

Early Years System Reform

Discovery Phase

Rapid Environmental Scan

March 2022



Context for undertaking this work

This environmental scan was commissioned by the Ministry of Health to support the health system's reform programme and its commitment to enabling a fundamentally different approach to the way the health system supports the wellbeing of pēpi, tamariki and their whānau, maximising the contribution that the early years system can make to the goal of pae ora.

The intent was to generate some of the critical learning needed to ensure our future health system is best configured to enable an integrated, whānau centric, equity-focused early years system that is grounded in and informed by the lived experience of children, parents and whānau, and responsive to community needs and aspirations.

Discovery Phase

There were three key questions those leading the early years health system transformation effort were seeking to answer:

1. What already exists that is making a difference to whānau in the early years that could be strengthened and amplified in order to accelerate equity and improve health outcomes?
2. How might we grow the conditions, capacity and capability for whānau and community-led design of new models for delivery of early years services and supports?
3. What does this learning mean for how the health system can work differently in the future in order to achieve more equitable outcomes and honour our Te Tiriti obligations?

This document outlines the approach to and findings of a rapid environmental scan to help identify the current, emerging and desired future state for the early years system of supports.

What we set out to do

Through the environmental scan we wanted to achieve:

- A greater and shared understanding of what good looks like from the perspective of whānau, illustrated through examples of initiatives and action that is already making a difference for whānau in the early years
- Identification of concrete examples of the shifts the early years system needs to make, and potential investment opportunities
- Increased clarity on the conditions that have enabled existing 'bright spots' and how these might be grown into the future.

While we had a particular interest in identifying bright spots in the maternity, WCTO and wider health system, this exercise intentionally took an holistic and whānau-centred view to encompass all equity-focussed initiatives making a difference in the early years.

Our focus was to identify initiatives that:

- Demonstrate active involvement of whānau with lived experience in the design of the initiative
- Lead from Te Ao Māori, Pasifika, or other culturally grounded approaches
- Illustrate a unique collaboration or partnership that shares power differently e.g. Te Tiriti based partnership
- Are explicitly geared towards supporting whānau aspirations, not solely only focused on 'needs'
- Track what matters to whānau, whānau have a role in determining what 'good' looks like
- Get us beyond transactional service or programmatic approaches, towards holistic approaches to supporting whānau wellbeing
- Include aspects that strengthen whānau and support healing, not just responding to immediate challenges or health issues

Limitations: things to keep in mind

Taking a relational approach to this kind of work is necessary; it is also time intensive. There are more people we want to connect with to continue to build a deeper understanding of what's happening across the early years system.

This was a time boxed activity that took place in the month of February 2022, just as the Omicron surge was taking off. Some sensitivity was needed when approaching organisations that were fatigued from intensively supporting their community throughout the pandemic. Towards the end of February, a number of our Tāmaki based team and their whānau were also directly impacted by Omicron.

It is worth noting some of the people we talked to had a high degree of mistrust in the health system, reluctance to be involved and cynicism about the level of commitment for meaningful change. At times, our team had to significantly leverage our relationships to encourage people to participate who are doing important work, yet have been burned by the system in the past.

This was not intended as a comprehensive scan to identify all initiatives that are happening in the early years space. Our approach was intentionally weighted towards engaging with Māori and Pasifika networks and organisations to help us identify innovative, culturally grounded, equity-focused 'bright spot' initiatives. We did not prioritise capturing BAU clinical services or models that did not represent a significant shift from the status quo.

While we did connect with some individual clinical and non-clinical practitioners, this was not intended to be a workforce/professional association engagement. We understood that workforce engagement and consultation was part of a wider process, and that there was value in keeping the environmental scan focussed on community-led change to ensure the voices of 'flax roots' innovators and community champions were not crowded out by the valid concerns and challenges facing our midwifery and child health workforces.

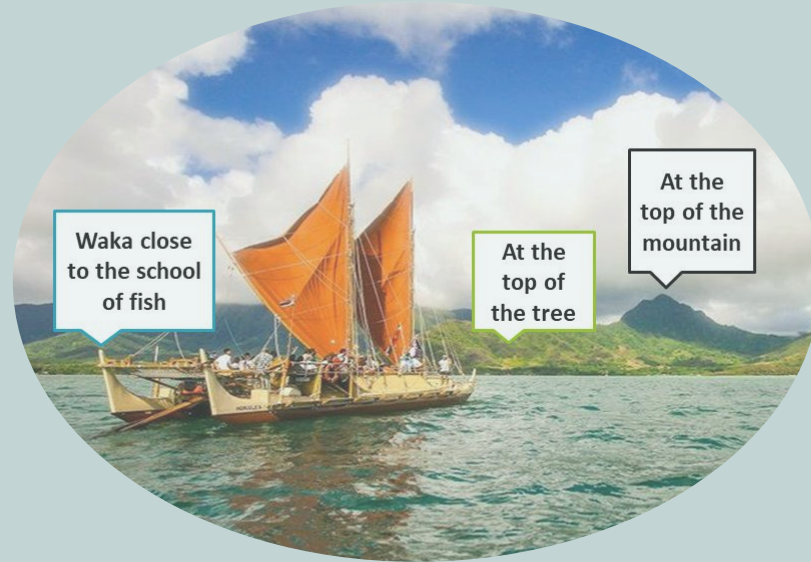
Our approach



The Southern Initiative partnered with Te Hiringa Hauora | The Health Promotion Agency to form a 'dream team' to drive the environmental scan. Each person in the core team brought a particular set of expertise and relationships. A number of other people across TSI and MOH were also engaged in the process through workshops and targeted conversations.

We used the **Fa'afaletui model** to guide the way we identified and mapped connections. This gave us a way to explore different perspectives across the early years system:

1. **Top of the mountain** - funders such as MOH, DHBs, wider social sector agencies and philanthropic foundations
2. **Top of the tree** - Community champions, people with a view to what's happening on the ground and who are also connected in to and influencing the system
3. **Waka close to the fish** - flax roots people working directly with whānau.



Our core team



Roimata
Taniwha-Paoo
Tāonga Tuku Iho



Angie Tangaere
Whānau-led innovation



Tracey-Lee Walker
Māori Community
engagement



Donna Te Whiu
Wellbeing Intrapreneur



Aimee Hadrup
Early Years System
Transformation



Paulien Fa'atafa
Mental Wellbeing
The Southern Initiative



Atelaite Mapa
Pasifika Health
Equity



Tanya Radford
First 1,000 Days
Community
Innovation



Emily Welch
Well Child Tamariki
Ora



Hayley Horne
Child & Youth
Wellbeing



Tania Anderson
Disability & Mental
Health

What we did

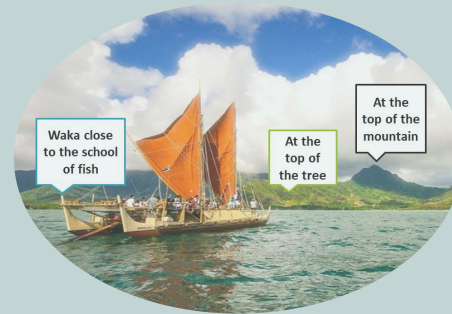
We reviewed existing inputs and Fa'afaletui mapping with key stakeholders to:

- Identify our key 'tree' and 'waka' people, generating a spreadsheet for prioritising and tracking our engagement process
- Develop our [discussion guide](#) to support consistency of approach and robust data capture.

Over 4 weeks our team connected and spoke with identified people and organisations, capturing insights as well as details about specific initiatives.

The team met twice a week to:

- Check in on progress and discuss emerging insights
- Continually prioritise connections and kōrero in relationship to the intent of the exercise, our criteria and what we were or were not finding.



The team have held sensemaking sessions to:

- Analyse and frame the findings from the conversations, including identify exemplars of the future state, the shifts and potential investment opportunities
- Capture overall insights from doing this mahi and the process itself, in terms of what this tells us about the current state and priorities for action.

Through the process we:

- Identified more than 120 'tree' people, 130 'waka' people or initiatives for further exploration
- Had 40 deep dive 1:1 conversations to gather information on 'bright spot' initiatives prioritised for the first phase of engagement
- Identified an additional 25 additional initiatives (and counting) where there was significant information already available.

Our approach to engagement

We took a highly relational approach to engagement which involved:

- Connecting through existing and trusted relationships, where possible
- Gathering information through kōrero (rather than an arms-length survey)
- Prioritising who we spoke with and capturing initiatives that were likely to be good examples of the shifts desired through the health reforms
- Reducing the engagement burden on people where possible - drawing on existing information where this was available (e.g. evaluations, websites, other system mapping or stocktakes)
- Treading carefully and sensitively with organisations where there may be difficult relationship dynamics at play.

What we found

Our key findings and insights

The types of initiatives we found

9 key categories of initiatives emerged through the environmental scan, many which sit across multiple categories.

1. Culturally grounded antenatal education (Hapū Wānanga and Pasifika approaches)

2. Support the revitalisation of cultural practices and reconnection to whakapapa

3. Resources, information, advice and support channels for whānau

4. Whānau to whānau supports, lightly held

5. Community spaces being activated differently to support whānau to nurture their tamariki

6. Support attachment and responsive relationships between tamariki and their whānau

7. Professional development to support whānau in different ways

8. Culturally grounded play as a mechanism for supporting child development and connection

9. Wrap around supports, WCTO innovations, social & mental wellbeing support

Culturally grounded antenatal education

Initiatives that base their approach on indigenous and cultural knowledge, practices beliefs.

Examples of initiatives:

Waikato Hapū Wānanga

Ngā Wānanga o Hine Kōpū

Pasifika antenatal education - Taeaomanino Trust

Hapū Wānanga Taranaki

Anofale Fa'atupu Ola Pasifika - Hutt Valley

Ngā Wānanga o Hine Kōpū

A culturally responsive, Mātauranga Māori response meeting the needs of wahine who are hapū in Te Taitokerau. Created with input from kaumātua and kuia from around the region, Ngā wānanga o Hine Kōpū provides wānanga based around the Māori creation story.

Pasifika Antenatal education.

Taeaomanino Trust, Wellington region. Incorporating cultural practices and beliefs, connecting with other māmā in group sessions. Also Family Start, supporting those with challenges that put health, education and social outcomes for their children at risk.

"Celebration of ourselves as Pacific – we embrace and celebrate the learnings, experiences and knowledge that comes from our cultures. "

Revitalisation of cultural practices & reconnection to whakapapa

Initiatives wider than antenatal education that focus on reconnection to culture, language, hapū, whakapapa and whenua.

Examples of initiatives:

Ngākau Atawhai - Māori Womens Welfare League

Tāonga Peepe Pēpi Packs - Tainui Hākui

E Tipu E Rea - Tāmaki Makaurau

Nāti Pēpi - Ngāti Porou Hauora

Rongoā practitioners

Wahakura Weavers

Fale Lalaga - cultural weaving platform

"Increasing recognition...that actually the first 1000 days is a priority and that haputanga matters."

E Tipu E Rea.

Based on the belief in upholding the mana and hauora of young Māori, embedded a kaupapa Māori approach to support people of all backgrounds.

Providing whānau-based health and social support, individual and systemic advocacy to allow mātua taiohi, hapū māmā, and their tamariki to thrive.

Resources, information, advice and support channels for whānau

Providing whānau and those supporting them access to online information and guidance.

Examples of initiatives:

Hākui - Kāi Tahu

Māmā Aroha breastfeeding app

Tūpuna Parenting

Kia Kaha Mama

Kia Ora Māmā

Kai Rua

My Baby's Village - Moana Research

Mātauranga Māori & Early Brain

Development videos for parents - Ngāi

Tahu & Nathan Wallis

"Midwives were needing a space to learn this so they could support whānau."

Hākui. Kāi Tahu customary birthing practices revitalisation.

Online resource portal for Kāi Tahu whānau and midwives on customary birthing practices.

Connects whānau with tīpuna knowledge and practices relating to pregnancy, birthing, as well support tools for whānau who have lost babies through miscarriage or still birth.

Whānau to whānau supports, lightly held

Initiatives that include a strong focus on parent-parent supports and networks, creating safe spaces to connect.

Examples of initiatives:

He Kete Aroha - TSI

Māmā Moving Mountains

Harakeke - parents for parents

Families Empowering Families - McKenzie Centre

He Waka Eke Noa - Little Shadow

Awhi Ngā Mātua

Woven Whānau - Whanganui

"Families want to connect and support each other, this is a whānau strength"

He Kete Aroha. The Southern Initiative. A prototype that builds local relationship networks that are supportive of whānau. Invites isolated whānau into positive, supportive connections to build social capital. Provides a mechanism for scaling whanaungatanga and manaakitanga for positive, lifelong outcomes for whānau and tamariki.

Families Empowering Families. Inclusion of tuakana within the early intervention service provision for whānau who have tamariki with disabilities. Building collective capacity amongst parents and significantly impact our community.

Community spaces being activated differently to support whānau to nurture their tamariki

Examples of initiatives:

Māmā E Mamia

Te Paataka Koorero o Takaanini - Auckland
Libraries

Ngāti Toa Breastfeeding Clinic

Dargaville Early Years Hub

Hokianga Rugby

Tafesila'i - Community of Care (Pasifika ECE)

Te Kaika Community Hub

Ōtara Kai Village

Kāute Pacific Hub

Poutokomanawa - Plunket Family Centre

"Māmā is building capacity within the community, so community do the caring of whānau and in that way build community responsibility."

Māmā e Mamia. Taku Mamia Trust.

A marae-based wellbeing model for pēpi and māmā Māori. Young Māori mothers and their pepi flourish when they are: connected to te Ao Maori; nurtured by Māori women; and are able to access mātauranga Māori that acknowledges and empowers their mana as wahine Māori.

A 'home away from home' to meet other young māmā or pregnant wāhine and to rest with the support of ama (volunteers) to care for their pepi.

Supporting attachment & responsive relationships between tamariki & their whānau

Initiatives aimed at supporting supporting early brain development through responsive relationships.

Examples of initiatives:

Talking Matters - Te Whakatohea iwi partnership

Pasifika Baby Brain Talks

Hoki te Rito - Ohomairangi Trust

1000 days of Alofa - Le Va

Early Brain Development videos in Pasifika

languages - Moana Research

ENGAGE prototype - Start Well

"Our tamariki to flourish as confident readers, talkers and thinkers who stand in their own mana motuhake as they grow"

Talking Matters

Building language-rich environments for babies in the first 1000 days. Includes a partnership with Te Whakatohea to support an iwi-wide focus on early oral language across Ōpōtiki.

Early Brain Development Resources

Moana research. Partnership with the Harvard Centre on the Developing Child to translate Early Brain Development videos into 9 Pasifika languages.

Professional development to support whānau in different ways

Workforce development and training that enables professionals to support whānau in new ways.

Examples of initiatives:

Ngākau Aroha Parenting - Tūpuna Parenting (training for Plunket Kaiāwhina)

Tiakina te Tamaiti - Brainwave Trust

Pasifika Doulas in Training

Te Whare Tangata Traditional Birthing Practices - Awarua Whānau Services (Bluff)

Hākui - Customary birthing practices revitalisation

“Joining Tūpuna Parenting on this movement has helped us all to better understand and how best to awhi whānau Māori from a te ao Māori world view”

Ngākau Aroha - Tupuna Parenting training for Plunket Kaiāwhina.

Reclaiming traditional Māori parenting practices to grow pēpi and tamariki into the rangatira of tomorrow. Grounding kaiāwhina in te ao Māori parenting kaupapa.

*Nā ngā ringa aroha, nā te ngākau atawhai, ka ora ai te whānau.
From loving hands, from a gentle heart, comes life for the whānau*

Culturally grounded play as a mechanism for supporting child development and connection

Cultural play-based environments and learning approaches for tamariki and whānau.

South Seas 'Rally Your Village'
He Pī Ka Rere (Toi Tangata)
Play Streets

"When a bird is ready to fly it stretches out its wings, faces the wind and launches itself into the air"

He Pī Ka Rere. Toi Tangata.

He Pī Ka Rere is a kaupapa Māori physical activity and nutrition approach which nurtures and develops the whole being of a tamaiti.

Based on traditional techniques used by tūpuna combined with a need to supply our tamariki with the abilities, skills, and awareness to lead a lifelong relationship with kori (movement) and kai (nutrition)

He Pī Ka Rere incorporates timeless mātauranga Māori knowledge and skills.

Wrap around supports, WCTO innovations, social and mental wellbeing support

Holistic, whānau centred approaches that integrate broader social and wellbeing supports.

Examples of initiatives:

Te Kupenga - Tairāwhiti

Start Well

Te Huarahi Ngā Tahī - wraparound supports for whānau on the edge of the care system (SASWB)

Māmā and Pēpi service (kaiāwhina model) -

Turanga Health

Tiaki Whānau

“The story of our people has shown the value of walking alongside and upholding whānau as experts in their own lives, allowing a lens to work with what is real and what matters, with care and support where it is needed, when people are ready to journey”

Tūhono Pilot - Te Piki Oranga

Nurture Taranaki - intensive home visiting service

Dads growing great children

Whakawhiti Ora Pai - Supports for tamariki and their whānau who are Meth affected

E Tipu E Rea

Whānau Whakapuawai - Te Puawaitanga ki

Ōtautahi pilot - Maternal mental health

Wesley Community Action Group

Wrap around supports, WCTO innovations, social and mental wellbeing support (cont.)

Tūhono Pilot. Te Piki Oranga

An innovative programme from kaupapa Māori primary health provider, focussed on providing pēpi for the best start in life. Intensive, personalised support for whānau to:

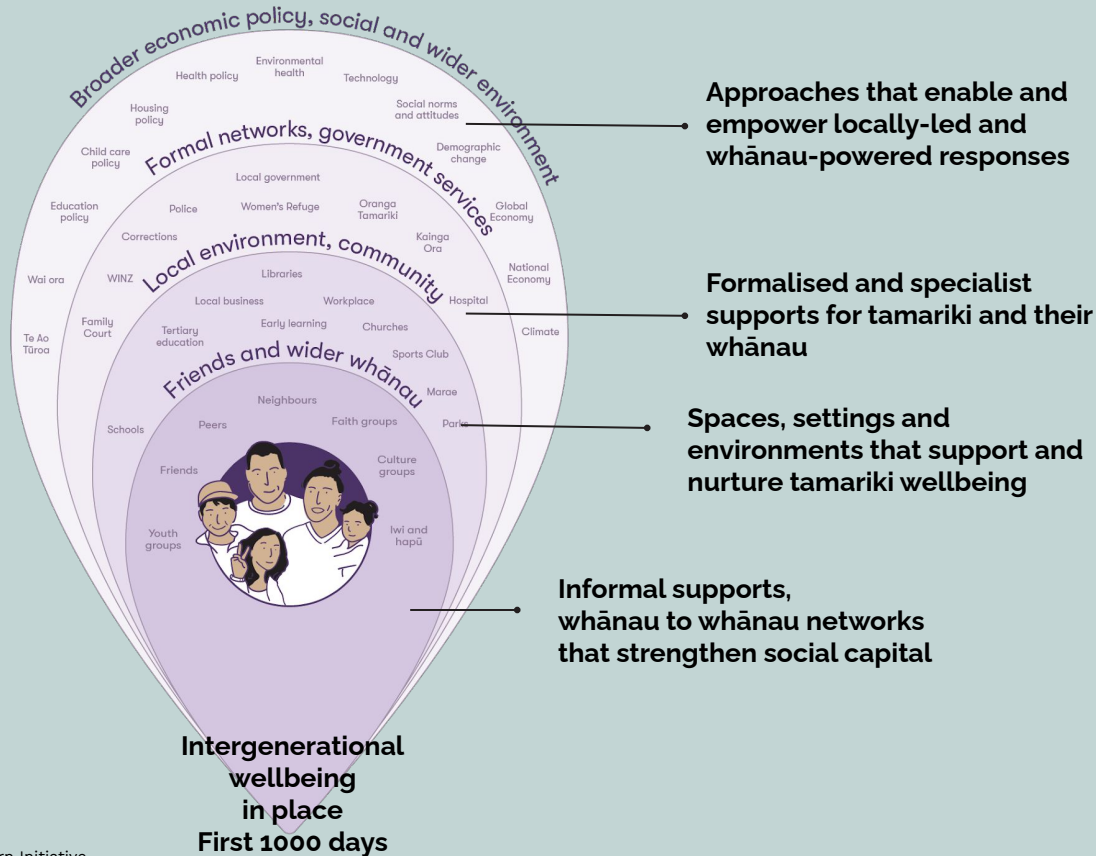
- Build the bond and relationship between māmā (or matua) and pēpi as foundation for health and development
- Creating valuable peer groups, whānau and tuakana/teina relationships
- Connecting whānau with key health and social services

Whānau Whakapuawai. Te Puawaitanga ki Ōtautahi.

Developing and implementing a kaupapa Māori response to maternal mental wellbeing for māmā and whānau living in Canterbury during the first 1000 days from birth of a pēpi. Addressing significant gaps in services for Māori whānau dealing with maternal mental health issues.

Mapping across the ecology of support

Examples of the ecology of support being activated



Māmā Moving Mountains

[Māmā Moving Mountains](#) was built on the belief that mothers have big dreams for their children; they want the best for them in their growing lives and in their future. To achieve those dreams, the mothers might well have to seize new opportunities in their own whānau lives. It was thought that getting there would most likely happen when these wāhine work as collectives – mothers' circles.

In the first phase of the project, mothers identified their dreams for their children and themselves. These dreams highlighted housing, food security, income generating opportunities, and more. The mothers' circles then moved into developing action plans to achieve those aspirations, to secure housing for their whanau, for example, and to improve their financial security.

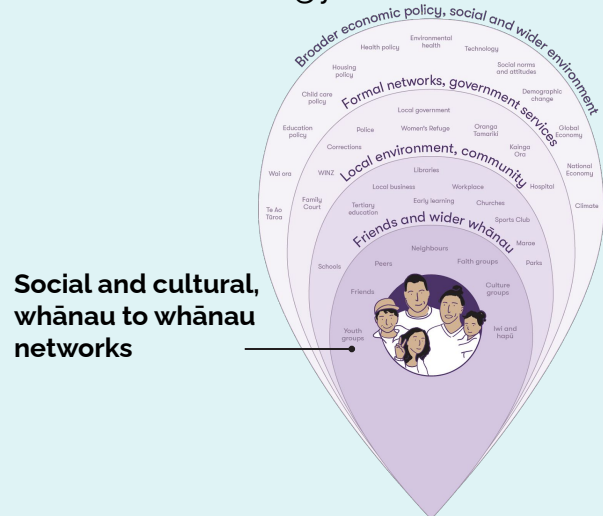
The initiative has approximately 20 Mamas engaged who bring a wide whanau network and influential within their community and Hapū. When the circles' members look back on their experience during this first year, some of them report good personal progress. Some made good connection with their whakapapa and whānaunga. Some planned practical ways of meeting their priorities. Some pulled together an initial plan for an urban papakāinga project. Others developed business ideas, even setting up small businesses, and started courses that to improve their chances of getting jobs and increasing their incomes. Their passions and cooperating were starting to get results. Dreams are useful.

Through manaaki, aroha, whanaungatanga, māmā have strengthen their connections and lifted their horizons to reach new heights in their chosen inspirations and goals. Over the past months motivated by the recent COVID19 lockdown, more wāhine have discovered their talents and passions in product development and are seeking opportunities to grow their business knowledge. Networks and confidence with the desire to become self-employed well.

"They've created a beautiful nurturing community of their own - an oasis of care and love"

"We need to radicalise the system that continually tells our māmā that they don't meet the criteria"

Place in the ecology



Shifts illustrated: Whānau to whānau
Shift toward aspirations, not just 'needs'

Themes emerging across the engagement process

Insights on what has helped or hindered bright spots to be possible

The tenacity of people to make things happen in spite of the lack of enabling system conditions

The leadership of community champions is a critical success factor and something that is not currently valued or recognised well. A number of the initiatives we heard about were created by people who themselves had been failed by the system.

Innovators also often spoke of the importance of respected leaders or community champions having their back, especially through the development phase of their bright spot initiative.

It was clear through this process that there is a network of change makers that are prepared to support and contribute to significant system change in the early years.

“Leadership, commitment, passion. Connection to land and people”

“Be willing to go against the grain no matter the opposition. When our kaupapa is strong enough, we will do it.”

“Stick to it, even when people fall off your waka, keep paddling”

The power of approaches that are grounded in indigenous wisdom

Opportunities to re-balance towards tangata whenua and indigenous-led practices, privileging and investing in mātauranga Māori, is key to transformational change.

"Innovation is the way to move forward but applied mātauranga Māori is where the magic is at"

"We focus on bringing traditional practices held by tūpuna to the forefront as a way for whānau to connect to whakapapa"

"I was working in a hospital environment for years and was being prohibited from implementing practices I knew tūpuna did for birthing māmā"

"Our ancestors all gave birth very naturally and used traditional rituals to carry them through the process... With my practices, I'm hoping for mothers and partners to have courage to speak their worries, fears and any questions surrounding birth, especially in a hospital setting. It is vital that their voices are always heard and respected."

"Parents are ready to learn and understand how a holistic approach to parenting can positively impact pēpi and whānau through cultural narrative"

Big opportunities to address systemic barriers and amplify culturally grounded antenatal education

Culturally grounded antenatal education offerings often exist because of the passion and leadership of amazing community champions - and in spite of the system conditions. The value of culturally grounded approaches is not adequately recognised or resourced by the current planning and funding system. Tightly defined service parameters currently constrain the potential.

"There has been a call for traditional birthing practices for many years, we just needed to do it and stand up against the system prohibiting it."

"[She] was a DHB employed childbirth educator for many years, but went out on her own after struggling with the way the DHB contracted and the demands made on the way the programme was to be delivered. (for example contract required that there was 12 hours of contact time and that a certain list of topics to be covered) which she found was not working for her parents"

Insights around Hapū Wānanga

Information on what's available is fragmented, it's often challenging to get a fix on what's out there

There are access issues with some services being oversubscribed

Staffing challenges, some are on hold due to not having the staff to run them

Opportunities to redesign required qualifications to be more culturally centred

Need to nurture Pasifika models and the unique approach required, this is currently under resourced

Opportunities to connect up people working in this space in a community of practice

Opportunities to explore/strengthen connection across to WCTO

Innovative digital offerings have sprung up through COVID challenges, these could be explored further

"Get rid of the diploma in childbirth education - Te Ara -. It's written to mainstream. Māori have to force themselves to do it so they can run hapū wānanga"

"[It's about] empowering women to make informed decisions in pregnancy and birthing. There are Māori wānanga for birthing rituals widely accessible and free. But for Pasifika there isn't as much workshops available. The high C-sections and unnatural births within Pasifika doesn't match with Pasifika traditional i.e. pregnancy fofoa (elderly Samoan massaging for pregnant wāhine)"

Funding barriers constrain early years innovation

Government has a tendency to tightly prescribe services within issue-based and siloed investment strategies which often don't make sense or meet the need on the ground.

Many participants highlighted that the over-prescription of services often gets in the way of innovation, culturally-grounded approaches and their ability to respond to what matters to whānau.

On the flip side, flexible funding sources where the funder is committed to high trust, relational and patient approaches have been critical in nurturing the early years space. Examples of these include SKIP (now known as Tākai), Te Hiringa Hauora, the Māori Health Innovation Fund (MOH) and philanthropic foundations such as NEXT, TOI Foundation, Foundation North and the Peter McKenzie Project.

"Often funding is so restrictive - you feel like you cant fit."

"We work with a village wrapping around Pasifika families, working for social and health issues and not just the one service that is contracted. Give us the opportunity to design services. This is what we need to change. We need to be a part of the talanoa for the funder service. We are at the frontline and we should have a say in how we deliver. Additionally, funding, reporting, systems don't talk to one another"

Funding barriers constrain early years innovation (cont.)

"We need to understand what comes with kaitiaki of a resource. You are not just resourcing a programme. It's a kaupapa. And what does resourcing a kaupapa mean?"

What do we need to take on board when we are investing in a kaupapa?

It means people, connections, whenua. How do we resource equity - economically? And recognise the patchwork of resources: Money, blood sweat and tears, mātauranga"

"Give the funding to those with wicked outcomes. Go with engagement – not stats"

"Innovation in community needs to encourage people that they can do things. So many amazing people are doing amazing things but they get put off by barriers and too many steps. Things get too hard then fall over"

"System always a few steps behind the environment so the starting point of prog isn't a true reflection of where communities are at."

"What will MoH do to maintain and transfer the energy created and present from the Pasifika COVID-19 response for child wellbeing?"

Clinical perspectives can dominate and sometimes get in the way of efforts to respond to what matters to whānau

"[This initiative] shows what's possible if we rebalance the scales away from privileging western and clinical POVs. It shows how accessing both knowledge systems can strengthen maternal and whānau wellbeing and what can be achieved when indigenous wisdom guides the way"

"[We've had] resistance the whole way - especially professionals response to inclusion of [peer support workers]"

"Moving care by primary clinics within community spaces support tausi le va and shifts power. If care is to be given in a family home, on their turf, in their comfort opposed to a clinic, western setting usually associated with mistrust and unlevelled power"

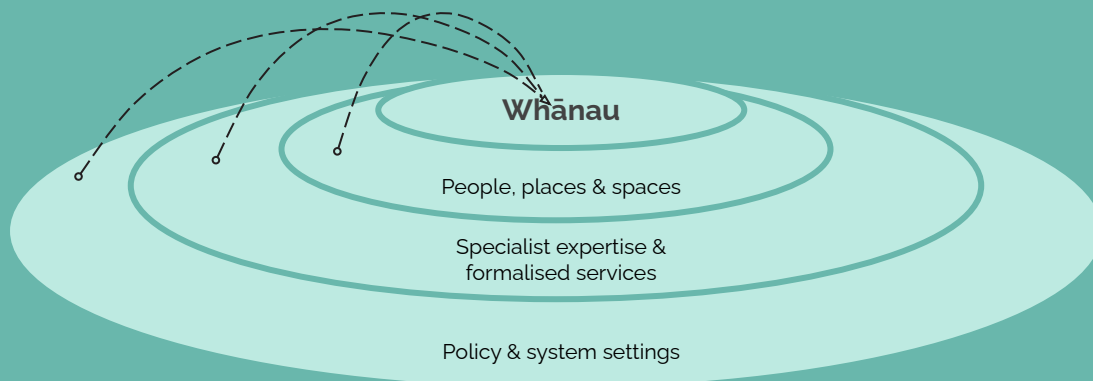
The importance of proximity to whānau

There is something important about 'where things start'. Decisions about the design and reconfiguration of resource needs to happen as closely to whānau as possible. Whānau being actively involved in the design process creates meaningful opportunities to reinforce Te Tiriti from the ground up.

Place-based approaches can provide a platform for partnering with mana whenua to support their aspirations for thriving mokopuna.

How do policy and commissioning set the conditions for locally led, culturally grounded responses and definitions of success?

Proximity to whānau



The vital role of carefully curated safe spaces for whānau to connect and feel heard

It is clear that values-led practices support the creation of safe spaces for whānau.

This is an intentional approach requiring specialised skill set, often demonstrated in Hapū Wānanga and many of the bright spots identified.

Building the capability of our system to make safe spaces more widely available can help enable a shift away from transactional, expert-led 'knowledge transfer' models, supporting whānau to heal and feel more connected in their communities.

A lack of spaces for parents of disabled tamariki emerged as a critical gap.

"We create a safe space for their tamariki and babies to be. Mums don't feel judged about coming as who they are. Crying babies aren't seen as distractions. We normalise an environment that makes bringing kids is welcome. We create a space for people to come together and connect"

"Retelling of stories is biggest thing and how we can apply connection. 60% of Pasifika are NZ born, disconnected from church and family (aiga/kainga), not same level of connection, identify with multiple ethnicities"

"It's about learning from other māmā who can share their knowledge and experience from a Māori world view and it also opens possibilities for māmā who are not culturally connected to find their way and who they are through the holistic approaches we use."

Resourcing that enables a relational approach is key

"Investment has to be in workforce that is fluid. Be able to train staff that they are the holders of some knowledge, but not all. When it comes to people's lives, don't make it about you (your tick boxes, your conversations you need to have). Need to be able to manoeuvre the system and cultural needs to meet where the person is. That takes time. System is very time frame dependent...time frames don't allow the unpacking that needs to happen"

"Va-centred practice - important to navigate the starting point for their pregnancy journey."

"At the moment the funding model is an antenatal funding model that says deliver things in a 'culturally appropriate' way. But, if we want to resource for equity we need to resource the cultural stuff. [The team] are stewarding the resource they have exceptionally well...but we are not resourcing adequately. We need to consider how we resource the relational approach?"

"It's not about a programme, but how you are in relationship with others. It's about checking in with each mama and understanding their stories and supporting those aspirations."

"Identity and sense of belonging important for our people. If they don't have sense of belonging and connection with programme, they won't connect."

Hopes for the future

What people told us about their aspirations and dreams for the future early years system

Peoples hopes for the future

"We need a wairua based approach for our health system, and a partnership approach for designing and redesigning a system that works"

"Building a world where if someone is in trouble they can connect and rely on each other. Where we don't have counsellors, we just have each other. Where our tables are bigger - so we can host everyone and fill it with all the kai. Where we feel rich through our connections and through our feasting together. "

"Govt departments truly centring whānau in the design of supports - the power shifts that are required to enable decolonisation process."

"I would love to see a genuinely coordinated cross govt approach to supporting healthy development in the first 6 years. There are so many investment ready approaches around. Someone needs to take ownership of this in government. We can be world leaders in this. We are small enough and we care enough"

"It would be fabulous to join together, and remove siloed care. Learn and evolve together."

Peoples hopes for the future (cont.)

"More work from Ministry on community engagement and devolving to the community what they want and need. Communities are eager to exercise ownership for their health."

They really hope the transitions and reforms brings about more prevention. They are excited by many ministries/agencies that are speaking about new things. But they worry that they won't collaborate and that they are missing each other.

"There are visible glimmers of hope often centred on the strengths of communities, and a transformatory approach for Pacific health can be built on this. By embracing and drawing on the expertise, knowledge and worldviews of Pacific peoples, we can strengthen the diversity, inclusiveness and responsiveness of our system, as well as improve health outcomes for Pacific peoples"
(Bula Sautu report)

"No longer seeing the health and disability space co opted by providers who speak on behalf of community"

"A system that hears what the family says and acknowledges their needs to support them where they're at."

What good looks like: Features of the future system

Emerging design principles for a fundamentally different approach to supporting the wellbeing of pēpi, tamariki and their whānau.

Whānau actively involved in the design and re-design of supports

Place-based investment enabling local, fit for purpose ecologies of support

Accountability is geared towards what matters to whānau

Indigenous knowledge systems are privileged and legitimised

Values-led practice that supports the development of trusted relationships

Active power sharing that reinforces Te Tiriti

Strengths-based and focussed on supporting whānau aspirations

Local leadership is nurtured and resourced

Decisions are made as close to whānau as possible

Shifts in whānau experience

The types of desired changes for whānau includes:

- Support is available in the places where people lives their lives
- The invitation into supports comes from whānau and other trusted people
- There is a diversity of workforces - people can see themselves reflected in the system
- Interactions between whānau and workforces are respectful, mana enhancing, trust producing
- Indigenous wisdom including cultural birthing and parenting practices and worldviews are affirmed
- Strengths based - supporting aspirations, not just addressing 'needs'. The overarching aim is to enable mana motuhake and whānau having increased agency over their lives, not being limited to dealing with immediate challenges or crises.
- Specialist care is seamlessly integrated into community-based supports and is culturally responsive
- Parenting guidance and supports are culturally affirming and reinforce the importance of responsive relationships
- Intensive support to address significant stressors is available when whānau want and need it. There is ability to flex up and down holistic and whānau-centred supports during periods of complexity - not just arm's length referral to social services that may not hit the mark.
- All interactions with government are actively contributing to supporting whānau in this critical period - maximising their capacity for influence and their unique role in the ecology of support (e.g Work and Income - tailored supports and permission giving for discretion for those working with whānau with young pēpi and tamariki)

Shifts in the system

The types of desired changes for the early years system includes:

- Leadership across all levels of the early years system is nurtured and supported and 'flax roots' innovators in particular are recognised and celebrated
- Power is shared and leadership is distributed
- Mātauranga Māori and other cultural knowledge systems are recognised as equal alongside Western knowledge systems
- Institutional racism is dismantled
- Relational ways of working are legitimised and resourced
- More flexibility and innovation around workforce configurations and integration into the local ecology of support. This contributes to reducing workforce pressures and bringing back the 'love for the job'.
- Commissioning and decommissioning decisions made closer to whānau on the ground, with what matters to whānau at the centre of decision making.

- Collaborative ways of working are embedded across providers and agencies
- Increased capability and capacity for whānau-led innovation and culturally grounded, authentic co-design
- Resourcing of a diversity of responses that are responsive to place and the complexity of lived experience
- Efforts at all levels are supported by a learning platform/infrastructure that enables a dynamic approach to changing system settings and conditions in response to what's emerging around what matters and makes the biggest difference to whānau and their pēpi and tamariki
- Purpose of accountability is for learning, not control, and is two-directional. The system is as accountable as those delivering on the ground for making the changes needed and enabling the reconfiguration of investment and policies in response to what we're collectively learning.
- There is space and appetite for learning our way to transformation and how to be a good Te Tiriti partner

For further information please contact:

Aimee Hadrup, The Southern Initiative

aimee.hadrup@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz