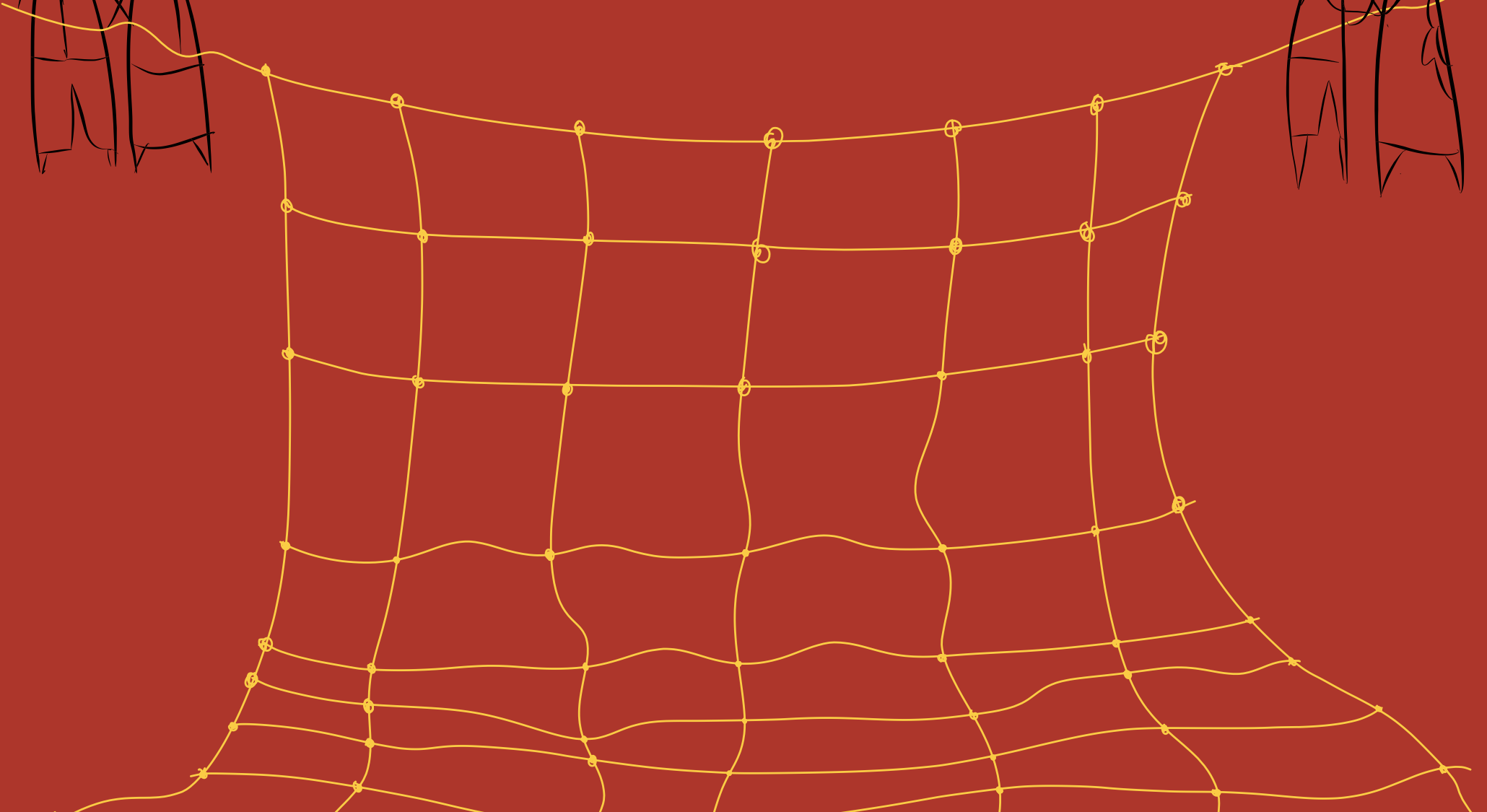# Youth Connections

Learning what it takes to support rangatahi

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini

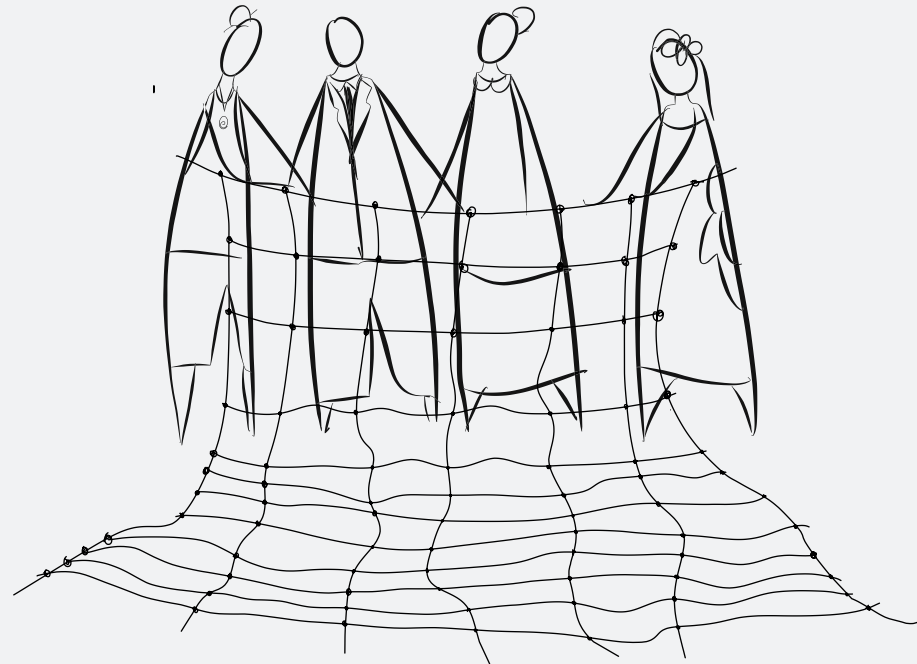## Success is not mine alone, but is that of the collective

As an old net withers, a new net takes its place.

This ancient Māori whakataukī is used to share the letting go of what is no longer fit for purpose and to bring to the fore new ways of thinking, being and doing.

Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi

"The old net represents what Māori identity may have signified in the past, while the new net represents the changing and situational nature of Māori identity for younger generations. It refers to the constant remaking of Māori identities to better suit changing contexts, communities, and collective needs"

It is a metaphor that empowers the next generation of leaders who bring with them relevant world views and experiences; new strengths; and creative ideas that respond to current and future paradigms.

This is embodied in the approach of Youth Connections through the Southern Initiative and their partners. In this context, 'rangatahi' are our future, the ones to adapt and bring new life and meaning to today's world by leaning into the value the old net provides and crafting a fit for purpose net for the future.

Introduction

Over 10 years, Auckland Council's Youth Connections aimed to connect rangatahi with employment opportunities and create positive future pathways.

It delivered a range of activities from large scale career events reaching thousands of rangatahi across Auckland, before transitioning to The Southern Initiative (TSI) and Western Initiative (TWI), with a deeper focus on Māori and Pasifika youth in South and West Auckland.

Since its beginnings in May 2012, there is now a growing network of community-based organisations working in partnership with agencies and philanthropy who provide an ecosystem of support for rangatahi.

Youth Connections in its present form has fulfilled its intentions and will cease to operate in 2023.

Looking to the future

Moving forward TSI will focus on a new model of engaging rangatahi through co-design.

The Te Taiwhanga Rangatahi, an equity-led youth design lab will seek to identify system changes (highlighted from Youth Connections) needed to ensure economic mana motuhake for South and West Auckland generations.

It will help government, Council and businesses understand rangatahi, through rangatahi themselves.
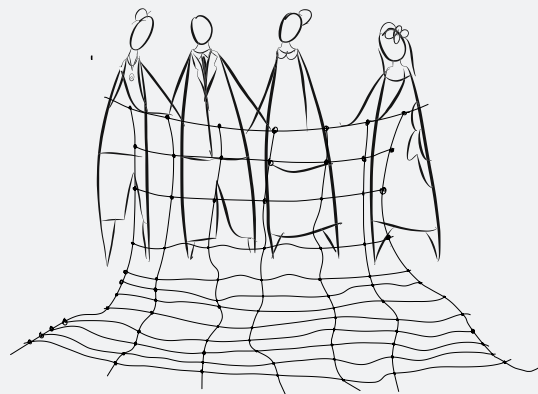
Capturing learnings and informing change

The Southern Initiative (TSI) sits at the interface between Government (the system) and communities.

Its role has been to seed ideas for change, surfacing insights that can lead to improved outcomes and system disruption. In doing so it aims to remove barriers that continue to entrench inequity.

It is appropriate therefore, TSI can use its platform to ensure that the work of Youth Connections is celebrated, and its learnings not lost and forgotten.

TSI has explored the factors and conditions which are more likely to lead to long term sustained impact for rangatahi, and to identify the barriers and challenges that can undermine such attempts.

This report documents the learnings and insights of Youth Connections from 2019 - 2023.

Putting rangatahi first is fundamental.

What has emerged is that a holistic rangatahi centric approach is necessary. Piecemeal and one-size-fits-all approaches do not work. They risk large amounts of resources and funding with limited potential for sustained positive impact in the lives of rangatahi.

Introduction

A narrow focus on single issues is often devoid of context.

It ignores complexities, system inequalities, and prolonged inter-generational trauma; the effects of this on rangatahi, their whānau, and communities.

In doing so, siloed approaches leave much to chance, and place the burden of responsibility on the young shoulders of rangatahi themselves.

Navigating complexity

Rather the work of Youth Connections has recognised that rangatahi need support to navigate the transition to adolescence, in an increasingly complex world.

A world in which the future of work is dramatically changing, against a background of climate change, and deepening inequality.

What is essential and necessary is a deep and sustained approach which places the person at its heart and seeks to unlock the passions of each rangatahi.

An approach that is built on relationships, trust, reciprocity, and cultural empowerment.
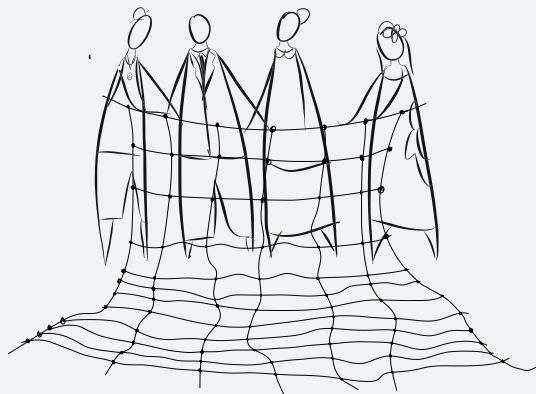
The purpose of this report

This report aims to provide evidence-based insights for agencies; policy and decision makers; and funders to inform their approaches to developing and investing in support for rangatahi.

Specifically, this report:

- Details the whakapapa of Youth Connections, showing its journey over time and how it evolved its approach.

- Spotlights stories of impact to serve as a template for future activity

- Presents insights into the components of successful support for rangatahi.

- Identifies issues that require ongoing attention if further gains are to be made.

- Explores the role of TSI in Youth Connections.

- Poses a series of questions for future consideration.

SUMMARY

01. A look back

Between 2019-2022 TSI Youth Connections had a significant impact on the lives of Rangatahi in South and West Auckland.

Working in partnership it developed a range of community based initiatives to support rangatahi.

These figures illustrate part of this story. More information about the whakapapa of Youth Connections and examples can be found later in this document.

$2.5M+

Distributed to organisations to support rangatahi in South and West Auckland.

1363

Rangatahi gained greater awareness, and confidence about employment and enterprise through participation in initiatives aimed at progressing them on quality employment pathways.

359

Rangatahi gained quality employment (defined as: living wage job, in sunrise industry, with progression opportunities)

63

Rangatahi have progressed their own enterprise idea.

95%

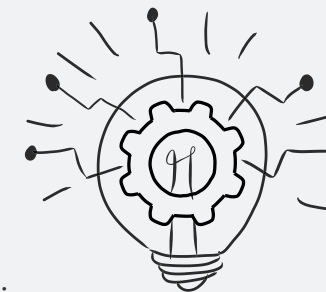Rangatahi engaged in Youth Connections programmes identified as Māori and/or Pasifika.

57%

Youth Connections community organisations were Māori and/or Pasifika led.

76%

Programming in our final two years was focused on future of work skills in enterprise or technology pathways. A shift from 13% in 2019.
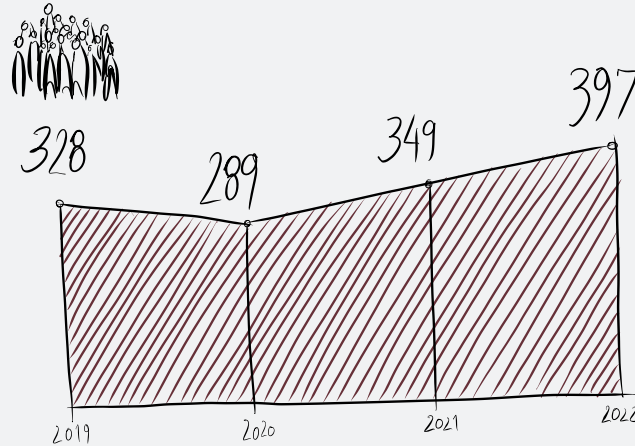
* Note period 2019-2022
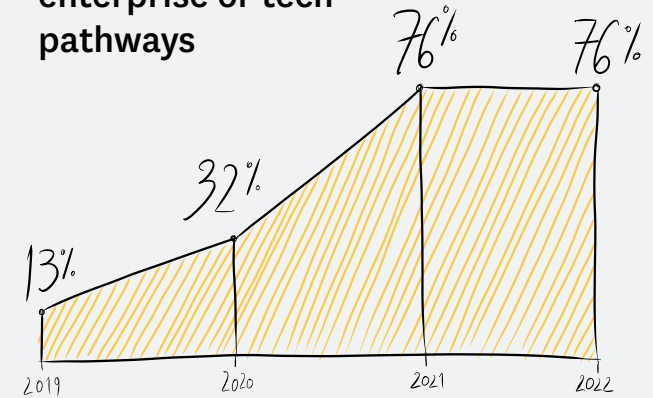
01. A look back

Rangatahi engaged in a quality job pathway in Youth Connections between 2019 and 2022.

Demonstrating a shift towards enterprise and tech pathways which offer increased high value career opportunities.

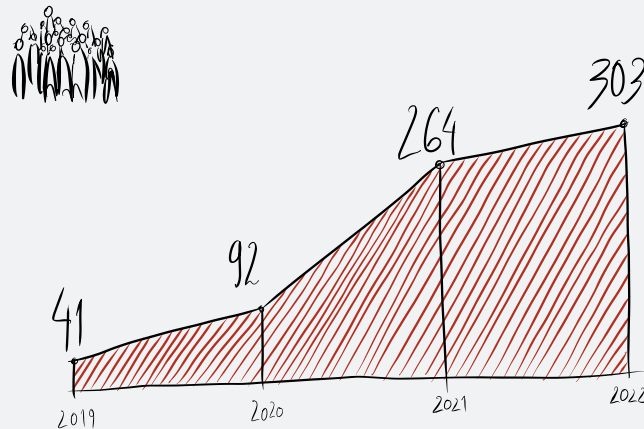### Total engaged

328 — 2019
289 — 2020
349 — 2021
397 — 2022

Enterprise or tech pathways

41 — 2019
92 — 2020
264 — 2021
303 — 2022

% of those engaged that were on enterprise or tech pathways

13% — 2019
32% — 2020
76% — 2021
76% — 2022

0.2 Summary reflections

Key reflections from our experience of Youth Connections.

Transactional supply and demand models of youth employment don't work.

1.

Any job is not a good job. We need quality jobs with good employers offering security, training, and progression.

2.

Career and employment pathways need to be integrated earlier into the school system.

3.

Young people need pastoral care to support them in the transition to work experience. They also need role models, networks and connections to help create career pathways and opportunities.

4.

Caring and nurturing relationships are key. The potential for greater positive impact increases over time, through trust and reciprocity.

5.

Māori and Pasifika must work twice as hard as their peers to achieve. Discrimination, inequity, and system barriers constrain their opportunities and stifle their potential.

6.

Rangatahi don't suffer from an 'attitude gap'. There is a disconnect between employer and social expectations of rangatahi and their developmental maturity.

7.

To improve Māori and Pasifika rangatahi employment access and success, employers need help and resources too.

8.

Support works best when community organisations partner with employers and agencies to provide innovative, culturally grounded programmes to support rangatahi.

9.

0.3 Lessons from Youth Connections

Six critical findings for future policy and programmes to better support rangatahi.

Equity, education, and employment.

Equipping rangatahi for prosperous future pathways means using an equity based approach that provides opportunity for quality education, training and employment.

Putting rangatahi first.

Means focusing on the whole person, their whānau and their needs. Employment matters, but it alone is not enough. This must include work exposure, education, life skills and mentoring support.
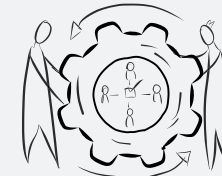
Empowering rangatahi.

Rangatahi don't just want to be heard. They want agency over their own lives, to actively contribute, and to be part of the decision making process, especially about the things that affect them.

Focus on building the net.

Get the basics right so that rangatahi can thrive. Employment, education, well-being, health, housing.

Create the conditions for effectiveness and deeper impact.

It is not just about delivery. Creating the conditions to support successful programmes is necessary.

Strengthening the net.

Addressing the structural and system challenges that create barriers and weaken the net, undermining efforts to support rangatahi and weaken impact.

0.4 Looking to the future

Three areas of future focus.

The kaupapa remains and it is incumbent on agencies, policy makers, funders and employers working with community organisations to take forward the mahi into the future.

Programme design

Delivering engaging programmes for rangatahi

- Ensure holistic support is available for rangatahi which is culturally grounded and founded on long term relationships.
- Work to better understand what employment opportunities are available in future focused sunrise industries and design pathways for entry.
- Develop participative approaches which provide opportunities for rangatahi to co-design and co-create services and solutions.
- Recognise, reward, and renumerate rangatahi for the value of their perspectives and contribution.

System of support
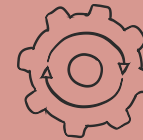
Building capability and capacity in the ecosystem to better support rangatahi

- Recognise the value of place-based community service providers with greater risk underwriting for innovative grassroots solutions.
- Create a platform that enables and incentivises better collaboration, connectivity, shared learning and practice, and integrated service provision between community organisations, agencies, educators and employers.
- Work with employers to develop adequate training and development pathways for rangatahi, including demand-driven pre-employment training-to-work pipelines; provision of literacy and numeracy (e.g. supporting apprenticeships); and cultural responsiveness.

Reversing the challenges

Removing barriers that prevent effective support and positive sustained impact

- Multi-year funding with adequate provision for operations and delivery for long term programme delivery.
- Increase in seed funding for smaller grassroots community organisations providing localised responses to supporting rangatahi.
- Policy shifts which focus on adolescent development rather than age for determining points of intervention.
- Sensible streamlined reporting methodologies. Greater use of storytelling for impact.

THE INSIGHTS

05. Insights

Engaging rangatahi meaningfully

**Any job is not the same as a quality job with real career progression, job security and future prosperity.
A radical re-think of our approach to supporting Māori and Pasifika rangatahi is necessary.
Using an equity-based approach enables issues of entrenched inequality, lack of access to opportunity, education and training, and structural barriers to be addressed.**

KEY INSIGHTS
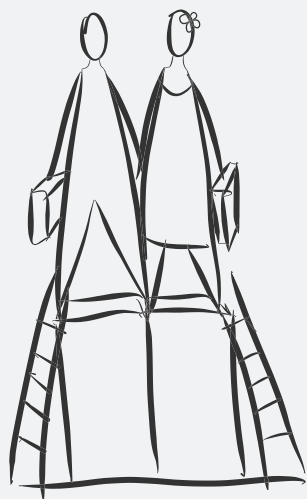
- Māori and Pasifika continue to be disproportionally represented by poorer outcomes in employment, education, health and well-being.

- The Covid-19 pandemic has further entrenched existing inequities.

- Poverty, inequality, and external stressors can have a negative impact on the cognitive and executive function of rangatahi and their ability to navigate the transition to adulthood.

- This goes beyond personal and parental responsibility but comes because of structural inequalities and discrimination.

- High inflation and forecast recession create difficult economic headwinds for rangatahi which diminish opportunity and risk long term economic scarring of their futures.

- Rangatahi cannot be placed into meaningful jobs in a labour market which is contracting. Without adequate protections rangatahi face a future of short-term insecure employment, punctuated by periods of unemployment.

- Investment, resources, and energy largely focuses on those rangatahi at the extremes of the spectrum (high risk with complex needs v high achieving) leaving large numbers, a silent majority, of rangatahi in the middle with limited support to navigate their futures in isolation. These rangatahi have huge unrealised and latent potential which is significant for New Zealand's future economic growth and productivity.

- The resulting scarring damages individual well-being and reduces the productive capacity of the economy. [1]

- New Zealand cannot afford to further constrain its economic productivity which is already lagging behind OCED expectations. This risks long term economic stagnation. [2]

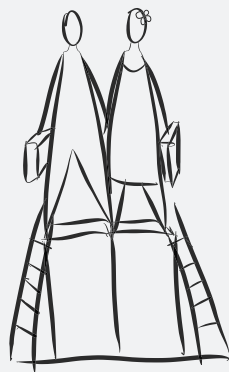- It is essential to invest in rangatahi to create quality jobs

Equity and employment

and build confidence in their future for the security of New Zealand's long term economic growth.

- Education and employment can't be separated.

- Education inequity for Māori and Pasifika students in South and West Auckland means that many are streamed out of core subjects early on, which means their future options are severely restricted before they are 15 years old. They are not at the same starting line as their peers.

- Attendance, engagement, and wellbeing of rangatahi in mainstream education is a complex issue, but we know that core subjects need to be culturally grounded, students should be connected to career exposure and broader options as early as possible.

- The proportion of Māori (18%) and Pasifika (16%) with a degree (or higher) qualification is significantly lower than the total population (35%). Whilst this has increased over the last two decades it has not increased as much as others. Leading to an increase in attainment gap.[3]

- Equally, rangatahi are often told that tertiary education is the pathway for future social and economic mobility.

- However, not all tertiary qualifications and apprenticeships offer equal opportunity for future growth (personal, social, economic).

- There is a lack of transparency between education pathways, career options and future earning potential. Rangatahi are not fully advised of longer-term implications of education choices, particularly at tertiary level.

- The result is rangatahi leave tertiary education saddled with high debts; face a highly competitive graduate labour market; and in some sectors (e.g. social care) a pay ceiling which prevents long term progression and further entrenches inequality.

- There are persistent disparities between the pass rates of Māori and Pacific students than others.

- In 2020, university qualification and course completion rates for Māori (52% and 82%) and Pasifika (48% and 75%) were below those non-Māori and Pasifika students (66% and 90%).[4]

- More support is needed to help students with learning decisions, goals and aspirations for their future, at all levels within the education system.

- This requires a whole of system response working in partnership with communities and organisations in that context and place.

- Shifting away from entry level employment opportunities in sunset industries without career progression, training and skills development, and limited wage growth is critical.

==Equity and employment==

KEY INSIGHTS

- Focusing on workforce development and creating pathways in sunrise industries – particularly the tech sector and the green economy – offers greater opportunity for rangatahi to access high value careers with progression.

- A living wage not a minimum wage. Providing rangatahi with the best start to employment going beyond the prescribed basics to securing wages that enable them to live well and removing precocity.

- Scaffolding opportunities through exposure to new experiences and training that is tailored to the passions and needs of the rangatahi.

- Connecting rangatahi to employers does not always lead to sustained impact. It requires ongoing advocacy and mentoring support to help them navigate into the world of work. Rangatahi do not always have the skills or confidence to do so. This is something that must be cultivated over time.

- The readiness of employers is as important as the readiness of rangatahi. Employers must be willing to better support rangatahi in the workplace, understand the maturity levels and reduce their expectations.

- Too much is expected of rangatahi. Employers, agencies, and society have unrealistic expectations of the maturity, confidence, and independence levels of rangatahi.

- There is an expectation that they will be 'work ready' - have the confidence, attitude, knowledge, and work ethic - to thrive in a role from the age of 17 upwards.

- This creates frustration on behalf of employers and risks disengagement by rangatahi. It is often reduced to an 'attitude gap'.

- Those that do not fit the criteria of a demand-led approach are further excluded from the economic system, reducing life chances and constraining opportunity.
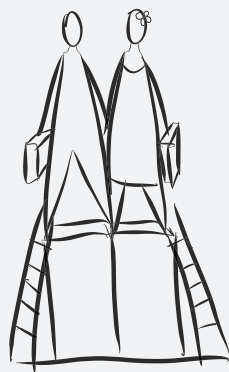
"As long as structural barriers remain in place, implementing employment-based interventions targeting young people may just fuel greater frustration. What is needed are comprehensive approaches and strategies that enhance the economic, social and political inclusion of youth and that recognize young people as catalysts for positive social change and sustainable development." (UN) [5]

<mark>Putting rangatahi first</mark>

Employment matters but this alone is not enough, a rangatahi centric approach is needed.

Whilst important, focusing solely on issues of employment and the economy, reduces the experiences and role of young people to one of an 'economic asset' for the labour market and their productive capabilities. The impact of such interventions (whilst well-intentioned) are unlikely to be sustained.

"Young people are more than just a potential workforce and should not be perceived only in the context of their situation in the labour market" (European Commission) [6]

KEY INSIGHTS

- Whilst preparation for employment is important, developing the whole person was significant to equip young people with the life skills and help them transition to adulthood.

- Too narrow focus on youth employment, skills and enterprise, does not adequately recognise the dynamic complexities in which young people experience the world today.

- It is necessary to reframe the relationship of young people with the economy and their development and maturity.

- Recognising that the transition from adolescence is mediated by family, social, economic, and political dynamics.

- This is intersected by culture, race and gender and colonial trauma that create structural inequalities, which shape how young people actively navigate the economy and its institutions.

- Rangatahi are often centred in place. Their boundaries of experience anchored to the geographies of their communities. As they transition to adulthood these boundaries are extended and become more fluid, however it can be unnerving if rangatahi have had limited exposure to places beyond their immediate boundaries.

- Some rangatahi lack basic life skills. For example, not having a birth certificate; a bank account; IRD numbers; being unable to swim; drive a car; or access to public transport. This limits their access to opportunities. They must be supported to grow their confidence and independence when using these life skills.

05. Insights

KEY INSIGHTS

- There is an expectation it is the family's role to help rangatahi develop these. But where family capacity is stretched or they themselves may lack these skills; this is not always possible.

- Adopting a youth development approach which takes a more deliberative 'whole person' seeks to identify and enable the building blocks to enable young people to thrive.

- This means providing wraparound / pastoral support as a priority and getting the basics right first. Reducing and removing stressors in their lives to build their wellbeing, resilience, and capacity.

- Young people need someone that can guide them throughout the process of settling into and succeeding in employment. Often there are small periods they may get help, but once a course is finished or a job matching made, they are dropped.

- Where possible adopting a whānau / aiga centric approach which works with the whole family to create a supportive and nurturing environment leads to high levels of impact.

"The best result for the money was to have this whole complete holistic [approach…including] pastoral care, education, role models and inspiration." (Interviewee)

"The whole wraparound thing was absolutely necessary, how vital it was from the young person's perspectives that on a basic level quite literal needs should be addressed first and foremost." (Interviewee)

Empowering rangatahi

Creating mechanisms for rangatahi to have greater agency over their own lives and actively contribute is an essential ingredient for deepening their engagement and attachment to economy and society.

Te Taiwhanga Rangatahi offers a model and pathway forward for engaging rangatahi in the issues and things that matter to them and co-creating solutions.

"Someone that actually listens to you, you know? It's nice to kind of give ideas and you're like actually heard...it's more like the listening...not just a talking robot."
*(Interviewee)*

KEY INSIGHTS

- Youth Connections observed what it terms a 'generational shift' in rangatahi and their engagement in employment.

- Rangatahi were consistent in saying "We are different. We want something different. We want to be listened to".

- Rangatahi are seeking opportunities where they can positively contribute, and are making conscious decisions about how their work aligns with their values and passions.

- They are seeking reciprocal relationships with employers, service providers and organisations in which they are provided with platforms and opportunity for their voices to be heard and their ideas acted upon.

- Where this occurred, it deepened their engagement and attachment to employers and programmes.

- This is consistent with growing recognition that rangatahi are not passive but active creators, contesting and colluding in these social processes and dynamics as they seek to navigate the world.

- Equally, the experience of organisations and employers that have enabled rangatahi to have greater agency has been positive.

- In engaging rangatahi, a specific 'youth culture' was observed which manifest in how they showed up and interacted with their peers, organisations and older generations.

- Understanding this, is important for creating environments in which rangatahi can be meaningfully engaged and their participation secured.

06. Building the net

Components of successful approaches for supporting rangatahi and helping to build the net.

There is no one size fits all to supporting rangatahi, but Youth Connections has observed common elements across approaches.
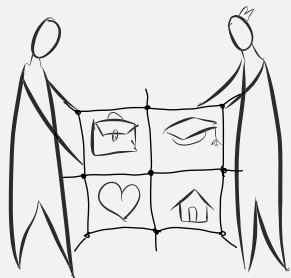
Hauora

Supporting rangatahi in the four dimensions of hauora: taha tinana (physical well-being – health); taha hinengaro (mental and emotional well-being – self-confidence); taha whānau (social well-being – self-esteem); and taha wairua (spiritual well-being – personal beliefs).
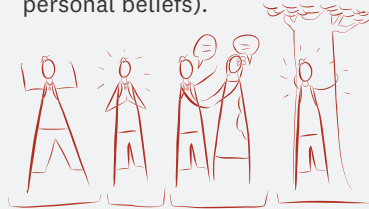
Employment

- Employment brokering
- Internship / work placements
- CV preparation
- Interview coaching
- In work advocacy and guidance

Social connection

Building peer networks and social support connections within communities and workplaces. Supporting young people to interact with confidence.

Advocating for young people helping them learn to manage conflicts and develop confidence to have their voice heard.

Life Skills

Helping young people establish the practical skills and means that are required for adulthood such as transport, financial skills, housing, and interpersonal skills.
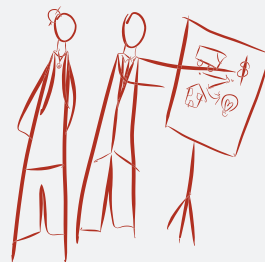
Entrepreneurship

Opportunities to develop skills and ventures particularly through digital mediums.

Education and Skills

Providing skills and training opportunities to young people as a pathway to future employment, job security and progression such as micro-credentials, trades training, in-work training and Tertiary qualifications.

07. Enabling conditions

Creating the conditions to be effective.

When cultivated well, the experience of Youth Connections suggests that these conditions will deepen the potential for impact.
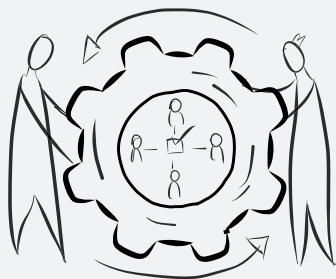
CULTURALLY GROUNDED APPROACHES

Culturally grounded approaches that deepen rangatahi attachment to their own cultural identity and belief systems are powerful for healing, strengthening and empowering rangatahi. They are intrinsic for future success.

Rangatahi can affirm their values and aspirations in the context of their whānau, community, and their place in the world. Whilst at the same time renewing their physical, spiritual, and mental wellbeing.

"It was never about getting education or employment. That is easy to do…we have to look at things like cultural identity, misplacement, being disenfranchised… intergenerational trauma…We have our own solutions and we have been very successful because we work on the person, the healing, the mindset." (Interviewee)

RELATIONSHIPS

Success was predicated on a highly relational environment, which promoted reciprocity, trust, honesty, and loyalty between the rangatahi, support workers, mentors and employers.

It enabled rangatahi to explore their true passions and develop a greater sense of purpose. The density and quality of these relationships provided rangatahi with 'guiding stars' - points of stability, constancy, and connection in a time of fluidity.

"Like, have the relationship with them and it's like friends helping friends. It felt like your family…I don't think I would be where I am today and like the confidence you know that I carry with myself…it was built from the first time that we stepped into this office." (Interviewee)

07. Enabling conditions
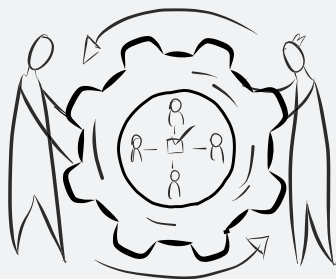
MANAAKI

Manaaki is at the heart of all relationships. Rangatahi must know that they are cared for, valued and respected. This draws a fine balance between a professional role providing youth support and friendship in which the process of showing respect, generosity and care for rangatahi can enhance their mana, confidence and resilience.

'For us it's just more natural, like that's how we are because we have always looked after each other. Whether it was like just having a feed or something because we grew up like that. For them to see us look after each other and they are part of our group and taking care of them as well…they started calling us uncles. All a sudden we are seen as counsellors…coming for advice." (Interviewee)
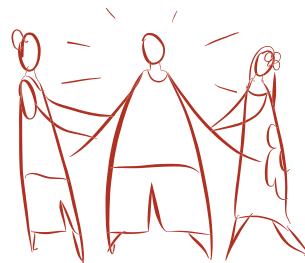
STAGE NOT AGE

Broadening approaches to consider the phases of adolescent transition and development from early teens to mid-20s is more aligned to individual experiences, needs and rates of maturity into adulthood.

"Young people have a kind of bottleneck experience around the last few years of school…. they've got all that pressure of exams and studies. They've got a lot of social pressure, puberty…relationships. It's the worst time to come…it's almost too late. Year 9 and year 10 is a kind of a transition, settling in period. There is less pressure so it's an ideal time to have a conversation." (Interviewee)

07. Enabling conditions
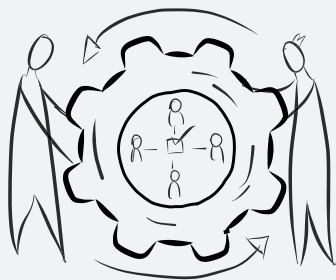
LONG TERM AND SUSTAINED

The longer the time investment, the deeper and more sustained the positive impact. Sustaining effort over several years in which rangatahi are given access to learning, opportunity and support, as they build the maturity, decision-making capacity and resilience required for adulthood. This enables rangatahi to step to the next opportunity at a point of their own readiness.

"We extended our programme to the young adult space...[thinking] lets maintain our relationship with them and well into their adult life...we've got young people coming back [at] 24 / 25 years old...we're already known them for five to six years prior." (Interviewee)

PROXIMITY MATTERS...A LOT.

Proximity in terms of culture, community, place, sexuality, gender and age matter. They become points of reference and relativity for rangatahi. When they can see themselves represented it builds confidence through positive reinforcement and understanding which is more likely to secure engagement.

"I think it was good to have someone who was young...i think it made them feel a lot more comfortable even... I think that's something really powerful, because you're engaging with young people that inspire you, but they are not much older than you." (Interviewee)

07. Enabling conditions
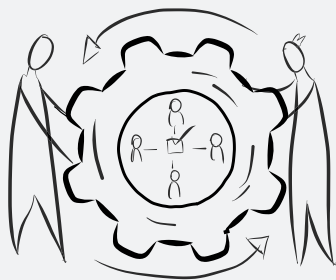
EXPOSURE

Increasing exposure to alternative futures; introducing role-models; and creating new networks and connections with employers, organisations, and peers, showcases new horizons of possibilities and gives rangatahi wider perspectives about their future pathway, whilst removing barriers to entry prevalent in closed networks.

"So, we went out to the Banks, and we got Māori and Pasifika employees to come and talk about their pathway into banking...and for the first time they are thinking 'oh maybe I could be in banking, why not?' and it's a shock for them to think that was possible for them because no-one in their [lives] had had those conversations." (Interviewee)

08. Challenges and barriers

Challenges create barriers and noise that undermines efforts to support rangatahi and weaken impact.

Discrimination, inequality and inequity

- Structural inequality and discrimination limit the opportunities for rangatahi in South and West Auckland, from primary years through to entry-level employment and beyond.

- Māori and Pasifika are disproportionately affected by inequity and inequality. It is well documented that they fair less in terms of job security, employment, income, education, housing and health indicators.

- Rangatahi are often viewed as lacking in potential. Assumptions are made as to what they would like to do; what they want to do; and what is good for them. This constrains the future pathways available to them.

- Future possibilities are opaque to some young people and their whānau. They have not been exposed to the range of possibilities available to them beyond their immediate points of reference (often family, friends, school).

- Where these are visible, they do not see themselves represented or as pathways that are open to them.

- Equally, discrimination, lack of opportunity and closed networks prevent young people from understanding these possibilities.

- They have not been given the full spectrum of options and their social capital networks are weakend, meaning their exposure to opportunities and possibilities is limited.

- Māori and Pasifika rangatahi must work doubly hard as others their own age. They are not-afforded the 'experimental' life defining years of university in the same way. They must overcome obstacles to entry and employment; balance study with work; financial pressures; and family commitments.

- They are expected to be mature beyond their years and carry huge loads.

- Discrimination becomes self-perpetuating. If they faulter they are perceived as reinforcing negative stereotypes about their potential.

Maturity expectation gap

- Too much is expected of rangatahi. Employers, agencies, and society have unrealistic expectations of the maturity, confidence, and independence levels of rangatahi.

- There is an expectation that they will be 'work ready' and 'world ready' from the age of 17 upwards. That they have the confidence, attitude, work ethic, and life skills to navigate the world and take advantage of opportunities that are presented to them.

- Rangatahi did not always have confidence or skills to communicate their needs, own expectations or navigate the world independently.

08. Challenges and barriers

- This creates frustration on behalf of employers and risks disengagement by rangatahi. It is often referred to as an 'attitude gap'

- This is reductive and implies a capacity to change on behalf of rangatahi which does not recognise the physiological and psychological developments which rangatahi experience at this age. Research suggests that rangatahi do not mature until around age 25.

- Nor does it recognise complexity, system barriers and entrenched inequity.

  "12 weeks is based on the programme, so they get all the basic requirements and things...but the hard part is sustaining it and making it long term because they fall back out..."

System rigidity

- A week is a long time in the lives of rangatahi. Large agencies are often too slow to respond and not operating in real time. This can have real consequences for rangatahi who may experience multiple crises in quick succession.

- Some rangatahi may not yet have developed basic life skills or have the resources necessary to assist with the transition to adulthood. For example, a phone; birth certificate; bank account; IRD number; driver's license; access to transport.

- Bureaucratic systems are viewed as impenetrable and hard to navigate. Making it difficult for rangatahi to access help and resources (in-kind or financial).

- Success has occurred due to the passion and drive of a small group of dedicated individuals. It has relied on those working together to remove barriers to entry within the system and create opportunities. There has been limited whole of organisation / whole of system response to creating an environment in which rangatahi can thrive.

  "Challenges in getting funding to students...some didn't have bank accounts...didn't have an ID number...and then systems make it hard to give money to young people because you've got to go through extraordinary amounts of documentation"

Restrictive short termism

- Policy interventions are too restrictive around age cohorts – usually 16-19 years. This limits who can participate and does not reflect the reality of the transition period to adulthood which spans from early teens to around 25 years.

- Programmes often are 6 – 12 weeks long, which is insufficient to provide rangatahi with the support they need to navigate the transition years.

- These short programmes put rangatahi under immense pressure to achieve in a set period, often as a result of funding restrictions and periods, rather than their own

08. Challenges and barriers

capacity to develop. Not all rangatahi are able to operate at this level of intensity.

"We've got them for a span of six or eight weeks, and we are going to try... but I guess the answer just sometimes you couldn't rush them...the Council and Local Board stop funding and they are really driven by numbers." (Interviewee)

Funding architecture

- Current Government (national and local) funding models are time limited, risk adverse, overly prescriptive and output driven.

- It undermines the ability of organisations to provide long-term deep support for rangatahi and creates financial instability. Organisations find themselves having to flex to demands of multiple funders whilst in a constant cycle of bidding and reporting. This diverts resources away from delivering support to rangatahi.

- Equally funders are less likely to support innovative approaches and new organisations who lack 'proven track records', stifling progression and grassroots community programmes which are more attuned and responsive to needs of rangatahi.

- Funders are increasingly unlikely to repeat fund existing programmes. They are are seeking to seed and scale new innovative approaches, rather than provide core operational funding for ongoing service needs. This raises issues as to whose responsibility is it provide funding when demonstrable need exists?

- This is detrimental to the longevity of the programmes and introduces instability in the support available to rangatahi.

"We're capable of scaling, we didn't have the resources and our main thing was we didn't have the finances...if they really want proper connections and pastoral care then the funding given couldn't do that" (Interviewee)

Burdensome reporting

- Reporting is output focused on numbers rather than impact. It requires complex data collection and analysis systems to be established. Often beyond the reach of smaller organisations. This in turn reduces their ability to secure future funding.

- Whilst at the same time it is not clear what the data is required for, how it will be used and by who.

- Data can be important, but without the richness of stories it lacks the nuance of lived experience.
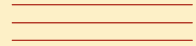
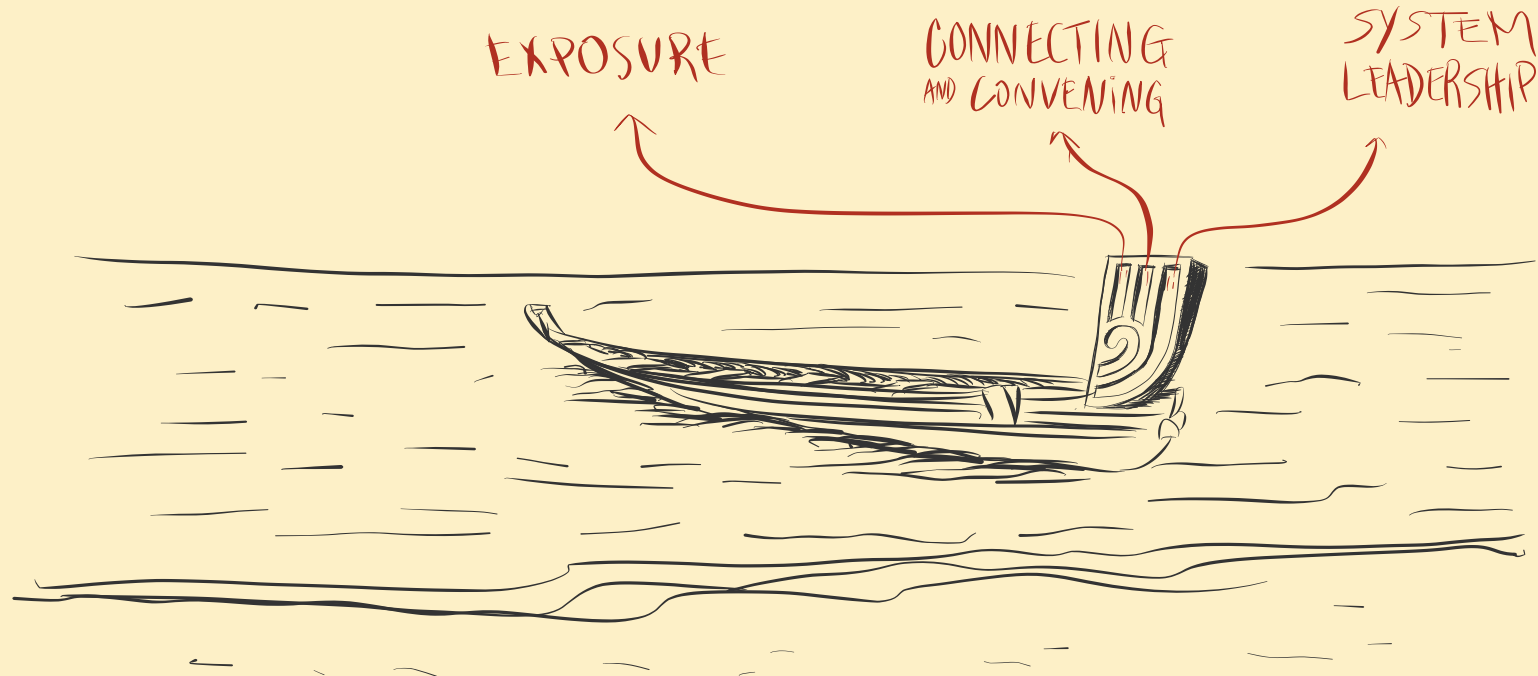## 09. Unique role of The Southern and Western Initiatives

Local public agencies play a critical role in facilitating connections between communities, grassroots organisations, employers, and agencies.

The duality of the TSI and TWI's role enabled them to leverage their position in the system to influence change, and by adopting a place-based approach develop trusted relationships with community-based organisations and leaders.

Whilst at the same time using its position within Auckland Council to build relationships with agencies and employers to secure funding, advocate for change, and create opportunities.

This was a considerable strength and acted as a mobilising force to bring together distinct parts of the system supporting rangatahi, and be a stage for challenge, learning and reflection at both a community and system level.

As such the role of TSI and TWI has been important in shaping the landscape of provision for rangatahi and Youth Connections.

EXPOSURE

CONNECTING AND CONVENING

SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

Catalysing capacity and capability

In catalysing new innovative approaches, TSI and TWI provided a 'safety net' for locally based community driven responses. By providing seed investment, it enabled start-up community-based organisations to develop a 'proof of concept' and crowd-in future funding.

"They gave us our first shot. They invested in us, they were able to give us that seed funding, from that we were able to try other things from the learnings. We were able to use that proof [to secure]...bigger funding. They gave us a shot because we were not a big fish at the time." (Interviewee)

By building deep relationships with partners based on shared kaupapa, values and trust, it acted as mentor and advocate, supporting organisations to develop their internal capability and build their confidence.

"[They] really pivoted what [we] do and really gave some structure and guidance... we had ideas of helping youth...so TSI... focused on giving proper guidelines and connected us to funding, and they helped

us breakdown the programme... that was not something we knew how to do... because that was our first programme... they could help use make the programme better." (Interviewee)

The effect has been to accelerate the development of these organisations. Resulting in increased density and diversity of locally based community provision for rangatahi.
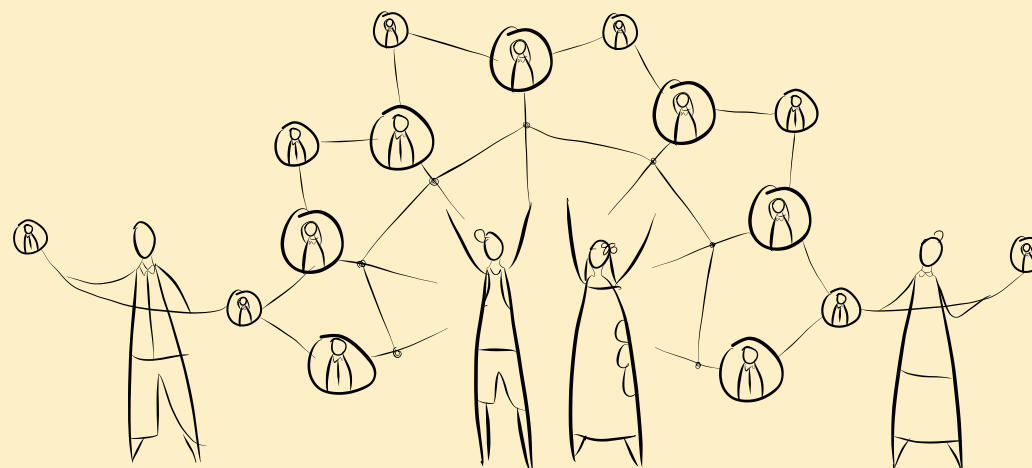
Connecting and convening

TSI and TWI's approach in Youth Connections was to champion the development of a broad-based network of actors focused on partnership working and collaboration.

It recognised that collective action is necessary to better support rangatahi, enabling increased agility in response to diversity of need, evolution of innovative ideas, and increased the concertation of provision through partnership. Thus reducing fragmentation and duplication.

They exposed us to different opportunities...to other businesses or charities or local users...connecting us even to businesses that [are] totally separate or just making us see what else is out there." (Interviewee)

Using its dual position and its knowledge of the operating landscape in South and West Auckland, it was able to forge connections between organisations and people, seeking out synergies and alignment of energy and kaupapa. This proved to be particularly valuable in identifying opportunities to leverage and strengthen Auckland Council programmes and activities for rangatahi.

"We had a lot of conversations with organisations that are doing similar programmes...we'd look to go into this connecting with organisations and supporting similar projects and working collectively" (Interviewee)

KEY INSIGHTS

System leadership

The role of TSI and TWI in Youth Connections has highlighted the need to consider not just novel approaches to service provision and direct support for rangatahi but how the system needs to change to better enable that support to be successful and have sustained impact.

Its own position in the system provided a powerful platform upon which it can simultaneously influence and disrupt.

"Radical and neutral from TSI, because their plan is to disrupt things...some systems are meant to be broken. Some systems are obsolete, not fit for purpose anymore and we felt that we now learn to be agile. We were able to actively be more assertive." (Interviewee)

On a practical level it has been crucial in lending support to smaller organisations which has increased their credibility in the system and building networks (as discussed above), enabling the sharing of ideas and best practice.

"TSI have helped us to have a broader picture and an understanding of that big things are possible if you are willing to keep pushing it, you and that's been good" (Interviewee)

At a strategic level it has created a conduit for which the learnings and insights from practitioners working on the ground can be channelled to better support policy responses and systems for rangatahi people and enabled organisations to have deeper and more meaningful conversations.

"TSI have helped us think about more about how we approach funders, how we think of funders...[now] we are able to say no, this cannot be a transaction anymore...because that would divert the energy...away from our core work" (Interviewee)
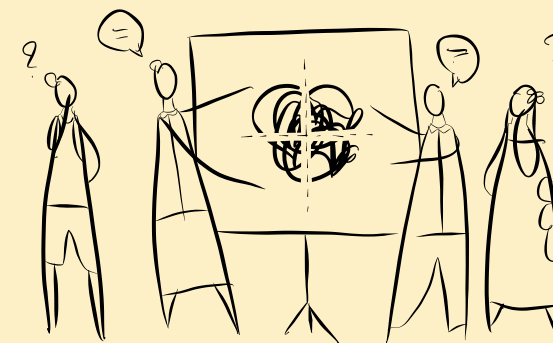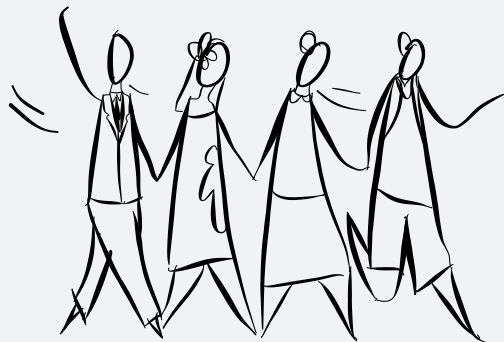
10. Whakapapa

This charts the journey of Youth Connections since its inception in 2012 launched with the support of Tindall Foundation and Auckland Council, showing key stages of transition throughout its life-cycle.

Its early focus was on connecting young people to employment opportunities across Auckland. Whilst its reach was impressive and it galvanised businesses, agencies, and the community, its scale could not offer a sustained impact for those that needed it most.

This was in response to a growing recognition that Māori and Pasifika rangatahi were disproportionately represented as NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and more likely to have lower employment opportunities and future job security.

In 2018 came a shift with the transition to TSI and TWI, moving from an employment initiative to an equity place-based one, with a realignment of focus on the needs of Māori and Pasifika rangatahi in South and West Auckland.

TSI and TWI committed to developing alternative pathways in which the wellbeing of rangatahi could be strengthened, lifelong learning capacities built, and their future prosperity secured though high value careers in sunrise industries.

This included a much heavier focus on higher value and quality pathways e.g. into technology jobs and growing entrepreneurial skills.

In its final stages, a new phase is on the horizon.

A youth-led participative approach which actively seeks to ensure that rangatahi have a voice and are given opportunity and spaces in which they can proactively contribute to employment and education environments.

These transitions demonstrate agility and proactive approaches on behalf of funders and lead agencies to pivot, responding to need and changing conditions.

Each transition has has been driven by a demand for better long term and sustained impact for rangatahi.

02. Whakapapa

2009
- Tindall Foundation convenes workshop of leaders in youth, community and employment fields to identify issues and find solutions.
- Sir Stephen Tindall Challenges local board leaders to take action on Youth Employment.

2011 - 2012
- A Youth Employment Action Plan
- Auckland Jobs Summit - getting young people into work.
- Youth Connections launched by Auckland Council. May 2012.
- Partners include Tindall Foundation and Local Boards.

2014-2015
- Youth Summits
- JobFests - career expos
- Youth Employer Pledge
- First job fest launches in Manukau in 2015
- 7 Employers join in the first round of Youth Employer Pledge programme.
- Delivery transfers to ATEED

- Youth Employer Awards
- Rainbows End Wins First Auckland Youth Employer Award

2016-2017
- Jobs and skills hub
- CBD Jobs and Skills Hubs Launch at Wynyard Quarter and in Tamaki Regeneration Zone in Glen Innes
- Auckland Airport Launches Ara Jobs and Skills Hub June 2017
- MBIE and MSD sponsor the co-design challenge 'Attitude Gap.

- Jobs Fest held twice per year attracting 2000 young people and 70 employers
- By 2017 14,000 Young People supported become job ready and 1300 secured employment.
- Hugh Green Foundation and Airport Community Trust Joins as a partner
- May 2017 Job Fest 1238 Jobs available. 130 young people secure jobs on the day.

2018 - 2019
- Employment Broker Coaches
- Māori Pacific Trades Training
- Delivery transfers to TSI
- Equity and place based focus on South and West Auckland.

2020-2021
- Covid-19 Pandemic. March 2020
- High value pathways and future of work focus.
- Earn while you learn.
- Longer term pastoral care.
- Community delivery models adopted.
- Demand-led workforce development focus, working with employers to develop pipeline of opportunities for rangatahi in sunrise industries.

2022
- Entrepreneurialism as a pathway launches.
- GEM - Good Employer Matrix

2023
- Youth Connection Ends
- Te Taiwhanga Rangatahi - Youth Lab Launches - Empowering rangatahi through participative equity led youth co-design.

11. Case Studies | Placing rangatahi at the centre - a holistic approach

BROKER COACHING

Between 2017-2020 The Employment Broker-Coach prototype focused on engaging with employers to establish pathways for rangatahi to access 'good quality jobs' with higher starting wages and progression potential in which they were offered employer-led technical micro credentials, short courses, and soft-skills empowerment training.

'Getting the basics of survival' sorted first and ensuring basic needs are met was critical, as was enhancing mana by strengthening whānau relational and cultural wellbeing and identity.

Whānau centric, place based, wraparound pastoral support during and after placements led to deep and trusted relationships. This was central to effective engagement in intensive case management; improved whānau support and positive parental support; improved retention, and greater labour market attachment.

WEST WAVE

A unique opportunity between Youth Connections and Auckland Council's Leisure Services and West Wave Leisure facility was able to offer West Auckland rangatahi the opportunity to become seasonal life-guards as part of a pathway to employment; gain training and qualifications such as learning to swim; driver's license; first aid; whilst being supported and mentored with life skills coaching.

For some rangatahi the experience was life changing leading new employment and training opportunity pathways. The mentoring and guidance provided by the team in a supporting environment enabled the rangatahi to grow in confidence and build their resilience.

TRANSITION TWO – THE RISING FOUNDATION

The Rising Foundation's Transition 2 is a 10 month in-school programme that bridges school and a students' next step for learners in south Auckland schools to transition from intermediate into secondary.

The programme provides the wraparound support and individualised career pathway planning that engages and inspires rangatahi to stay connected to learning and consider the many options that could build their future. It is this exploration and the journey that is important to enable within each rangatahi.

Rangatahi receive workshops, mentoring, one-on-one support, industry networking, career exposure visits, tertiary education support, job placement and assistance and in-school engagement.

The focus is on all elements that make a young person employable and prioritises their individual hopes and needs for their desired career pathway.

45 rangatahi participated in the programme, of which 29% went directly into jobs and a further 49% onto further education pathways. Despite taking place during Covid disruptions, there was 100% engagement throughout.

DEMAND-LED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Youth Connections trialled demand-led workforce development in a number of industries including trades, security, tech and arborists. This approach fast tracks rangatahi into quality skilled work and recognises the in-demand skills shortages employers are facing. The approach provided wrap around support for rangatahi, including transport, basic employment skills, documentation and financial literacy alongside

 targeted short courses, training or micro-credentials and job brokerage. Employer and rangatahi connection during the programme and the ability to earn-as-you-learn at the later stage of the programme was vital in building a stronger relationship between the employer and the rangatahi.

Targeted employment programmes like this, linked to live jobs are much less risky for rangatahi with limited resources and increase motivation from both the rangatahi and employer given the likelihood of a job matching.

In a pilot with Visionary Group, 14 out of 15 achieved ongoing employment through this approach, almost all in the arborist industry targeted, despite

Covid and personal challenges.

TE TAIWHANGA RANGATAHI – YOUTH LAB

Te Taiwhanga Rangatahi is a youth design and innovation lab. It helps Government, Council and the private sector understand rangatahi, through rangatahi.

Seven young designers from South Auckland and a network of peers work on issues where the outcomes for South Auckland are persistently under performing –like education, employment and the environment.

Together they are turning youth voice into action, by working with other youth groups so they can be more strategic. They work peer to peer with them to accelerate their thinking and focus on the most powerful and influential actions they can be taking.

Te Taiwhanga Rangatahi has been working on initiatives such as exploring high value green career pathways and supporting MOE Auckland Youth Advisory Group to build their design and influence capacity so rangatahi can act as equal partners with public, private and community sectors.

HAVE YOUR SAY – RANGATAHI ENGAGEMENT IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET SUBMISSIONS

In March 2023, over 200 rangatahi aged between 12-30 years from South and West Auckland attended two workshops to learn about the Auckland Council draft budget. Rangatahi were provided with the opportunity to ask questions from subject matter experts and complete submissions.

This was delivered in partnership with Te Taiwhanga Rangatahi, Brown Pride, Mā Te Huruhuru, Zeal, Auckland Council's Engagement Team and Finance Team. As a result over 150 rangatahi submitted feedback to Auckland Council on the draft budget. Post event, youth development organisations continued to advocate for submissions.

It demonstrated a new approach to proactively engaging rangatahi in the democratic process.

TECH THREE BAGS FULL (3BF)

Three Bags Full (3BF) programme by KidsCoin supports school students at risk of dropping out of school due to their families financial situation to continue their education while developing strong digital and financial skills along with lifelong learnings skills. This programme supports young people to earn while they learn.

Youth Connections piloted a programme with KidsCoin in 2019, to address two key aspects, keeping young people at Papakura High School and also support them to be exposed to technology at school.

This programme helped to highlight the importance of students staying at school, learning and having exposure to technology at a young age. It also showed how removing financial barriers during their schooling is vital for them to pursue their learning in technology and developing their confidence.

This helps the families to see the potential in their children and support their high value career choices.

20 Māori and Pasifika rangatahi completed the programme, all reporting personal growth and increased confidence as a result, as well as wanting to pursue a tech related career.

This was subsequently expanded to support whānau and other local schools with Local Board, Foundation North and other philanthropic funding .

SUPPORTING RANGATAHI ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In 2021 a Māori Business Community Pop-Up Shop in Manukau in partnership with Ngahere Communities was an opportunity for Māori and Pasifika rangatahi to develop their ideas and products for market through the Youth Businesses Into The Hood initiative.

The success of the pop-up led to spin offs in West Auckland. Ranui 135, working in partnership with rangatahi, launched a Christmas pop-up shop in Westcity Mall in December 2021, it showcased Youth Enterprise Scheme (YES) products and was supported by a specially designed digital platform for e-commerce and participants were supported with business mentoring and development workshops.

The pop-up employed four rangatahi on a living wage, featured 19 Māori and Pasifika businesses, provided 10 rangatahi with 1:1 support and mentoring, and generated $38,000 revenue and sold out all stock in its 14 days of operation. In 2022 a follow up event saw an increase in the number of YES businesses participating and rangatahi running the shop.

REA COACH

Rea is a Māori owned education provider supporting learners into the technology sector through an 18-week part-time programme followed by a three-month internship with employers.

Rea's connection to the IT sector and employer's needs, combined with flexible learning and an accelerated pathway, have produced real success for Youth Connections participants.

The 18 rangatahi funded by Youth Connections, received a learner experience grounded in Te Ao Māori, with a strong focus on wellbeing and a coach led approach to pastoral care. On-the-job training and on-demand support also provided a safe and nurtured environment during the internship with continued support available after employment placement.

60% completed the programme, continuing onto a range of employment and education pathways including securing roles at Deloitte, The Warehouse Group and Watercare.

SUPPORTING LOCAL PROVIDERS IN PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Mā Te Huruhuru is a charitable trust that takes a unique kaupapa Māori approach to support rangatahi in South Auckland who experience family violence, gangs and poverty. It offers a comprehensive programme ranging from employment support, life-skills, health and well-being advice, social work support and mentoring. Critically however it is grounded in Te Ao Māori and focuses on connecting rangatahi to their cultural identity.

Youth Connections was able to support Mā Te Huruhuru to access seed funding from the Local Boards and acted as guarantor securing them premises to operate the Trust and create a hub in the community as a safe space for rangatahi.

Brown Pride is a community-based gym and fitness facility in Manukau. Established as a partnership between five Samoan men it began as a fitness enterprise, before progressing to provide rangatahi mentoring, coaching and employment support after recognising a strong need from their members seeking support for whānau members and friends.

Youth Connections was able to provide seed funding, programme development support and connect Brown Pride with other businesses to help them develop their own business model.

ENVIROSCHOOLS SUSTAINABILITY CAREER'S PATHWAYS PILOT 2022

A partnership between Auckland Council's EnviroSchools and Youth Connections to remove barriers for Year 13 Māori and Pasifika rangatahi from South Auckland to engage in sustainability career pathways at Auckland Council.

This pilot recognised the lack of representation from Māori and Pasifika in sustainability fields and limited opportunities to learn about sustainability. But also, the value of cultural knowledge and practices as essential for developing innovative solutions and embedding regenerative practice to respond to the challenge of the climate crisis.

Six rangatahi from four South Auckland EnviroSchools experienced a range of paid high-quality work experience opportunities in sustainability related roles including:

- Working on significant ecological areas with iwi planning Kauri dieback and pest detector dogs.
- Education and community climate action planning
- Bio information and the use of UAV drones.
- A Ranger Day at Auckland's Regional parks
- Urban design

This was supported by partners including Social Labour Supply, EcoJustice, Ihumatao Marae and Auckland Museum.

As part of the scheme Auckland Council provided each rangatahi with a $5k budget for development projects after their work experience.

Youth Connections advised as to the deployment of funding and supported the provision of pastoral care, financial literacy and Māori and Pasifika mentors for the scheme.

The insights from the pilot demonstrate the critical role that quality, culturally grounded and equity-led work experience plays for Māori and Pasifika rangatahi, and the role that many corporate organisations can play in this space.

Rangatahi reported high levels of engagement and value; feeling of connection to the local iwi; and how the cultural representation of tuakana was appreciated and how they could relate to mentors from the same place with similar experiences.

Importantly the pilot showcased a model for how to work cross organisationally and with communities to achieve positive outcomes and change.

GEM – THE GOOD EMPLOYER MATRIX

GEM is an evidence-based tool originated by TSI's Uptempo team and further developed by Youth Connections and TupuToa. It brings an equity lens to how employers can increase opportunities for Māori and Pasifika in their organisations, building and progressing Aotearoa's future workforce.

It provides a set of standards and benchmarks to improve diversity in the workforce and enable Māori and Pasifika staff to progress and succeed at work by removing inequalities and recognising their unique contribution.

Māori and Pasifika are hugely important for the future of Aotearoa's economy. As the fastest growing population, by 2043 they will represent 32% of the country's employment base. Economically they are a powerhouse. The Māori economy has grown in value to $68.7bn in 2018, and the Pasifika economy is represented in $8.6bn in assets alone. Despite this Māori and Pasifika experience poorer employment outcomes; lower pay; and limited progression and career development opportunities.

GEM helps employers develop pathways to increase and improve the progression of Māori and Pasifika talent in their organisations across four key areas.

1. Recruitment & Promotion
2. Organisation & Culture
3. Pay, Conditions & Benefits
4. Training & Development

12. Rangatahi in South Auckland - a snapshot

The experiences of Māori and Pasifika rangatahi in South Auckland told through numbers.

As one of the fastest growing and most youthful populations in New Zealand, Māori and Pasifika represent our future workforce and economic security.

The health, wellbeing and education of our Māori and Pasifika tāmariki and rangatahi is critical to the future success of New Zealand.

Youth Connections has made headway in supporting rangatahi in South and West Auckland. However, when over a quarter of Auckland's tāmariki and rangatahi live in the Southern Initiative area, more needs to be done.[7]

These numbers tell a story about Māori and Pasifika rangatahi in South and West Auckland today: one of entrenched inequality and structural barriers which prevent them from reaching their full potential.

That despite numerous policies and interventions over decades, stubborn issues remain. The scale and complexity demand a continued systemic response working across community, employers, and agencies in partnership with rangatahi and whānau.

OUR FUTURE

Māori and Pasifika populations are young and growing.

The average age for Māori is 25.4 years old (for Pasifika it is 23.4 years) compared with 41.4 years for Pākeha.
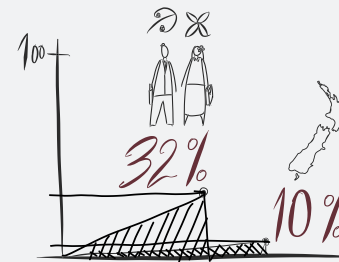
Māori and Pasifika working age population grew by 32% in five years compared with only 10% nationally. [8]
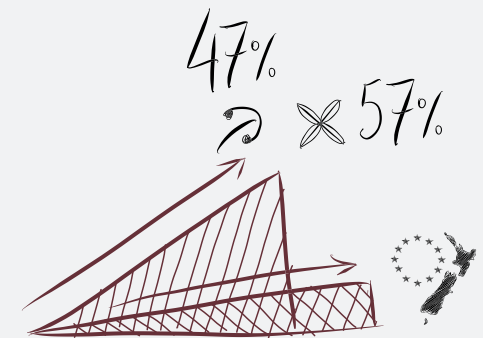
The number of Māori and Pasifika in employment rose by 47% and 57% respectively during the same period. Nearly triple the rate for NZ European.[9]

LEARNING

The education system is not enabling Māori and Pasifika to achieve their full potential.
Māori and Pasifika in South Auckland are more likely to leave school with little or no qualifications.

32.3%   13.1%

20.0%   5.7%

16.3%   8.0%
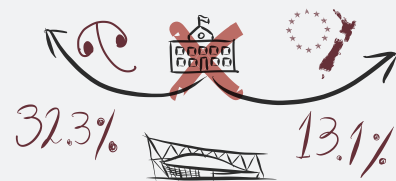
32.3 per cent of Māori and 13.1
per cent of Europeans in the
Southern Initiative area left
school without NCEA Level 1. [10]

Compared with 20.0 per cent
of Māori and 5.7 per cent
of Europeans in the rest of
Auckland. [11]

The average for all ethnic groups
in The Southern Initiative area was
16.3 per cent, compared to 8.0 per
cent in the rest of Auckland. [12]

South Auckland rangatahi are playing catch up after experiencing barriers to school completion or
University entry that have limited their pathways to higher-value tertiary qualifications.

72%   72% FOR LEVEL 1-4
QUALIFICATIONS [13]

3%   JUST 3% WHERE
DIPLOMAS [14]

13%   AND 13% BACHELORS [15]
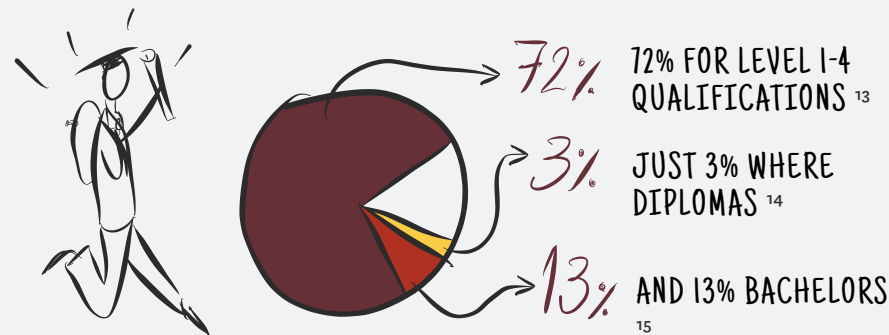
South Auckland rangatahi who
completed studies at tertiary
institutes were almost twice as
likely to have been doing level 1-4
qualifications compared with other
Aucklanders.[16]

12. Rangatahi in South Auckland - a snapshot

Rangatahi are paying dearly for the cost of catch-up

Whilst least likely to have a degree than other young Aucklanders, 86% of South Auckland rangatahi were likely to have a student loan, averaging $17,000 per loan.[17]

Rangatahi in South Auckland have higher rates of unemployment and joblessness

The Reserve Bank predicts an economic downturn would see rangatahi unemployed at significantly less rates that in other age groups and take longer to find new employment, with Māori and Pasifika hardest hit in job downturns.[18]

Māori and Pasifika rangatahi earn less than their Pākeha counterparts.

The average yearly income for Māori rangatahi was $21,300 in 2018, compared with $24,740 for pākeha.

$21,300 $24,740

Pākeha earn on average $2,407 and $3,348 more than Māori and Pasifika rangatahi in South Auckland (respectively). [19]

LIVING

Māori and Pasifika rangatahi experience high levels
of child poverty. Rates have worsened in Auckland.

June 2020 nearly 31% of children were living in households with less
than 60% mean equivalised disposable household income. [20]

31%

Rangatahi in South Auckand were more likely to live in poor quality and overcrowded homes.

46%
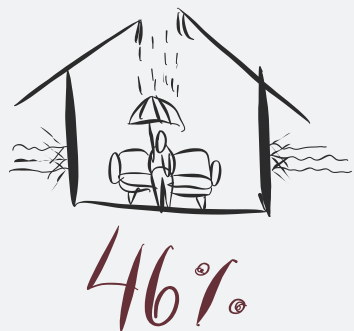
Poorly ventilated, damp and
mouldy homes contribute to poor
health outcomes. Tāmariki and
rangatahi in South Auckland are
more likely to live in unhealthier
homes. Nearly 46% of 0-24 year
olds in Māngere-Ōtāhuhu and
Ōtara-Papatoetoe living in homes
that are always damp.

47.3%
36.8%
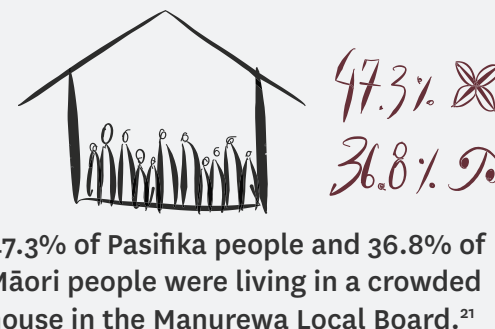
47.3% of Pasifika people and 36.8% of
Māori people were living in a crowded
house in the Manurewa Local Board.[21]

One in three rangatahi experience housing deprivation and insecurity.

Those most affected by housing deprivation were rangatahi
living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods. Māori, Pasifika
and rainbow youth were more likely to be affected.[22]

Appendix A: Approach

This describes the approach we have taken to this report, its scope, key activities, and limitations.

Approach

The purpose of this work has been to surface insights from the experiences of designing, delivering, and managing the Youth Connections programme with a view to contribute to the ongoing development of an evidence base as how best to support Māori and Pasifika rangatahi.

Its aim is to influence and shape future policy and funding strategies for rangatahi.

Its focus is on the four years from 2019-2023 under the custodianship of TSI and TWI.

Workshops

- Four workshops were held with members of the Youth Connections TSI team to explore their experiences of the Youth Connections programme.

- Workshop 1 Preparing for Interviews: co-designing the approach to interviews to ensure that they are aligned with key exploration questions, TSI practice and protocol.

- Workshop 2 Tracing the Whakapapa: charting the evolution of youth Connections, to understand its past, present and future.

- Workshop 3 Understanding the ripple effect: demonstrating the role that Youth Connections has played as a convener in the system and how it helped to catalyse impact beyond its immediate activities.

- Workshop 4 Insights from experience: capturing insights and learning from the direct experience of the Youth Connections Team.

Interviews

- 13 stakeholder interviews were conducted from a cross section of delivery partners, employers and rangatahi.

- Interviews sought to explore their experiences of Youth Connections; what they believed to be the necessary factors to support rangatahi; the challenges and barriers they experienced; and their experience of working with TSI.

- A Youth Connections Interview Framework was developed which set out the process, ethics, and approach to supporting the principles of Māori Data Sovereignty

- All participants were provided with a copy of this framework, informed of their rights as a participant and full questions in advance of the interview.

- Interview transcriptions were shared with participants post interview for their records.

- Interviews were carried out independently. No members of the TSI Youth Connections team where present at the interviews. With the exception of rangatahi to ensure young person safeguarding was protected.

- Quotes provided are anonymous and non-attributable but drawn from these interviews. The language and words used are the speakers own. Where words may be missed in conversation, infill words have been added and noted by the use of [ ]. These are only used to ensure the sentence reads appropriately.

- The content of these interviews remains confidential.

Literature Review

- A review of recent reports, data and documentation relating to Youth Connections provided by the TSI.
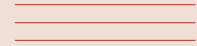
Appendix A: Approach

Qualifiers

In reading this report the following should be understood:

- It is not an academically designed research project.

- Although full efforts have been adopted to ensure appropriate ethical arrangements are in place to engage with stakeholders.

- It does not evaluate or assess the impact of specific initiatives or projects delivered by Youth Connections.

- Due to limited evidence and availability of records, it is not possible to provide insights, data, or evidence from earlier phases of Youth Connections delivered prior to 2019 by others.

Appendix B: Further reading

The intention of this report has been to build on previous work developed by TSI and TWI on Youth Connections. Readers should refer to the following for additional information.

Te Taiwhanga Rangatahi – An equity-led youth design lab (2022)

Creating Futures for Pacific high school students (2021)

Evidence Brief Employer Engagement (2021)

Exploring the Youth Economy Discovery Insights Report (2021)

What works in employment support & job broker-coaching services? (2021)

Growing the innovation ecosystem in South Auckland (2020)

Know me, Believe in me / Kia mārama mai, kia whakapono mai (2020)

Youth in the South – A Data Overview of Rangatahi in Four South Auckland Local Board Areas (2020)

He Awa Ara Rau – A journey of many paths (2019)

Appendix C: Acknowledgments

This describes the approach we have taken to this report, its scope, key activities, and limitations.

End Notes

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2. Zheng, G., Hoang, D. & Pacheco, G. (2021). Benchmarking New Zealand's frontier firms, New Zealand Productivity Commission. www.productivity.govt.nz

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4. https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/453303/tertiary-institutions-given-10-years-to-end-minority-pass-rate-disparity Oct 2021 Accessed 04.04.23

5. UN World Youth Report: Youth Social Entreprenuership and the 2030 Agenda (July 2020) (p54)

6. EC Expert Group Report: Developing the creative and innovative potential ofyoung people through non-formal learnign in ways that are relevant to employability. European Commission (Jun 2014) (p2)

7. Auckland Council, (May 2022) A Profile of Children and Young People in Auckland: 2022 Update Technical Report. https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/2381/tr2022-07-profile-of-children-and-young-people-in-auckland-2022-update.pdf

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10-16. Auckland Council (2020). Youth in the South: A data overview of rangatahi in four local board areas. https://www.tsi.nz/s/TSI-Youth-in-the-South-final-report-Feb2020.pdf

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18. https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/hub/news/2022/03/maori-pasifika-young-people-and-small-regions-hardest-hit-in-job-downturns

19. IBID Auckland Council (2020)

20. Auckland Council, (May 2022) A Profile of Children and Young People in Auckland: 2022 Update Technical Report. https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/2381/tr2022-07-profile-of-children-and-young-people-in-auckland-2022-update.pdf

21. Stats NZ. (2018b) 2018 Census household crowding for people of Māori ethnicity https:// www.stats.govt.nz/news/almost-1-in9-people-live-in-a-crowded-house

22. IBID