What excites you most about the youth work you're doing?	• What do young people need to engage and participate in youth organisations effectively?	• What things would make you feel effective, useful and valued in the work that you do?
Affirming strengths	• What can young people learn from you?	• What things do you do well?	• How do you celebrate longstanding commitment and contribution?
Resourcing	• What do people need to do well in your organisation? • What do people need to feel useful, valuable and that they belong?	• What skills do people need in youth organisations? • What practical resources are needed?	• What needs to happen for people to be comfortable here? • What do we all have to offer each other? • What other sources could we tap into?
Creatively re-working structure and process	• How can people do things in ways that are meaningful for them in your organisation?	• Are young people allowed to find their own ways of doing things?	• Who are your advocates that can explain what is happening?
Honouring formal relationships	• What are the best ways adults and young people can work together? • What are the best ways young people can work together?	• How do you influence the way relationships are built? • How do you celebrate youth development?	• Who should be hearing about the great stuff you do? • Who do you refer to from the past? • How are you building people for the future?
Nurturing informal relationships, bonding and linking	• What do you love doing most? • What are the connections between our stories? • Who else shares our passions?	• What gives less dominant members of the community a chance to contribute? • Who else could you work with in the community?	• How can we get to know and trust each other? • What non-task activities might people be able to do together?

Crowd Sourced Answer to an Ethical Dilemma

By the Korowai Tupu Facebook Community

We all have times where we just aren't sure, and we don't know why, but we aren't quite comfortable with something. We've been to supervision (or are going), have thought about it in the car, the train, the bus and have chatted about it kanohi ki te kanohi with our co-workers, but it's still not totally clear.

The Facebook post below was a solution to the above problem for our very own Rod Baxter and was full of too much awesome to not include as a bonus in this issue of Kaiparahuarahi.

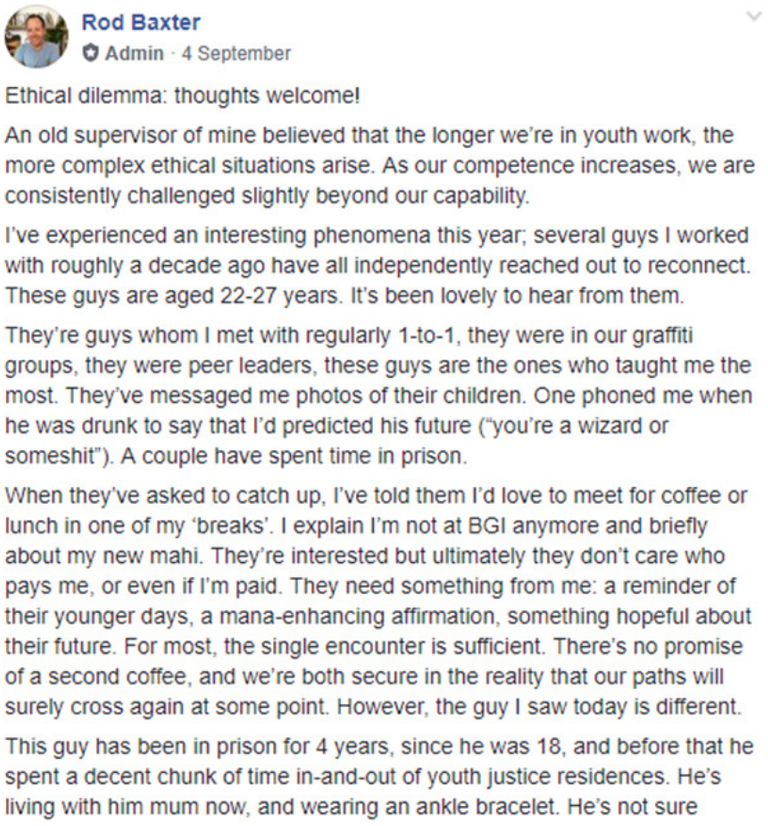
As professional youth workers we are committed to ensuring we adhere to the Code of Ethics.

You will see that Rod and others have been very careful to protect the identity of all involved, are referring back to the CoE and are conscious that this conversation is occurring on social media – albeit in a closed group.

This post is important on so many levels, the content of the post itself and the wisdom shared by the respondents, seeing the community from across Aotearoa come together with their variety of perspectives, thinking about bigger issues that are impacting this situation and of course, thinking about "what would I do". But also, showing that even those who have been around for a while, have huge mana and experience also don't always know, and are open to learning and suggestions and growth. Even better – that they welcome it!

With youth work occurring in such diverse spaces and with a variety of colleagues who might not be youth workers themselves reaching out carefully and intentionally in this way can be a great way to connect. And connection is what youth work is all about.

Lastly, a massive thank you to all who commented on the post for allowing us to publish your thoughts here. You are the real MVPs!



Rod Baxter
Admin · 4 September

Ethical dilemma: thoughts welcome!

An old supervisor of mine believed that the longer we're in youth work, the more complex ethical situations arise. As our competence increases, we are consistently challenged slightly beyond our capability.

I've experienced an interesting phenomena this year; several guys I worked with roughly a decade ago have all independently reached out to reconnect. These guys are aged 22-27 years. It's been lovely to hear from them.

They're guys whom I met with regularly 1-to-1, they were in our graffiti groups, they were peer leaders, these guys are the ones who taught me the most. They've messaged me photos of their children. One phoned me when he was drunk to say that I'd predicted his future ("you're a wizard or someshit"). A couple have spent time in prison.

When they've asked to catch up, I've told them I'd love to meet for coffee or lunch in one of my 'breaks'. I explain I'm not at BGI anymore and briefly about my new mahi. They're interested but ultimately they don't care who pays me, or even if I'm paid. They need something from me: a reminder of their younger days, a mana-enhancing affirmation, something hopeful about their future. For most, the single encounter is sufficient. There's no promise of a second coffee, and we're both secure in the reality that our paths will surely cross again at some point. However, the guy I saw today is different.

This guy has been in prison for 4 years, since he was 18, and before that he spent a decent chunk of time in-and-out of youth justice residences. He's living with him mum now, and wearing an ankle bracelet. He's not sure

what's happening and for how long life will be like this.

He's specifically reached out because he feels his "life is going downhill" and he wants to "get back on track". He fondly recalled the murals we painted, the trips we went on, the friendships he built, the achievements he made. He doesn't have many possessions but he kept a canvas painting we did together. "That group kept us all outta trouble. For a while." He wants a job. He wants to go to the gym. He wants to care for his girlfriend, mum and siblings.

I look at him and I don't see a criminal. I see his heart, his humour, sometimes glimpses of pain and fear. He asked if I'd seen him on Police Ten 7; I hadn't but I googled his name later. There are several official public records, easily accessible online, that detail his crimes. None of it is described in the ways that I see him. It's like reading about another person.

Here's my main dilemma: I'm not currently working in a role that easily enables me to provide the full support for him that I'd like to or that he needs. And I don't know who to refer him to. I'm doing some research and searching for people, although I also don't have much faith in many of the systems that have already failed him. I'm grateful for my Korowai Tupu membership, and it's actually this that gave me the momentum and credibility to step into the home.

Where's the clause in the Code of Ethics that helps me navigate the longer term impacts of youth work? Quality Relationships according to the YDSA would surely praise this level of rapport and acknowledge the time involved in building such trust, but where does it end? What more can my supervisor do beyond listening, clarifying boundaries and checking accountability?

What are you thoughts about supporting young people long term? If dependency isn't an issue, dignity and autonomy are high, they need help navigating systems and holding onto hope, they only trust a select few people, and they've chosen you? What if you're no longer working for the same organisation or in the same kind of role? What does our Korowai Tupu membership and identity offer us, practically in situations like this?

What are your thoughts after reading this story?

Charmaine Tuhaka, Kate Eggleton and 9 others 41 comments Seen by 54

Miri Palmer After reading this I feel a bit conflicted about the boundaries I've taken up as a youth worker who supports YP with a lot of trauma. I've had YP from my previous role reach out recently, one for a character reference for interviews. I was okay with this, as he knows my boundaries from me being really clear about what I could and couldn't do within the role to all young people. I am super super wary of post work interactions with YP due to seeing some really unethical relationship building from colleagues in roles I've taken. I have taken an extreme stance, whereas I have colleagues who happily engage with YP on personal social media accounts. I'm a post work contact conservative, I guess! If i was in your shoes however, and any young person outside of work needed support, I think my professional ethics would kick into gear. It's professionally AND personally within my morals to at least make sure the right services get involved. At least I think..... Maybe the answer to feeling secure in these situations sits in the space where personal and professional responsibility/morals/ethics crosses over and that's okay.

Like · Reply · 9w 1

Rod Baxter Kia Ora Miri. Yes, and the two cautious commitments I made were: 1) I just happen to be meeting with a senior person in MSD on Friday. I will ask her what's available for him. He's on the Jobseekers benefit but he said he doesn't know what questions to ask. I might even go with him to an appointment. 2) I've asked him to find out when his next court appearance is. I told him I travel lots these days but if I can be there, I'd like to be. I'd also like to chat with the lawyer about what's happening, as he's also confused. The intent in both these actions is to tautoko and also to identify other services.

Like · Reply · 9w · Edited 1

Kate Eggleton What a story is my first thoughts and also goes to show just how quality, quality relationships can be!

Personally lack the skills / knowledge of who to connect this young person with next but hoping someone else can.

I think this highlights the importance of having Korowai Tupu right? The whole us all coming together and being able to connect young people with the appropriate help / nexts steps. It's not about this organisation young people or that organisation young people but rather about young people as a whole and how we collectively best support them in challenging circumstances and to be able to say we can back the mahi of the person we recommend due to sharing the Korowai Tupu identity.

I also keep thinking of the whole quote around:
"United we stand divided we fall."

Like · Reply · 9w 2

Rod Baxter Kate I absolutely think so. I'm increasingly grateful for my membership, our collective professional community and especially the opportunity to discuss such issues in a forum like this.

Like · Reply · 9w

Jono Harrison What's your definition of quality relationships? Is it based on time spent at an organisation? Or more on walking alongside young people on their journey? A young person's journey doesn't end because your title changed ir your job changed... youth work is a full time forever job it never ends! Quality relationships ... it is a long term thing! Agreed nothing in COE supports long term support however nothing says you can't do it... or you shouldn't... youth works an investment that never gets cashed out 😉

Like · Reply · 9w · 4

Rod Baxter Jono well said!

Like · Reply · 9w

Si Mareko My first thoughts are this is a great testimony of who you are Rod and the endless amount of hours you would've spent to build and gain that trust from the young fullah and the many young people over the years.
I think we need to honour that trust that these young people have instilled in us despite changing roles, jobs or even countries. I go back to that saying that Lloyd Martin often mentions in his Circle of Courage training in that young people need 7 supportive people/mentors in their lives. Youth workers that young people trust are/could be one of them. The dilemma for me would be, why would you question helping that young person. Korowai Tupu as a professional body is a great reminder of safety but so is being a Korowai for a young person even beyond youth work. When we work hard as a youth worker to build that trust, we need to ensure that we understand what that truly means and how precious that is in how we hold that.

Like · Reply · 9w · 3

Rod Baxter Si wise words. Experiences like these are certainly teaching me about the depth and extent of trust along with something about responsibility.

Like · Reply · 9w

Emma Peek I have had a similar situation come up a couple of times and it felt tricky but ultimately I agree with what Jono said. We have had a positive impact on these young people who for varying reasons still need some support. If clear boundaries are in place and the different constraints of your new role are explained then I don't see an issue with it. In my situation I was definitely aware of trying to extend their supports as well

Like · Reply · 10w · 1

Rod Baxter Thanks Emma. It's good to know that more of us have experienced something like this.

Like · Reply · 10w

Anne Russell I hear you Rod. I've had this experience a couple of times myself and you know what I did not hesitate to provide them an ear and talk...I know my boundaries and they also knew the boundaries from when I worked alongside them in a past life and I haven't changed my role or organisation. I do remind them of course. They just want to reconnect because negative things have happened for them and they all stated that I was a person they knew that never gave up on them, regardless of them being dicks at the time. I just happened to walk to reception the other day and found a young man now 23 there with his girlfriend and baby. He was glad to see that I was still there as he saw my business card on display and took one because he wanted to catch up. We cuddled and chatted and cuddled his wee son, it was like old friends. He still wants to catch up and this will happen when he is read, he has my number and knows where I work..Lol.

Like · Reply · 10w · 2

Rod Baxter That's so cool Anne. Thanks for sharing a similar story. I see some real themes emerging in this discussion.

Like · Reply · 10w

Anne Russell

👌

Like · Reply · 10w

Anne Russell Bless their hearts no matter how old these young people get some just need reassurance sometimes as they go through changes 😍😍

Like · Reply · 9w · 1

Rod Baxter So true.

Like · Reply · 9w

Charmaine Tuhaka Hmmmm. Good kōrero everyone. I have two cling ons. They actually kind of my first young people i worked with. Initially the most challenging to initially engage and they still around (10ish years later). I do get some tricky requests or shout outs for help and it can make my ethical compass spin. I find myself redirecting them to where they could be helped OR chat with them to give them a boost and they figure it out again.
Is that Out of Gate option available for your person? Support for those released.
I hear ya on seeing the lawyer does that open the door wider?!?
Head, heart, gut stuff.
Mauri ora

Love · Reply · 9w · 2

Rod Baxter You mean the Klingons from Star Trek Charmaine?

Like · Reply · 9w

Rod Baxter Seriously though, I think there's something about the most challenging to initially engage with can sometimes be the sturdiest relationships long term. (Except the one guy years back who literally refused to speak - that's an ethical dilemma for another thread!) I appreciate how you've connected to the ethical compass concept! I need to investigate Out of Gate, don't know much or even who to talk with for this dude.

Love · Reply · 9w · 1

Charmaine Tuhaka Rod Baxter had to google haha. They make my forehead like that sometimes

Like · Reply · 9w · 1

Charmaine Tuhaka Rod Baxter and ask msd person on Friday criteria and who has contract. If his probation officer is good then they could be a useful pivot

Like · Reply · 9w · 1

Rod Baxter Charmaine apparently there's no Probation officer? I'll totally be asking the MSD person for every hookup possible!

Like · Reply · 9w

Jayne Mercier I think the key to whatever is decided is being clear about the frame. It sounds like in the previous work there was a clear frame which you both understood, and this determined and defined the context of the relationship, expectations and levels of engagement. However, engagement from here requires the two of you to clearly negotiate the frame. And perhaps for you Rod, is to consider what you have capacity to offer, and whether this will actually be enough to meet what the young person might need from a youth work relationship at this time.

Like · Reply · 10w · 1

Rod Baxter I like this imagery Jayne! Thank you

Like · Reply · 10w

Isabel Lemanutau I think youve highlighted a really important point, we got into the youthwork business because we genuinely cared about young people and their futures. I think its unfair to expect young people to trust us coz we wont be like the other adults in their lives just for us to be significant on our terms, our contracts and our 9-5. I still have students who I havent worked with for more than 5 years still hit me up, and i love it. Understanding the power imbalance is the best way to ensure safety in ethics. Because we, as youthworkers are a part of a young peoples village, and we add to the village to best support. Anyway my two cents. Youre a legend Rod. Thanks for stoking the flames 😊

Like · Reply · 9w · 4

Saskia NZ Kia Ora Rod I believe the complexities of the ethical situations are always there but as a senior youth worker the veil is off and they can become very visible.

The trust and relationship never ends it just changes shape. Boundaries need to be even more clear and often the shape needs to be different to protect you as a person (self care, safety, time pressures etc.).

I had an experience reconnecting with a young person (now 19years) via messenger and the odd lunch to listen as epilepsy, depression and other life related full on events had become unbearable for him. The messages started to weigh on me and I sort to give him info on professional services which he did. I also assisted him through a homeless situation by providing a ride and called his Dad on his behalf who he now lives with safe and cared for for the last 2 years. (At the time I was definitely felt I was walking an ethically grey line navigating this).

Over time I was getting down, about his mental health and getting messages willy nilly. I now have new boundaries as I was finding I was getting emotionally exhausted. I call him once a week, no messenger contact just a simple check in and chat. This seems to be working for both of us and is so much clearer for me as the nature of the relationship functions is more defined.

COE 1.2 The youth work relationship begins when the youth worker engages with the young person as a youth worker. and ceases by necessity or by agreement (expressed or implied). The seamless nature of youth work is acknowledged and youth workers will manage transitioning between different forms of relationship with care.

Like · Reply · 9w 3

Rod Baxter Saskia: this is wise, humble, honest and profound. Thank you for sharing such a powerful story. I am really noticing the themes in our practice whether it be Wellington, Taranaki, Invercargill or Nelson! I also really like how you've quoted the COE! Jane Zintl will be impressed! And I've been wondering about re-reading the Code with this situation as a lens - mostly to see what might need to evolve for the 3rd edition!

Like · Reply · 9w 1

Steph Brook I suspect thats where quality relationships connected to our 'work' becomes a challenge. Personally I have felt i needed to develop relationships 'just because', because if we are simply building relationships for an end purpose what are thise relationships actually built on? They are kind of more transactional, I'll work with you and 'care' for you while you are in this home/programme/church whatever but once you achieve/grown 'too old/move on, my responsibility to you ceases. But thats not really what relationship us about. I don't think we should cling to our relationships with young people as circumstances change but i do think the door should be open. So I agree its a pretty tough one, i wonder if he might need your support for a short season as he attempts to re-orient himself and find new ways to live and be, and connecting with you as the only safe person he remembers is what he needs just now but not forever. Sometimes we do need to hang with the people who see our heart, not our deeds. But in the long run, only you can work through what that looks like (with all the feedback from supervisors and your wise peeps 😉). I too have had some of my older yp reach out and have weighed the consequences each time before responding. How sad is it that life continues to be so hard for so many 😔

Like · Reply · 9w 1

Rod Baxter I wholeheartedly agree Steph and am expecting this is a short season. Actually most of our work has been short seasons in between residences and disruption, and it's been him who has kept the thread of consistency. This has been the biggest leap in terms of time, events and circumstances. I've been reflecting on the church bit: because if I was his youth leader in a church context, and I was still a member of the congregation, then I'd be saying "welcome back!" and there'd be a bunch of other people around. The ethical essence is surely similar, even when the community context is more nebulous.

Like · Reply · 9w

Steph Brook Rod Baxter yeah i think so, i guess like most professions, we have wildly different contexts that we work in, with different pressures and expectations within those contexts 😊 Go well in this one Rod

Like · Reply · 9w 1

Emelita Zee Luisi Great convos! Weighing in from a Pasifika worldview, the authenticity of our Va Tangata is so criticial to the establishment and maintenance of balance. We must be careful to hold that Va in tact- Va Tangata being the realm of people. We are here for the long haul whether we choose it or not and that is the essence of how true Community's are built. Everyone having a place and a way to belong. We understand as Pasifika that we remain in life long service to our aiga/kaiga/community always. These relationships are generational, they are deep and they are enduring and when you step away from duty, you can expect to be grounded by your Matuas to whom we are guided by, why didnt you help? I completely agree re safety and boundaries and feel after 20yrs of doing this critical work that i know for myself where my boundaries lie within the scope of Practitioners who are Tangata o Te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa and for that reason also feel that a western construct of our pathways to well being are not the only to be considered if our point of orientation as practitioners and consumers of support requires stepping through multiple cultural complexities which require different approaches when considering the holistic health of all who are party to the relationship. Many times young people have sought us out beyond the initial constructed relationship when they have grown and had families but face challenges because they believed the relationship was more than 'you're my worker,' and based on tuakana-teina, to rangatira, tuakana, teina and round again. The cycle of transition through to so many stages never ends. When our relationships end because of what we ascribe to as a set of principles, perhaps we need to consider all cultural principles at play, push more for inclusion of other ways of knowing and being i.e. the very things that make us human and weigh up for the young person how does it best serve them. Without our relationships, life gets pretty tough and lonely anyway and what ive always loved about youth work is the ability to see beyond boundaries and limitations. Of course if you're feeling torn come back to the intentions of your support. Seek your own guidance from elders, family, supervisors but be sure they are skilled enough to see beyond a singular lens. Im no cultiral exponent, but know who i am and that is the platform my aiga/kainga/community allows me to stand on. Alu a (have a good day- In celebration of Tongan language week).

Like · Reply · 10w 3

Charmaine Tuhaka Word!!!! Mauri ora

Like · Reply · 10w 2

Rod Baxter Wow. I think I might have to print out this whakaaro and return to it! I've read your wise words twice today thanks Zee and will read again. One point that particularly resonates is that question from the Matuas: if I kept my boundaries super rigid and... See more

Like · Reply · 10w 1

Nikki Hurst No wise words to comment other than great, real dilemma that got us talking in the office!

Like · Reply · 9w 3

Rod Baxter Lies! I bet you have heaps of wise words! I'm really inspired to hear this got you talking in the office! That's the whole point. I'm really keen to hear some glimpses of that discussion...

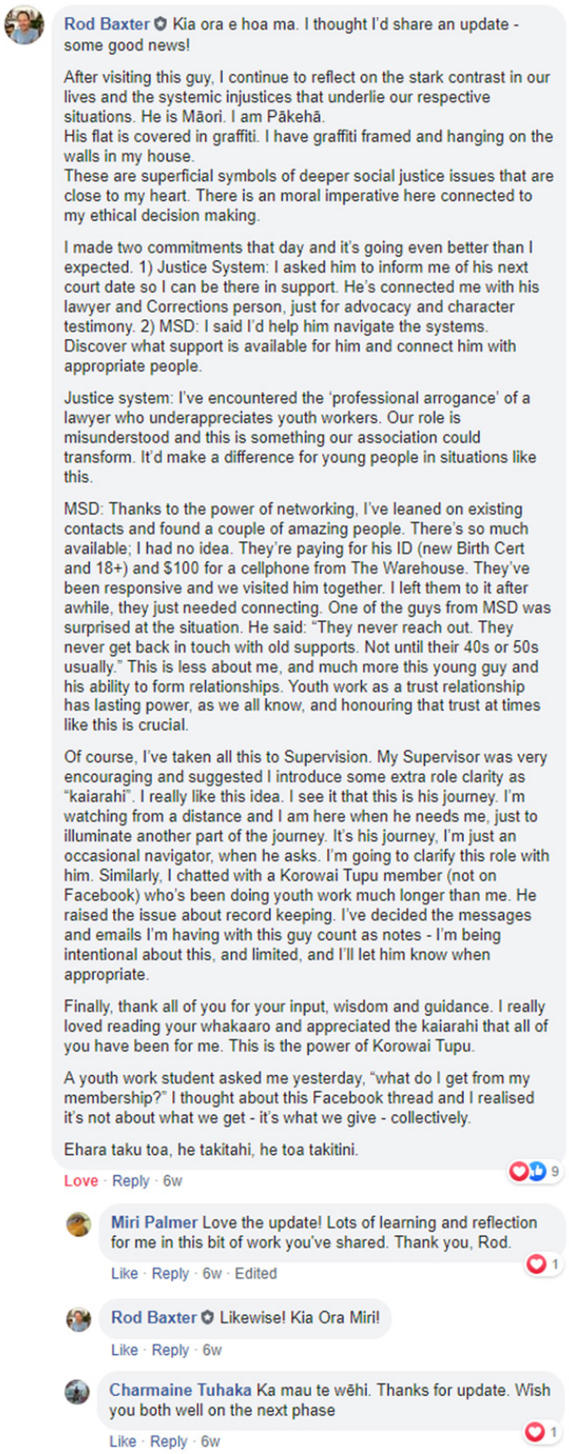
Like · Reply · 9w

Nikki Hurst Haha, no owls here! I think it was more "oohhh that's complicated" "yup, sure is! Been thinking all morning.." "def going to see what others say" AND, you've got Jayne's thoughts above.

I also think I'm the worst to comment as my boundaries are the things I most need to work on.

My only suggestion that I can see others also leading to, is supporting them to transition to another support person. So perhaps meeting with them with that as a transparent goal. But doesn't help the issue that you are no longer in that role and that this means needing to be careful with your time for your well-being.
AND, perhaps a little that the broader issue for Korowai Tupu is also around increasing the number of quality youth workers out there, building these relationships with each other, and growing the sector as a whole but also its visibility, quality and efficacy... (Fully off track now.. haha)

Like · Reply · 9w 3


Rod Baxter Kia ora e hoa ma. I thought I'd share an update - some good news!
After visiting this guy, I continue to reflect on the stark contrast in our lives and the systemic injustices that underlie our respective situations. He is Māori. I am Pākehā.
His flat is covered in graffiti. I have graffiti framed and hanging on the walls in my house.
These are superficial symbols of deeper social justice issues that are close to my heart. There is an moral imperative here connected to my ethical decision making.
I made two commitments that day and it's going even better than I expected. 1) Justice System: I asked him to inform me of his next court date so I can be there in support. He's connected me with his lawyer and Corrections person, just for advocacy and character testimony. 2) MSD: I said I'd help him navigate the systems. Discover what support is available for him and connect him with appropriate people.
Justice system: I've encountered the 'professional arrogance' of a lawyer who underappreciates youth workers. Our role is misunderstood and this is something our association could transform. It'd make a difference for young people in situations like this.
MSD: Thanks to the power of networking, I've leaned on existing contacts and found a couple of amazing people. There's so much available; I had no idea. They're paying for his ID (new Birth Cert and 18+) and $100 for a cellphone from The Warehouse. They've been responsive and we visited him together. I left them to it after awhile, they just needed connecting. One of the guys from MSD was surprised at the situation. He said: "They never reach out. They never get back in touch with old supports. Not until their 40s or 50s usually." This is less about me, and much more this young guy and his ability to form relationships. Youth work as a trust relationship has lasting power, as we all know, and honouring that trust at times like this is crucial.
Of course, I've taken all this to Supervision. My Supervisor was very encouraging and suggested I introduce some extra role clarity as "kaiarahi". I really like this idea. I see it that this is his journey. I'm watching from a distance and I am here when he needs me, just to illuminate another part of the journey. It's his journey, I'm just an occasional navigator, when he asks. I'm going to clarify this role with him. Similarly, I chatted with a Korowai Tupu member (not on Facebook) who's been doing youth work much longer than me. He raised the issue about record keeping. I've decided the messages and emails I'm having with this guy count as notes - I'm being intentional about this, and limited, and I'll let him know when appropriate.
Finally, thank all of you for your input, wisdom and guidance. I really loved reading your whakaaro and appreciated the kaiarahi that all of you have been for me. This is the power of Korowai Tupu.
A youth work student asked me yesterday, "what do I get from my membership?" I thought about this Facebook thread and I realised it's not about what we get - it's what we give - collectively.
Ehara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takitini.
Love · Reply · 6w
9
Miri Palmer Love the update! Lots of learning and reflection for me in this bit of work you've shared. Thank you, Rod.
Like · Reply · 6w · Edited
1
Rod Baxter Likewise! Kia Ora Miri!
Like · Reply · 6w
Charmaine Tuhaka Ka mau te wēhi. Thanks for update. Wish you both well on the next phase
Like · Reply · 6w
1

The Mana Taiohi Organisational Self Review Tool

www.manataiohireview.org.nz

Ara Taiohi's *Mana Taiohi Organisational Self Review Tool* has come to life and is already improving Youth Work in Aotearoa left, right and centre!

This Review Tool is designed for organisations to review how they align with the new Mana Taiohi Youth Development Principles of Aotearoa – to reflect on their practice and receive helpful ideas for their next steps!

Organisations survey as many participants as they want to capture a 360 snapshot about where their they are at. Based on the responses, the tool provides an overview of an organisation's strengths and areas for development.

Responses are able to be grouped by the whole organisation as well as sub-categories e.g. governance, management and/or kaimahi – a great way to check if you're all on the same page!

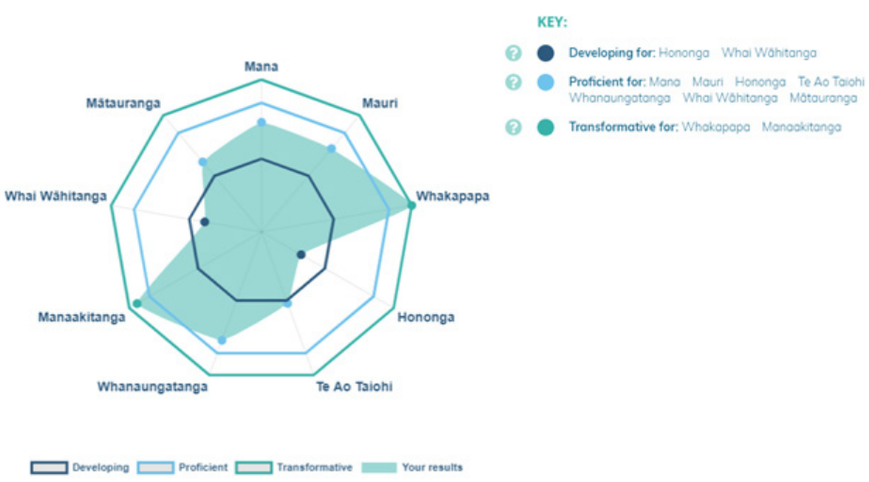
Participants spend approximately 30 minutes to complete an online questionnaire, then these results are analysed and collated in a beautifully designed visual graph.

The tool's questions were formed by laying the Mana Taiohi Principles alongside the Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa, Korowai Tupu Core Competencies and Ara Taiohi's Whatu Raranga strategic framework.

But the best part is *quality advice!*

Our incredible team of Youth Work superstars have customised recommendations and feedback based on the possible results your organisation generates. You will receive recommendations from experts in the field to link you to the latest research and resources so you can level-up in no time! Or perhaps discover that you're a leader in the sector and stand up as the tuakana you are to pass your knowledge on.

Sign your organisation up today! Find out where your strengths lay and how you can continue to whakamana our taiohi!



The editors have intentionally saved this exciting article for the very end. We believe that in living whai wāhitanga that a young person should have the final say.

Our amazing friend Abby Golden was perfect for the job. On writing this article Abby has just completed her journey through secondary school. Abby is an integral part of Sticks 'n' Stones, a proudly youth led organisation dedicated to bullying prevention. She also volunteers with St John and is a talented musician.

We asked Abby to comment as a young person on her experience of digital spaces. She gave us so much more... Each of the principles of Mana Taiohi have been woven in to this article, if you are careful you will notice each one.

Young People Online, The Final Word: an Integrative Contemporary Perspective from an 18 year old

Abby Golden

The world is at our fingertips, with social media and internet use continually evolving, we have the ability to do anything and everything we like and it's all right there in the palm of our hand. For many people (parents especially), this can be a scary concept and there is often a lot of uncertainty or misconceptions about what life online is like for young New Zealanders. While I can't speak for every young person in New Zealand, I'll do my best to try and provide some insight from a young person's perspective on how social media has evolved and what we can do to make online life more positive for young people.

My name is Abby Golden, I'm 18 years old and I am an Advocate for Sticks 'n Stones, NZ's multi-award winning, youth led bullying prevention organisation. Sticks 'n' Stones was founded in 2013 in Central Otago by 30 young people and is now expanding across the country. Our bullying prevention charity puts young people at the heart of decision making, planning, co-design and delivery to change the culture around bullying. Our youth-led model is key to engaging young people in a relevant, relatable and authentic approach. We are all about empowering young people to create change in their communities and helping them to develop their own strengths, skills and leadership abilities. My work with Sticks 'n' Stones has provided me with the opportunity to work with young people from across New Zealand as well as some incredible youth-focused organisations and professionals who are committed to preventing bullying both online and off.

So what is life online like for young New Zealanders? At the touch of a button, we have access to information on an unimaginable scale. We can entertain ourselves for hours binge-watching our favourite TV shows, streaming music the second it's released or even downloading an eBook or two. The entertainment possibilities are endless, but it doesn't stop there. The impact that the internet has had on education is incredible, the world of distance learning and collaborative learning have opened up and it's easier than ever to learn. Gone are the days when you'd sit and study from a textbook, there are now so many different learning methods to cater to everybody's individual needs. Many of these are offered online, from quiz and revision apps to subscription sites that contain smart lessons on just about every subject you can think of, not to mention the thousands of video tutorials available on YouTube. Social media is an incredible tool we can use to keep in touch with our friends, especially those who we don't see every day. Having just finished high school, I'm suddenly faced with the reality that the people I've known since kindergarten are all leaving and starting new adventures in every corner of the country. Social media makes it that much easier to stay in contact with them all once we've parted ways and in my opinion, that's one of its most valuable features.

A lot of parents think that teens today are antisocial, do not know how to communicate and do not have meaningful friendships. They see the internet and Social Media especially as big factors in these issues. What they don't see is that for so many young people today the internet connects us to groups that make us feel like we belong. It's simply an extension of the face-to-face relationships that we've already developed and can allow us to connect with others who have similar interests to ourselves. Often I hear people referring to 'online life' and 'real life' as a means of contrasting two different means of communication. I find it really interesting, because for today's teenagers, online life IS real life. The internet has become an integral part of our day to day lives and the things we do and say online have direct effects on our face-to-face relationships. Dismissing its influence on our lives

is counterintuitive to ensuring young people are having positive experiences online.

So what's the problem? What are the real concerns facing young New Zealanders online today? It's difficult to summarise all of the challenges as every young person is different and as a result, we all spend our time online differently. Instead of listing every issue teenagers face online, I'll touch on a couple of things that are frequently discussed in the media and give my take on them.

Curated Content:

No one's life is perfect, yet young people are confronted by perfectly curated content through social media that often makes us question whether or not we measure up. Adolescence is a confusing time when we are all trying to figure out who we are. There is an endless desire to fit in and be liked and a constant need for validation from others. We used to talk about the unrealistic rep resentation of women in the media and how it is having an effect on young people's self-esteem. Unfortunately, with the evolution of social media, we are now comparing ourselves more and more to those we see every day, our friends, our schoolmates, our colleagues, our peers. It's hard enough to remind yourself that the person you see on the covers of the magazines are paid to look the way they do and probably sat in the makeup chair for hours (and are still retouched and photoshopped), but when the person you're measuring yourself against sits next to you in class it's even more difficult to separate reality from perfection. We are constantly faced with the 'perfect lives' we see our peers living on social media. It's all too easy to forget that it's just a highlights reel and that they have bad days too. This false perception of 'life' means that young people are continuously questioning whether we are good enough, pretty enough, popular enough, smart enough, whatever enough and this often leads to self-doubt, low self-esteem and the pressures of holding ourselves to an impossible standard.

Online Anonymity

Anonymity is constantly discussed in the media and I'm not sure it's always accurate. When we talk about cyberbullying, it's not difficult to imagine someone sitting behind their screen making nasty comments and sending anonymous messages but in reality, for teens, the bullying taking place online is often a continuation of bullying that happens in person. Discussion about whether banning online anonymity would help reduce cyberbullying has been taking place for a while now, and while I think it would certainly reduce some of the platforms that people are able to use to bully others online, I don't necessarily believe it's the answer. The anonymous cyberbullying we're seeing at the moment comes from a huge range of third-party apps and their popularity typically comes and goes in waves. I don't think the absence of these anonymous apps would cause a huge reduction in cyberbullying as a whole because a lot of the incidents we're seeing online today come from people we know. Likely, those who are hidden behind the screen will still be open to using similar tactics face to face.

So what can we do to make online life more positive?

We believe that the most effective way to create positive change both online and face-to-face is to put young people at the heart of decision making. We want to take greater ownership and responsibility for making things happen and positively impacting their own social environments. International research shows that when young people are actively involved in decision making, the outcomes are better not only for us but also for getting our messages across to other students.

Research Sticks 'n' Stones conducted in Central Otago back in 2015 showed that 48% of young people that had been bullied didn't tell anyone what had happened, they ignored it and hoped it would go away. In response to this, we developed an online support tool designed as a starting point for teenagers experiencing online negativity; who are not sure where to go or where to start to get through. ICON (In Case of Online Negativity) has been planned, developed, designed and tested by teenagers from all across New Zealand to be a tool that gives young people honest, practical and relatable strategies when they are experiencing online negativity. It's not an alternative or replacement for the incredible services already available throughout the country but simply points you in the direction of the tools and services that are available (that you might not necessarily know about)

ICON is a clear, easy to use tool to help teenagers explore their options and troubleshoot online negativity, from nudes to cyberbullying as well as hate & abuse and practical tips for taking charge of your time online. Not only does it contain information about how you may choose to deal with your situation but it also touches on legal aspects that may be relevant. We also wanted to ensure that the young people who use ICON knew that they weren't alone in how they felt, so we've compiled a range of audio stories that they can listen to. These tell the true experiences of real young people in a way that is non-judgemental but remains meaningful and relatable to listeners. Go check it out at icon.org.nz.

Online life has opened up a world of opportunities for young people to remain connected and informed but it doesn't come without its complications. I think it's important to remember that while we hear plenty of 'horror stories' about life online, the reality is that they don't happen to everybody and we have to stop fearing the worst.

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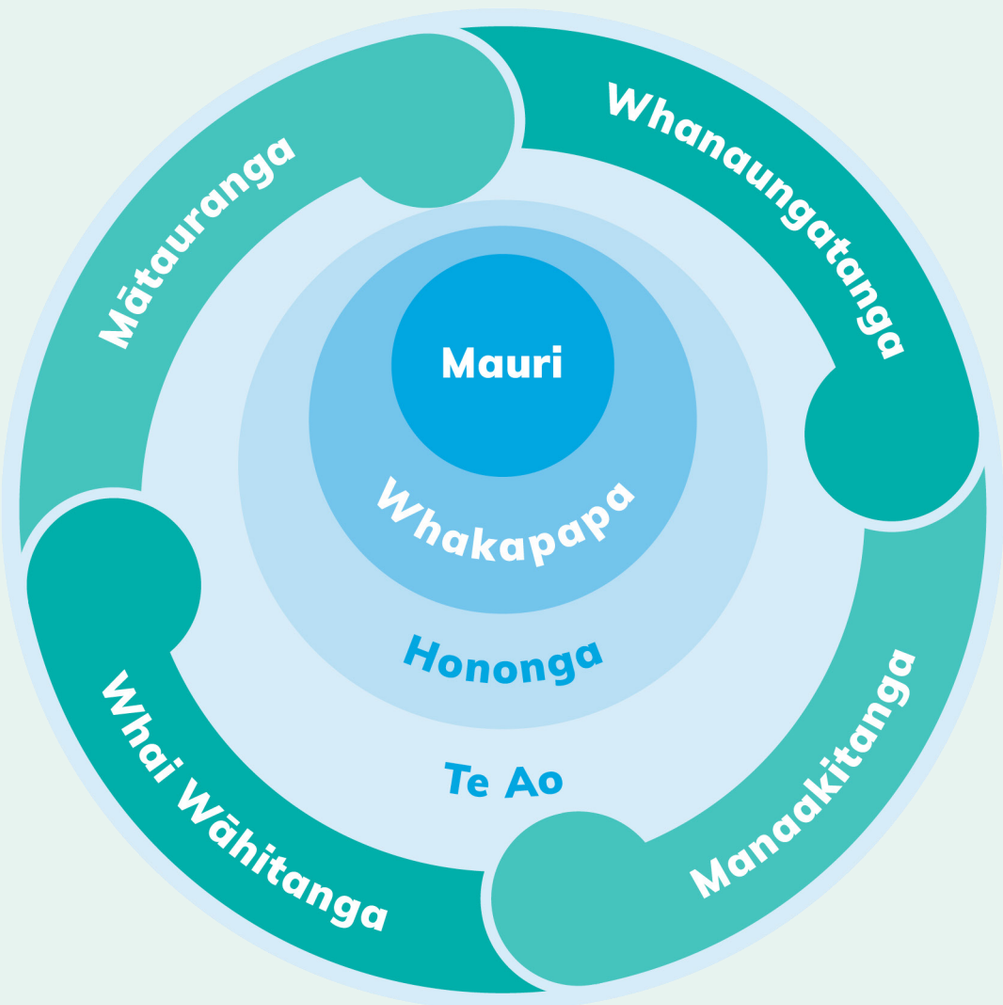

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