Tāiki e!

The Todd Foundation Youth to Employment Collaboration

- **What does it take to grow placed-based, locally-led systems change to enable young people to achieve success in their place, for their place?**
- **How does Tāiki e! demonstrate this through their journey, and in their relationship with The Todd Foundation (TTF)?**

Introduction

Since 2014, The Todd Foundation (TTF) has utilised their Special Focus Fund to invest in Youth Employment initiatives via four place based local partnerships across Aotearoa to develop community-led approaches to enable and support pathways for youth to employment (Y2E). These partnerships have been with: Toi-EDA (Eastern Bay of Plenty), Trust Tairāwhiti (Tairāwhiti), Tāiki e! (Tairāwhiti), and YOUth INspire (Lower Hutt, Wellington).

In 2017, TTF engaged The Knowledge Institute (Member of The Kinnect Group) to assist the collaborative development of an evaluation framework in partnership with their Y2E partners. A range of evaluative processes were facilitated with these partners to gain insight into their 'story of change', and the steps they took in their journey towards achieving community-led, place-based systems change for the Y2E initiative. TTF and the evaluation team also examined what attributes supported and hindered this process of change, including the role that TTF played as the funding partner. A key goal was to inform the wider philanthropic and funding sectors on what it takes to successfully support communities to achieve systems change.

One of these evaluative processes involved facilitating a half day workshop with partners to collaboratively determine what success looks like and what is seen as credible evidence. A suite of six success criteria for the initiative were identified:

1. Genuine, diverse community ownership and leadership
2. Collective and system focused solutions
3. Supporting youth to be work ready (hard skills, soft skills, readiness)
4. Employer engagement
5. Innovation behaviour (at the edge, social enterprise, innovation)
6. Supporting functions & processes.

While these criteria will provide the general structure for this case study, it is critical to note that Tāiki e! were not part of the initial collaborative design that produced the success criteria. Tāiki e! guide and drive their community-led systems change through tikanga Māori and therefore the journey of Tairāwhiti-based Tāiki e! will be reflected through both the lens of their tikanga and the success criteria for the Youth to Employment initiative.[1] This is critical to acknowledge, as it reflects Tāiki e! expression as Māori, indigenous innovators.

[1]*Refer to Appendix 1 for an overview of the Tāiki e! Tikanga.*

Background to Tāiki e!

In their own words, Tāiki e! describes themselves as Tairāwhiti's first impact house; a collaborative space with a shared agenda for social and environmental action. They 'lead with aroha' and are focused on bringing people together who are passionate about creating systemic change by using collaborative design principles and entrepreneurial thinking.

Growing and supporting rangatahi, whānau and communities in Tairāwhiti is the focus of Tāiki e!, which is led by Cain Kerehoma and Renay Charteris. Entrepreneurship, capability, and collective leadership development are key to the purpose and approach of Tāiki e!

We are Whānau, We Work Together, We Grow Others[2]

Tāiki e! recognises that their community is rich in talent and opportunity. Tāiki e! helps to inspire, connect, and empower people to shine in their own leadership and aroha. Tāiki e! is home to a diverse range of social entrepreneurs and impact ventures. From impact investment to digital literacy, to wellbeing data analytics, the Tāiki e! whānau are working on a range of important kaupapa. They offer support to those who have a shared vision for a prosperous, regenerative, and caring community to lead with purpose and intention.

For Tāiki e!, collaboration isn't just a word, it's a way of being; actively fostering mahitahi (working together) and leveraging the diversity of talent, perspectives and networks that everyone can bring. Tāiki e! encourages growing individual ideas and ventures through collaborative leadership and shared action, while contributing to a number of shared community impact projects.

"We endeavour to uplift the makers, the doers, the innovators and the dreamers with the confidence, tools and networks to be a force for positive social and environmental impact".

This is where we want to go and what we're seeing as the opportunity to move forward and this is what you could kind of, these are the ways you could help us, yeah, that might kind of have some pieces, hopefully a couple of gems in there that we could, which we've already sort of talked a little bit about, you know, in terms of a different kind of funding relationship, help with data, networks, broader things than just money, that sort of stuff.

[2] *This section draws heavily from the Tāiki e! Website.*

A brief profile of young people in Tairāwhiti[3]

- According to the 2018 census, Gisborne district has a usually resident population of 47, 565 and Wairoa district has a usually resident population of 8,400
- 6.3% of the Tairāwhiti workforce are currently unemployed compared with 4.1% nationally[4]
- Tairāwhiti has approximately 1,300 15-24 year olds who are not currently in employment or education[5]
- The Tairāwhiti population tends to have more people in the 0-19 age group, compared with the national average, and there is a high proportion of Māori in the region, compared with the national average. Tairāwhiti also has a very high proportion of people in the most deprived section of the population[6]
- Although there are more young people in the region, historically, they have not remained local. However, the young workforce coming through presents a real competitive advantage[7]
- The proportions of people aged 15-19 (Gisborne=68.0%; Wairoa=82.1%), and 20-24 (Gisborne=63.9%; Wairoa=78.6%) identifying as Māori are among the highest of all Territorial Authorities
- The population of Māori grew faster in Gisborne and Wairoa from 2013-2018 than the population of other ethnicities, and there were significant reductions in the non-Māori population, particularly among those aged 20-24 years old
- The proportion of school leavers who left before their 17th birthday was relatively high in Gisborne and Wairoa, compared to other Territorial Authorities between 2009 and 2018
- Rates of attainment of NCEA level 2 qualifications by 18 years old are low in Gisborne and Wairoa. The proportion of school leavers with a University Entrance qualification is relatively low and the proportion without an NCEA level 1 qualification is relatively high in Gisborne and Wairoa compared to most other areas. The proportion of school leavers with an NCEA level 3 qualification is relatively high in Gisborne district compared to other areas, but across all districts, this proportion of school leavers is relatively small. Larger proportions of school leavers in Gisborne either have an NCEA level 2 or University Entrance qualification
- For both 15 to 19, and 20 to 24-year-olds, the NEET rate (Not in Employment, Education or Training) in the Gisborne and Hawke's Bay regions is higher than the national average and is higher than most other regions
- Geographically, the distribution of the 15-24-year-old population is similar to the distribution of employment opportunities in Gisborne and Wairoa. The largest cluster of jobs is around the urban centre of Gisborne.

Agriculture is a significant industry in Gisborne and Wairoa, and accounts for around a quarter of jobs. Other important employers in the area are manufacturing, healthcare, and social assistance.

What has it taken for Tāiki e! to achieve place-based, locally-led systems change?

Figure 1: Tāiki e! key ingredients for place-based, locally-led systems change

1.
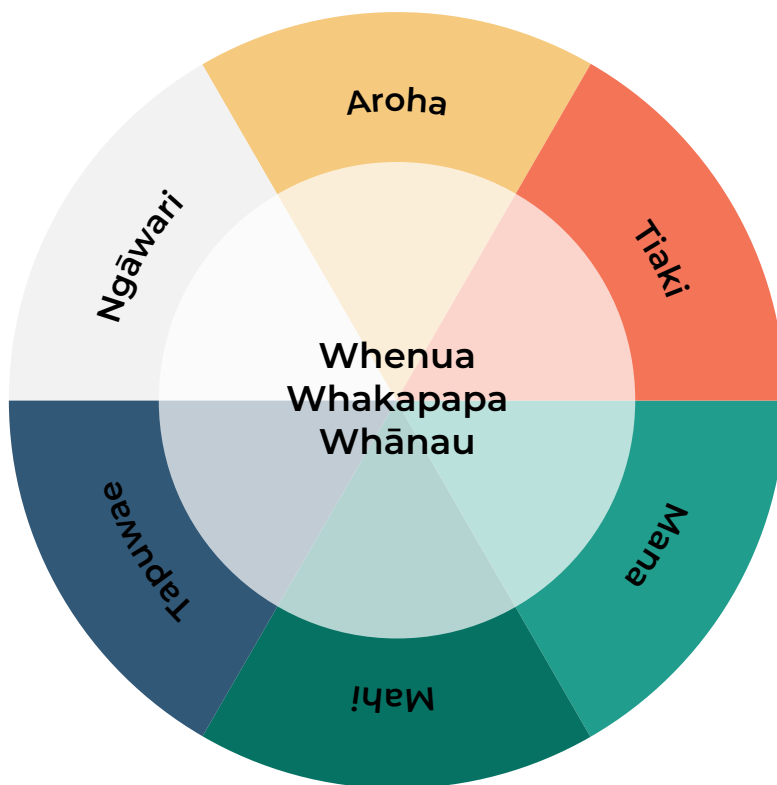
Genuine, diverse community ownership and leadership

Tāiki e! is a manifestation of the expressed belief in the whenua, whakapapa and whānau of Tairāwhiti. Genuine, diverse, community ownership and collective leadership is at its heart. There is a deep commitment to the kaupapa of place-based change, leading with aroha, and through wairuatanga.

Tāiki e! creates connections and relationships that reflect and drive kaupapa. This requires a deep awareness of the pulse of the community, being observant of, and able to respond to what is happening within community.

.... pulling people from our community, it's rangatahi focused, it's leadership ... it's the value of entrepreneurship for rangatahi, it's the specialness of Tairāwhiti, building from strengths, you know, it's kind of got all those sort of elements within it ....Rangatahi are connected into making a difference – want to be enabled to make change [reflecting on the partnership with Youth Enterprise Trust].

There is an explicit and actioned desire to nurture people, passions, and ideas for systemic change, through community-led development. Therefore, there is commitment to long-term change within and for Tairāwhiti. There is a constant offering of opportunities for people to grow and test ideas. The Tāiki e! Impact Hub explicitly wants to invest and realise action for impact. This is also seen in their desire to nurture rangatahitanga - to sustain rangatahi in Tairāwhiti, so that they can achieve success in Tairāwhiti.

They continue to build belief through impact projects and other offerings, as well as creating spaces for connections to spark ideas and collaboration. Building sustainability through entrepreneurialism within rangatahi and the wider community, through tuakana-teina approaches such as 'Technovation' and 'Like a Boss', are critical to building dreams and creating legacies.

Technovation, it was a girls, a global challenge, an app development programme, it also had an entrepreneurial kind of education component to it. Essentially, girls 10 to 18 [years] form groups, come up with ideas to solve challenges in the community, build apps, prototypes of apps, so, it has to be an app-based solution. It was real grassroots and community based, so, it kind of wasn't inside of schools, we really worked with some of the community-based groups that were around, both here in Gisborne and up the Coast, and then we just kind of learnt our way through it because we didn't really know what we were getting into but [said] let's just give it a go. Did really well, it was a four-month programme and culminated in a sort of pitch event ... we had about 30 girls and they created some pretty awesome things and as a result of that, we were learning heaps about different things that work, so, we were trying kind of weekend wānanga type formats, we were trying after work things, we were trying parent mentoring types of approaches.

Tāiki e! understand the complexity of their work to create systemic change within the local contexts that they support. However, they mahitahi with joy and fun in the process.

1.

... actually creating space for youth enterprise, Māori enterprise, ... build people up into the marketplace and then leadership... How do you grow that collaborative leadership, cooperative leadership, community leadership ...
that's kind of our true north - just figuring, those kinds of bubbles and unfortunately, as tough as it is, you have to do all of them

2.
Collective and system focused solutions

Tāiki e! are intentional about re-indigenising through focused and long-term attention, and they action collective and systems-focused solutions. The whānau of Tāiki e! work on building ecosystems, with much of the work focused on establishing the invisible infrastructure 'below the ground', leveraging diversity, building interconnectedness, and realising aspirations 'above ground'.

This is another expression of local and unique leadership through the establishment of the Tāiki e! Impact Hub, which resists the influences that do not reflect indigenous knowledge systems, in turn sharing the mauri (life force) that speaks to those with a shared vision or understanding akin to Tāiki e! This fosters opportunities to collectively design and lead kaupapa.

... it was good because it was an opportunity to actually hear some of their āwangawanga about some of this ... [and] also hear from [the kura] about what their ideas for STEM, youth entrepreneurship, technology, financial literacy ... this [is what this] whole space [is about]. ...[at the] time I was working with Banqer, which was Kendall Flutey and her team, working on the financial literacy sort of tool that they've created and was working with a few kura around that kaupapa, so, it was [bringing the kaupapa and people together].

Extending from collective design, Tairāwhiti communities have been conscious of 'external' or 'imported' programmes vs community driven, collective solutions, which are valued and have enabled communities to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic.

Programmes have their advantages but we're over programmes, and everybody has kind of clocked what a programme looks and feels like and how the system works and, so, there's sort of like fatigue, programme fatigue.

Rangatahi want to lead rangatahi things.
Māori want to lead Māori things.
And I think that's fair enough.
So, again, I think philanthropy is in a unique position to kind of be able to really think about where it sits in relation to helping enable more of that from within leadership capacity.

One thing is the more we can build collective muscle, not individual muscle .....that village mentality has kind of got a real boost in the arm, in the post-Covid world and we expect to see more of that village co-working ... but they still need a team and a whānau and lots of interaction ... networking is our resilience, whanaungatanga is our resilience.

2.
Collective and system focused solutions

The whānau of Tāiki e! focus on areas that they deeply care about, and that uplift and enhance through Te Ao Māori and can therefore be tikanga driven. This is also reflected in their past and present relationships with collaborators, such as TTF. TTF backed their belief and commitment to Tāiki e! There was a purposeful 'invisibility' of TTF as a silent supporter, contributing in a range of ways that added value to Tāiki e!

Trial and error was an expected learning process, and accepted and encouraged by TTF as an expression of tiaki. This learning could then be shared with others, and demonstrates the naturally generative and reciprocal nature of tiaki.

... we want a partnership that's broader than just money, we're looking for relationship-based partnerships, not transactional ones, and I think that's what's been really good [with TTF] and Seumas, [he] fundamentally, works from that basis.

I guess when we speak to the role that philanthropy can play, is we would never have got that type of enabling funding from a government agency or a local [funder] ... where we said 'well, we don't actually know what the programme is and can't tell you how many kids and all the rest of it, but [invest in us] and we'll go out and almost feel where the energy and the ideas are inside of the community and we'll just run with that ... we'll give ourselves a year just to kind of, you know, experiment' ... So, Todd, [invested in us to] go out and experiment with a whole bunch of different things. From our perspective, it was awesome because we had the freedom just to kind of go and find where the natural energy and capability in the community was and, you know, Seumas was awesome because he understands this community and that things do take time and you can't just snap fingers and it turn things on.

Tāiki e! accept that relationships often come to a natural end, and do not pursue relationships when there is resistance or a lack of understanding of collective and system-focused solutions.

You know, for them, they were very much on the short-term [focus], that [was] their agenda that they were hoping that we would help them to kind of serve.

3.
Supporting youth to be work ready (hard skills, soft skills, readiness)

For Tāiki e!, the goal for local rangatahi goes far beyond supporting youth to be work ready or getting them into jobs. The focus is on youth enterprise, supporting rangatahi to dream big, and mentoring them to develop their ideas, particularly in fields such as technology and media. The collective leadership of Tāiki e! have a long-term vision for their rangatahi and community, and are continuously focused on facilitating connections with others who can help manifest this vision. These are community driven ideas and solutions, informed by the needs of rangatahi and love for Tairāwhiti and its people.

And we were always like – this isn't really about, you know, sort of the short-term stuff. We're trying to create more longer-term transformation and build community infrastructure to think about jobs but kind of not, you know, forestry jobs and truck driving jobs, but technology jobs and, you know, building entrepreneurial capability.

3.

Supporting youth to be work ready (hard skills, soft skills, readiness)

How do you curate spaces to engage diverse peoples? With aroha at the heart – things start to emerge.

There is a deep love for rangatahi and a strong commitment to whakapapa and the legacy they can create, individually and collectively, to manifest dreams. Again, this is not simply about getting young people into jobs.

We want an intergenerational approach – sense of community when they can pop in as themselves, rangatahi, parents, for themselves, in their own way.
[One rangatahi] brought his sister in, then popped in with her friend to seek support for a CV; Mum came in as wanting to learn te reo Māori and then wants Family Court to learn te reo Māori so they can develop the deeper understanding of it; so connected her with te reo coach.

You can support them and their whole whānau through [Tāiki e!].

There is a strong focus on building rangatahi belief ('developing the belief muscle'), supporting them to feel hopeful, and encouraging them to dream big. Intergenerational connections and concepts like tuakana-teina or organic aunty and uncle mentoring are maximised for the benefit of rangatahi. In this way, Tāiki e! curate conditions for rangatahi to grow in their leadership, recognising and utilising intergenerational taonga.

It's kind of – how do we create a real smorgasbord of, you know, really inclusive, diverse, high expectation, really stretchy, you know, I always look for programmes where we're going to stretch these kids and put them, not through the wringer, but kind of through the wringer a little bit, to build some of that...it's not resilience, it's belief.

When they can achieve things that people don't think that they could of, then these kids start to kind of believe in themselves a little bit more – that they can create an app, that they can build things that the community kind of makes them cry, you know, and say that they're awesome and stuff, you know, but you've kind of got to stretch them a little bit and, so, we do look for things where we can really wrap around the kids in those kinds of ways.

Yeah, yeah, belief, that's foundational and it's slow, you know, just by telling people they can doesn't mean they believe it. That seeing is believing stuff, throw them into a start-up weekend, help them to build their first kind of business, help them to do their first community project, just get them into it, build that muscle, the belief kind of comes with it and it comes quite quickly if they've got, you know, if you can curate the conditions for them to come through in their own leadership.

Building belief is encouraged through a range of rangatahi initiatives to enhance and nurture rangatahitanga through innovation, entrepreneurialism, and transferable skills. Examples include supporting rangatahi through social enterprise (e.g., community kai sharing pantry/pātaka kai), supporting rangatahi to pursue passions such as pacific art and running an open mic night, supporting rangatahi to participate in local market gardens or running an entrepreneurship club.

3.

Supporting youth to be work ready (hard skills, soft skills, readiness)

We very much are though, more probably in the entrepreneurship sort of space, so, it's actually – what are the ideas that the young people have for creating change in our community? And who are the people that can bring different experiences and tools to support them on that kind of journey, that we can then, you know, kind of wrap some skills up and build leadership capacity around them but also, yeah, what are some programmes that people aren't doing, like the Māori medium stuff, but all community-led development kind of stuff.

….so, a club idea where they can self-regulate a bit of the pace around, you know, how quickly they want to fire some of their ideas up and get going and more of that organic sort of aunty and uncle mentoring, which we can leverage from having this kind of place where there's lots of small business owners around, that's kind of our idea for having it, something as a foundation. Then we can bring schools in and we can run programmes and have speakers and, you know, kind of run competitions and stuff but there's something regular, consistent, that's ongoing, and is community.

These experiences have had profound effects on local rangatahi, in some cases providing scaffolding or inspiration to engage in further education or other opportunities. Rangatahi gain useable and transferable skills (e.g., stretching resources, structuring sponsorship letters), and some have been able to recognise the benefits that come from connecting practical experiences that Tāiki e! is able to support, with theory that is taught by local institutes.

I wouldn't be in the bachelor of business, it got me interested in that business stuff.

I can tell that all my classmates would benefit… from mentoring. I can tell…I'm getting top grades, they are getting good grades, but not high… it's definitely experience that helps me… what I did last year, it was 100% [what] got me through this first term…in how to do stuff… I think it will help me through the whole three years…

We need [the] practical side to it… we are learning all about cashflow issues… talking to us about cashflow issues, and how you might resolve it… we need practical examples… some of the assignments I've been able to relate it.

It was really eye opening – didn't really realise how much impact we had made.

It's still pretty cool… lives go on and lives are busy and everyone is doing different things… Pātaka kai is in me, and I want to do it…

From my own experiences, don't limit yourself, and just be really open to all opportunities you come across; taking opportunities here … to enhance your wellbeing is to just get involved; don't be whakamaa about starting it; you may not have the same opportunity again.

Looking back, this was such a good learning about myself and business; better time management, unleash that creative range; so happy I did this and worth it already. I will value this.

3.

Supporting youth to be work ready (hard skills, soft skills, readiness)

Tāiki e! whānau actively look for strengths that can be fostered to grow (e.g., cultural capital).

There's lots of money floating around this town and, so, it's not really a shortage of resource that's kind of the issue, you know, it's that it's all very top down, quite paternalistic, it's real low expectation stuff, it's built off a lot of deficit, it's often about trying to fix people or ram them into kind of, you know, jobs or being literate or whatever it is. But it's often kind of how do we, and really low levels of investment into building off where the strength really lies, which is in the culture, you know, the cultural capital of this place is really significant. You'll hear the reo just kind of in the street, organically, you know, it's 50-50 Māori population here, so there's lot of that taonga just walking around, but everybody doesn't always clock it, you know, kind of how much value is just walking around the place.

….go out and find all the good stuff, work from a place of strength, nothing deficit, you know, so really work to what we're strong in here – culture, sharing, yeah, build off the things that we've got kind of going for us.

When all of these strengths come together, placed-based development is sustained and rangatahi desires are affirmed, as they experience success in Tairāwhiti. Collaboration and exploration is nurtured and supported by Tāiki e!

Weaving in the Social Enterprise
… not sure you have to blend; our people are collective and operate collectively, not sure this is separate.

Being open and operating collectively; when open and inclusive we are going back to who we are; decolonising; we are going back to who we are as Māori is part of the mind shift – hold the space to rediscovery, being open to others and Māori is a way to open you to your humanity.

Ultimately, the expression of ngāwari is realised through enabling rangatahi and whānau to truly express their authentic selves, which is encouraged through innovation. This in turn makes explicit the desire of Tāiki e! to contribute to the growth of good ancestors by being good ancestors – by providing mentoring, creating a space to come and go, and to test ideas.

4.

Employer engagement

The expression of their tikanga through whanaungatanga is central to Tāiki e! They build and maintain extensive connections and relationships within local communities, organisations and entities, but also connect into regional, national, and global networks.

These relationships and connections are frequently drawn upon, often to support the kaupapa that are fostered within and by Tāiki e! For example, within local kura and schools, local community groups and clubs, Crown, and other agencies such as CORE Education, and liked-minded kaupapa driven entities such as Youth Enterprise Trust.

4.
Employer engagement

As previously noted, the focus of Tāiki e! is not on giving rangatahi 'work experience'. Rather, it is on creating connections, fostering relationships, utilising the experience of those who may know more in a particular area to mentor young people, and supporting them with their ideas through the actioning of tuakana-teina relationships.

We were really interested in seeing if the entrepreneurship kaupapa would kind of land, so we worked up a conversation through Ministry of Youth Development to get some pūtea to Business Time … 20 rangatahi, aged from about 13 all the way up to about 22, six different kind of ventures that we kick-started. We did some online stuff, we did some mentoring, sort of face-to-face mentoring, we did some seed funding, so, we actually put some money into their kaupapa and we just awhi them along, to try and turn their little ideas into real, living, breathing things.

Tāiki e! is therefore very considerate of the relationships they nurture, as they want to ensure that opportunities for reciprocal partnering are clear and possible for all contributing partners (entities and people) who respond to the karanga of rangatahi innovation and impact.

5.
Innovation (at the edge, social enterprise, innovation)

Innovation, and in particular, being at the outer edges of entrepreneurialism, is central to the vision and collective mahi of Tāiki e! Aroha is the foundation of the collective leadership model that Tāiki e! facilitates with community and whānau in the pursuit of positive change.

If you have time with no financial /burdens that stop you, what would you do with your time? How do we give people back their time – what happens when you do this, what turns up and how? ….. This is inclusive and open to all opportunities, offering to as many as much as we can – broad and wide but more deep work – touching in people's values systems and deep dive into that.

Recognised for being at the cutting edge of innovation and realising aspirations with and for rangatahi through innovation and entrepreneurialism, was the impetus for the relationships between Tāiki e! and TTF.

By enacting their tikanga of manaaki, Tāiki e! encourage people to start from their truth – mana aki – uplifting and striving to bring light and possibility to the futures of rangatahi and whānau, not just exclusively driving towards a job. The visions and ideas that rangatahi have are inherently responding to systemic issues such as poverty, resource scarcity, and social disconnection. By their very nature, these issues are difficult, and not everyone has an appetite to address them. But this is the niche for Tāiki e! - to foster an appetite and harness skills, talents, and resources for systemic change.

So, systems change - not everybody's a fan - sometimes you can sit in your own bubble and think everybody's of that way of thinking but, actually, appetite for change is a smaller group than what we think it is, even amongst our own, they don't want change, even if they're kind of [keen] they're scared of unknown.

5.

[The contribution of Tāiki e! is] trying to hold space for people to give them time and space to explore themselves and how they want to contribute; that they have enough people around them to feel strengthened

6.

Supporting functions & processes

Tāiki e! are clear on their purpose and role - to facilitate a community, a whānau, a collective dedicated to working collaboratively to curate positive change. As noted, they do this by leading with aroha as they nurture young people's ideas and connect them with others who can help, all within the context of their whānau, hapū, iwi, and community.
They are also unwavering in their goal to contribute to, and enhance, the social and cultural capital within Tairāwhiti through fostering innovation. There is an explicit re-indigenising of systems and how systems are convened through Mātauranga Māori.

Building capability in communities – scaffold from spaces to develop foundational capability ... All the right [elements] are here – right size, indigenous to indigenous, deep layers of cultural capital, infused into community, huge voluntary capacity – largest in the country ... have to level up to reengineer the systems tools to utilise our cultural frameworks.

Tāiki e! are unequivocal about how and why placed-based and locally-led solutions can emerge and be sustained through innovation. While recognising the traditional, and usually competitive environment for public funding, they seek to remain connected and to contribute to values-led relationships**.**

We don't have to 'sell' [ourselves and our ideas ... we are] over that 'game' ... people kind of understand or have enough empathy and knowledge of what is transpiring [within and through Tāiki e!] to kind of be able to join the dots. And I think that's a key part of the equation in the community led development space.

The network, the intelligence[s] ..... it's just kind of knowing that you've got people that are really, truly, authentically invested in trying to get the best out of, and are truly supportive of the work that is happening.