

KIA TIPU TE AO MĀRAMA

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TOKONA TE RAKI
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INTRODUCTION

“What makes ideas ‘real’ is the system of knowledge, the formation of culture, and the relations of power in which these concepts are located. What an individual is – and the implications this has for the way researchers or teachers, therapists or social workers, economists, or journalists, might approach their work – is based on centuries of philosophical debate, principles of debate, and systems for organizing whole societies predicated on these ideas. These ideas constitute reality. Reality cannot be constituted without them.”

Linda Tuhiwai Smith
Decolonising Methodologies 1999

Te Korekoreka and the Niho Taniwha are evaluative frameworks that underpin the learning environments within Tokona te Raki and The Southern Initiative, respectively. Developed in parallel, this paper shares the journey and role of these two frameworks within each of the organisations, Tokona te Raki, an indigenous social innovation arm of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and The Southern Initiative¹, a social innovation initiative within Auckland Council, based in the south and west of Tāmaki Makaurau.

Both organisations are explicitly attempting to recover, extract and renew indigeneity from European colonising influences. On the one hand, the frameworks, as systems of knowledge, are in a traditional European ideological context and, on the other, indigenous efforts to decolonise practices for

knowledge production, relocate them in the context of indigenous values, traditions, and ways of being.

Both frameworks embody indigenous values, perspectives and approaches to social innovation, underpinned by a desire to catalyse and prioritise social and economic transformation through kaupapa Māori² and Treaty-based³ practice.

The context for each framework differs. Te Korekoreka emerged from the need for indigenous theories, methods, and practices within the indigenous context of Ngāi Tahu, an indigenous tribe of Te Waipounamu, the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. The Niho Taniwha has been developed as a culturally grounded, place-based response for ways of supporting Māori and Pasifika innovation in the South and West Auckland region.

The Southern Initiative developed the Niho Taniwha in response to the emergent and culturally grounded learning and practice being developed alongside communities and whānau in South and West Auckland.

Te Korekoreka and Niho Taniwha share much, and their similarities and differences are instructive, particularly in respect to their intent and development. They are frameworks or approaches not only for whānau voice, data and analysis but also integrated sensemaking, strategy, decision-making, practice iteration and team building. At the heart of both evaluative frameworks are statements of values and intentions about the world. Rather than transplanting Western ideas into indigenous communities these approaches privilege indigenous world views. They actively challenge and create alternatives to Western ideas (western/post-colonial ideology premised institutions and systems) through indigenous knowledge and approaches, drawing from metaphor and story to frame and make sense of social impact in their respective communities.

Both frameworks share a common history where imported Western solutions have been consistently deployed to fix imported Western systems that haven't worked for whānau. Their shared purpose is not just to move away from the continuation of colonising practices but to also move towards trusting indigenous culture as the source of our solutions and thereby indigenising systems.

Both frameworks are still being tested, developed and evolved and we are learning about them and with them as living knowledge systems. In this paper, we share the frameworks and the journey of their parallel development. We also reflect on them as connected practices, that engage with a particular set of values, perspectives and approaches to social innovation.

The paper begins with an introduction to the two organisations and their context. In Part Two, we discuss our shared motivations and start points in seeking to embed and amplify a culture of learning as part of innovation practice. Part Three introduces the two frameworks and their different origins. Parts Four and Five provide a more detailed description of each approach and highlight how they have been developed to assist the organisations to build culturally congruent, robust and reflective innovation practice. Part Six reflects on shared themes that emerged from looking at the frameworks together, including: making visible different layers of action and sense-making as part of social innovation; the importance of the practice as embodied and living and; negotiating the ongoing learning of a bi-cultural practice. We conclude with thoughts on what the frameworks highlight about collective learning in systemic and transformative change.

¹ For brevity, we use the title The Southern Initiative to cover both The Southern Initiative and The Western Initiative.

² Kaupapa Māori is a Māori approach to doing things, involving Māori knowledge, protocols, and values

³ Te Tiriti O Waitangi / Treaty-based refers to acting in accordance with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the founding partnership agreement for Aotearoa between Māori and the Crown. For more information see <https://teara.govt.nz/en/treaty-of-waitangi>

PART 1: THE ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

TOKONA TE RAKI

Tokona te Raki is an indigenous social innovation organisation housed under the mana of Ngāi Tahu – an indigenous tribe of Te Waipounamu. The organisation's remit is to work within a Māori future-making mindset, as part of building and leveraging shifts in systemic policy and practice that positions a Māori worldview at the forefront. Tokona te Raki works to ensure that all rangatahi and their whānau are inspired by their futures, thriving in education, confident in their culture and determining their own path. The organisation works within three unique spaces: rangatahi capability building, data insights and developing innovation in the Māori Futures Lab. Rangatahi capability building occurs through participation in real life projects that offer a structured and disciplined apprenticeship in innovation and complex problem-solving. The data and insights team focuses on identifying in-demand and future-focused skills such as mapping current systems, whānau voice, workshop facilitation, co-design, collaborative problem-solving and evaluation.

Finally, the Māori Futures Lab tests new ways of thinking and doing as part of solving the most pressing challenges for iwi. This includes experimenting with new approaches that can be adopted and, in some instances, scaled by the iwi and hapū post incubation.

The ultimate vision of Tokona te Raki is to offer a mechanism to grow the next generation of future-focused iwi leaders from Ngāi Tahu centric kaupapa Māori values and culture as the source to solution building and future-making. One of the primary aims of Tokona te Raki is to nurture transformative systems change to achieve education and employment equity for Māori. As an organisation Tokona te Raki has been purposely designed to respond to the need for the iwi to have a specific focus on social innovation, to experiment and test new approaches to entrenched challenges. At the systems level, Tokona te Raki works with partners to build new understandings of systems change and social impact through a te ao Māori and Treaty partnership lens.

Tokona te Raki strives to develop a fit for purpose culture of learning to respond to the unique cultural context of the organisation, and to the needs of the practitioners working in these spaces. In late 2019, Te Korekoreka emerged from a series of wānanga with tribal leaders, practitioners, and designers. Te Korekoreka is a kawa, a set of protocols, practices, and processes used to guide how we operate together 'for transformational change in thinking, practice and approach. In discussing the kawa Tarena notes,'

“Future-making is not a new concept to Māori, the use of the words in this way may be new but the concept is ancient. It talks of imagining a new future, learning from your past, examining your present, planning for and committing to deliberate action to move from a current reality to a new destiny. Te Korekoreka is a tool for Māori future-making. It has been crafted from the learnings of our tīpuna and seeks to re-equip and give us confidence in our own traditional knowledge to help us create and navigate towards a new future.”

Our core team at Tokona te Raki is small with only eight full-time kaimahi and a range of supporting contributors. Being small and nimble, the organisational strength is in leveraging our partnerships with industry, education, iwi, and the government sector. Tokona te Raki is growing its capability to collectivise and leverage partnerships, to prototype large scale whānau, hapū and community-led interventions. An underlying motivation for the innovation lab, one that is shared by both The Southern Initiative and Tokona te Raki, is experimenting with new approaches to dismantling long-term systemic barriers to Māori achieving equity in education and employment.

This is not innovation for innovation's sake but rather an explicit focus on transformative paradigm shifts, as opposed to incremental improvements in systems, policies, and practices. As an indigenous future-making lab, Tokona te Raki draws from Ngāi Tahu centric kaupapa Māori values and culture as the means to building a better future. This includes working with whānau, hapū and iwi where they are and designing alternative pathways with them to dismantle socio-economic inequities, as well as building insights into how the system currently works, and pointing to actionable outcomes that progress an equitable vision of the future. This mahi is all funnelled through our futures lab where we focus on growing indigenous social innovation and enterprise skills in the next generation of rangatahi leadership.

THE SOUTHERN INITIATIVE

The Southern Initiative is a place-based social innovation unit within Auckland Council, embedded in South and West Auckland communities and striving for radical change. The Auckland Co-design Lab (The Lab) is a combined local and central government innovation lab that is nested inside The Southern Initiative. The Lab acts as a learning and innovation partner to The Southern Initiative teams and has helped to lead the development of the Niho Taniwha as a living, learning and evaluative practice framework to support The Southern Initiative's innovation work. The Southern Initiative collaborates and works in partnership with local communities, whānau, changemakers, institutions, iwi, and marae, as well as central government, business, and philanthropic funders for systems change. Its team champions and enables culturally connected social innovation. In practice, this calls for experimenting, learning and delivering what it takes to assist real socio-economic transformation.

The team is dedicated to supporting South Auckland and West Auckland communities as prosperous, resilient places where children and whānau thrive.

The mahi of The Southern Initiative spans building capacity of Māori and Pasifika enterprise, supporting whānau to transition into meaningful career pathways, enabling conditions and systems of support where whānau lead their own change, re-imagining local food systems and economies, and working alongside rangatahi to unlock learning and alternate future pathways through the integration of mātauranga, technology and western knowledge systems. Being place-based enables the team to take an integrated holistic view of wellbeing. Social, cultural, economic, and environmental

dimensions are interconnected, based in the recognition, and nurturing of wairua and mauri of people and place.

The team's mahi focuses on fostering the conditions for greater equity and intergenerational wellbeing; whānau realising their own aspirations and building their own responses and solutions. We seek to do this by shifting local and larger systems and policy conditions – testing, trying, modelling, and building capacity for compelling, whānau-led alternatives to the status quo. This means growing the infrastructure and capacity of the system to work differently and moving beyond services to ecologies of support. Central to this is a relational practice grounded in manaakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga that strengthens, builds on, and reconnects to the existing innovation capacity and natural and cultural supports in Pasifika and Māori whānau, communities and businesses.

As an innovation platform there is a remit and mandate for experimentation, testing and trying new things. There are many prototypes, programmes and initiatives running simultaneously with whānau and community partners. The location and focus of the work across different teams is diverse. Ways to ensure the learning and efforts towards change are connected and mutually reinforcing across the workstreams is critical.

Though The Southern Initiative is not a kaupapa Māori organisation by mandate, its initiatives are kaupapa-driven and increasingly indigenous knowledge-led. The team is predominantly Māori and Pasifika, and the mahi is values-led. The Southern Initiative centres Māori aspirations and outcomes and seeks to reconnect to and ignite Pacific innovation. We often act as disruptors inside our own and other

institutions by privileging indigenous knowledge and tikanga led practice. The relational ways of working embodied by the team are inherently principles of aroha, whakawhanaungatanga and manaakitanga⁴. Guided by mātauranga, The Southern Initiative foregrounds indigenous worldviews, including honouring Aotearoa and

its place in the Pacific. As with Tokona te Raki, the approach to evaluative practice needs to be responsive to unique indigenous contexts and support the cultural and innovation practices that emerge from the mahi with community and system collaborators.

A SHARED ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The Southern Initiative and Tokona Te Raki operate in complex organisations and contexts drawing upon extensive collaborations with community and other partners. Like most systems change initiatives, The Southern Initiative and Tokona te Raki focus on experimenting with 'what it takes' to make change, prototyping evidence based insights, growing and modelling new ways of working that value whānau centric outcomes. Further, both organisations are working to support the system itself to change. Both organisations seek to dismantle traditional working structures and oppressive systems, using values-based approaches to support the cultural paradigms of people and place.

Tokona te Raki and The Southern Initiative have been connected as practitioners and organisations in different ways for some time on our systems change journey. This paper has been an opportunity to come together to better understand each other's frameworks and practices, and to identify what is shared and unique within them. The organisations are natural learning allies, and this paper is a reflection on different journeys to develop place-based approaches to learning within social innovation, and ways of working that share a commitment to transformational change in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are grateful to have had many great minds journeying with us in this mahi and to be part of a broader network of teams working towards systems change right across Aotearoa.

⁴ The relational approach underpinning TSI was explored further in this report
<https://www.tsi.nz/s/A-Relational-Approach-report>

PART 2: AN EMBEDDED CULTURE OF LEARNING


The Southern Initiative and Tokona te Raki sought to increase our impact and potential for systems change by embedding a culture of learning into organisational culture. This translates to supporting practitioners to continually hone their professional identity as innovators and future-makers. Te Korekoreka and the Niho Taniwha frameworks have given us the foundation to grow this kawa as a team and more broadly in our work with collaborators. A 'kawa' in this sense is described as 'a shared pattern, a set of protocols, practices, and processes that we use to guide how we operate together'.

Te Korekoreka and Niho Taniwha grew partly out of the necessity for tools and theories to address real life challenges that were grounded in a specific and evolving cultural context, and partly because of the limitations of other evaluation frameworks.

STRENGTHENING INNOVATION PRACTICE THROUGH EVALUATIVE MINDSETS

To nurture a culture of learning both organisations took the approach of seeking to integrate evaluative mindsets into existing innovation practice. This meant creating the space and discipline to slow down ongoing activities to connect day-to-day activities with a systems level strategy. The introduction of evaluative frameworks and practices is not necessarily straightforward – particularly when teams have the experience of evaluation and monitoring frameworks feeling removed, disconnected, or incongruent to innovation practice and what happens and what matters on

the ground. It was important for both teams that the evaluative approach taken would recognise the complexity of social dynamics and the issues of power and equity embedded therein, as well as the cultural context and paradigms of the mahi. Additionally, as social innovators, team members are already reflective and evaluative. We needed approaches that recognised and strengthened this existing practice bringing a focus on learning and tracking outcomes in ways that would energise rather than restrict existing dynamics. Both organisations needed a practice that was rigorous and robust, but also



values-led, responsive to place and respectful of the diversity of different approaches and contexts of the work.

Conventional ideas of evaluation as something that happens at the end of a project, done to you by external evaluation teams, is still a dominant paradigm. In addition to this, a focus on Randomised Control Trials (RCT's) for establishing effectiveness and value still prevails in certain settings. While these approaches have their place, they have less relevance in the context of complex place-based systems change⁵. In science, experiments are 'bounded and precise' – they have clear start and stop points. Testing specific variables is possible and important. In more dynamic settings, one of the risks in trying to apply this kind of approach is that it reduces highly complex situations down to outcomes and outputs, suggesting a degree of control or consistency (also prediction) that isn't there. We needed approaches that would help us to embrace and acknowledge complexity rather than seeking to reduce or control it.

Developmental Evaluation (DE) embeds the practice and role of evaluation in the innovation work and prioritises strategic learning and accountability for practice as part of the outcomes. DE practice and international exemplars have been strongly informed and influenced by kaupapa Māori evaluation practitioners and leaders from Aotearoa such as Nan Wehipeihana, Kataraina Pipi and Kate McKegg. As a result of the culturally nuanced theoretical framework of some of the DE work, both Tokona te Raki and The Southern Initiative initially drew upon the traditions of DE in understanding the value of and approach to evaluative practice. In both cases we looked to DE and kaupapa Māori research methodologies and practice to help strengthen existing innovation practice and embrace the complexity as part of the learning process.

⁵ <https://blogs.rch.org.au/ccch/2019/05/06/theme-4-evidence-for-innovation/>

EXPANDING WHAT WE TRACK AND MEASURE

Conventional evaluation is also bounded in traditional ideas of what is 'valuable' and what should be 'measured'. A key part of embedding a learning culture was building a values based framework that in some way counters this with an alternative set of values. We wanted a framework that would support us to make evaluative judgments about how well we were expressing our underlying values that place whānau and rangatahi at the centre of our motivations. It moves us from seeking to 'measure' based on external definitions of success to asking ourselves in what ways are we making a difference – that difference needs to matter or be determined by and with whānau and communities.

What's important for both Tokona te Raki and The Southern Initiative is understanding whether we are doing the right things (the valuable things), in the right way and whether we're making positive impacts on the broader social system. Strategic learning becomes an important output of the process, both for informing next steps and understanding the processes and impacts of change in the short and long-term. As innovation partners it is less about proving our value, and more about

facilitating the collective outcomes. Collective outcomes are identified and enabled in the context of partnerships by working alongside multiple community members, entities and groups from community, iwi, government, and social agencies. Tracking our individual contribution is less to justify our existence, and more about what it tells us about how we can best support transformative outcomes. We view scale in the same way, it comes not from the outcomes of our work, but by how we help the system itself to be regenerative and to support compelling alternatives. This kind of inquiry requires unpacking and thinking critically about what constitutes or determines success and evidence, and where 'measures' or indicators and evidence of success comes from. How we think about accountability also matters. Teams and systems partners are part of the communities they work in. While a range of forms of accountability need to be considered and addressed, the team is primarily and personally accountable to whānau, hapū and wider community networks. This needs to be captured and recognised within any evaluative framework.

FOREGROUNDING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CONCEPTS OF EVIDENCE

A critical aspect for both Tokona te Raki and The Southern Initiative is foregrounding and privileging indigenous knowledge systems and mātauranga Māori as integral to future-making and transformational change within the context

of innovation. For both teams addressing the ongoing effect of colonisation sits as central to the mahi – indigenous knowledge and reconnecting to indigenous innovation practices are part of the solution. Tokona te

Raki and The Southern Initiative are focused on developing practice-based evidence which, from our perspective, involves demonstrating and building our culturally located knowledge of what works through innovation methodologies that draw on mātauranga, western science, qualitative and quantitative data and the expertise and lived experience of communities, whānau, hapū, and iwi. New knowledge and change occurs through developing things on the ground, together with whānau and other partners.

Developing solutions by designing with whānau and creating a bridge between big data and lived experience is integral to our mahi in terms of identifying and actioning levers for change. This bridge serves to translate research for the iwi and whānau but to also produce indigenous knowledge that points to systemic change. Central to this is positioning mātauranga and whānau lived experience as having the same validity as other forms of evidence⁶.

In many ways, the dominant methodologies of positivist social science lay in stark contrast to the te ao Māori worldview and ways of being, which are holistic, and values driven.

A kaupapa Māori methodology has a broad set of principles, values, and traditions that work within the paradigm of Māori as whakapapa genealogy. It is this whakapapa that creates a web of interconnectedness connecting people to each other, the land, oceans, rivers, plants, animals and even intangible elements like winds or knowledge itself. Everything has a whakapapa that explains how objects and elements within the Māori world are connected and ordered. In this sense, interconnectedness and managing the complexities of these relationships is nothing new for Māori.

What is new is using these same principles to understand and make sense of the complexities of Western systems.

In summary, embedding a culture of learning for us involves:

- Honouring knowledge from diverse sources and world views, privileging indigenous cultural knowledge and practices, place and whānau lived experience
- Enabling the development of practice-based evidence – through drawing on different forms of knowing and through acting and learning together with whānau and systems partners
- Framing and structuring our learning and mahi within the context of systems change and transformation, not just specific or individual interventions
- Recognising our change capacity as enabled through partnership and working with community and systems partners
- Building in greater intentionality and practice around connection to, use and generation of evidence and data in prototyping and testing
- Acknowledging and working with complexity rather than seeking to reduce it or control it
- Accommodating our multiple accountabilities – to whānau, community, team, partners, stakeholders, funders, public
- Providing a framework for both strategic learning and accountability
- Enhancing and amplifying the innovation mahi of teams, rather than restricting it
- Providing a cohering structure or practice for different kinds of innovation practice and practitioners
- Recognising the limitations of western post-colonial constructs to enable innovation for impact/outcomes and creating different starting points (to get different outcomes).

⁶ This aligns to an ever increasing and broader movement for such approaches and perspectives in government and academia in Aotearoa

PART 3: INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORKS AND THEIR ORIGINS

Te Korekoreka and Niho Taniwha help teams integrate evaluative mindsets and rigorous reflective practice into existing design and innovation practices. Both frameworks provide culturally grounded and practice-based kawa for experimenting and learning, facilitating testing and demonstrating alternative models of working alongside whānau and other institutional and organisational partners

(systems partners). Each framework aims to facilitate the production of rigorous practice-based evidence, through the application of tools, practices and processes that are appropriate for and tailored to indigenous cultural contexts. In this section we briefly introduce Te Korekoreka and the Niho Taniwha methodologies and their origins. The frameworks are then examined in more detail in parts four and five.

TE KOREKOREKA

As noted, Te Korekoreka is a kawa for Māori future-making and nurturing our culture of learning. An important distinction between the kawa of this Māori ideology is that the curricula (content), the pedagogy (process), and assessment (evaluation) are not separate. Te Korekoreka includes these because it is

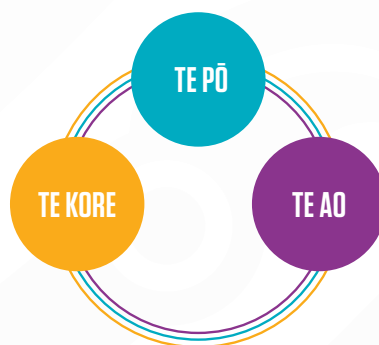
intrinsically developmental. Te Korekoreka is currently being prototyped with Tokona te Raki's partners and within the larger tribe within a context of professional learning for staff, and as an evaluation kawa. For the purposes of this paper we will discuss Te Korekoreka through the lens of organisational learning.

We call this future-making approach Te Korekoreka as it weaves together three wāhanga (phases), each with its own tikanga:

- *Te Ao as the world of fruition (knowing & doing)*
- *Te Kore as a space without form (seeking & understanding)*
- *Te Pō the world of fashioning (imagining & making)*

We take each of these wāhanga and weave them through our research, evaluation, and organisational training with the intention of building solutions and influencing systems change. It is a kawa for evaluative thinking at a programmatic level (Te Ao), at an organisational

(Te Pō) and systemic level (Te Kore). This kawa assists our thinking and practice in our mahi and facilitates future making shifts of perception and interpretation across all three wāhanga.



“In some senses, I suspect the Māori had a three-world view, of potential being symbolised by Te Korekore, the world of becoming portrayed by Te Pō and the world of being, Te Ao Mārama.”

Māori Marsden (Ngā Puhi Tohunga)

Te Korekoreka is a response to trusting in indigenous knowledge to grow solutions fit for purpose for the community in which we live, work and serve. Te Korekoreka grew out of the need for an evaluative paradigm located in a kaupapa Māori worldview that embodied the core values of the organisation while maintaining a robust framework to grow practice-based knowledge.

When we first started out, we drew on a range of Western theories and tools but it soon became evident that our focus on indigenous transformative shifts in systemic thinking and practice needed an approach that could support us to capture not only the incremental impact within our initiatives but also the innovation, influence and insights across the whole organisation.

Te Korekoreka revolutionises indigenous methodology for practitioners interested in understanding and tracking their personal and professional learning and development. As an evaluative framework, it draws upon Ngāi Tahu creation traditions to set a kawa to reclaim a future-focused mindset and to build the vessels to reach the intended destination. It is also a living kawa that facilitates internal transformation through reflective and collaborative practice, whereby practitioners assume roles of both teacher and learner developing insight into applying innovation and systems thinking to our mahi.

Tarena describes the role of Ngāi Tahu tīpuna Matiaha Tiramōrehu and the subsequent inspiration behind Te Korekoreka as our organisational future-making kawa:

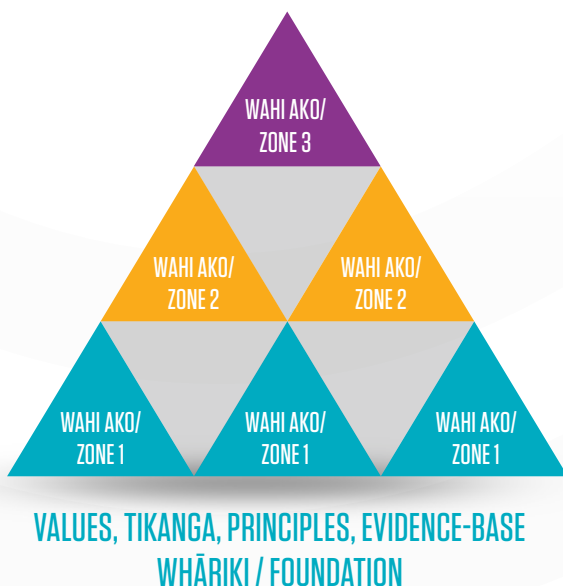
The Ngāi Tahu karakia ‘Kei a Te Pō’ was authored by Matiaha Tiramōrehu and is the inspiration for Te Korekoreka. Matiaha was one of Ngāi Tahu’s most important and influential rakatira. He lived in the 19th Century and was a leader, a scholar, a teacher, and an early advocate for Ngāi Tahu land and cultural rights. He was also an expert in tikanga and whakapapa. ‘Kei a Te Pō’ is the karakia associated with the Ngāi Tahu creation story and speaks particularly of three key realms – Te Kore, Te Pō and Te Ao. In our search for a model of Māori future-making we have examined this karakia and these three realms. We considered what each realm looks like independently and then how each realm relates to the others. Furthermore, we explored what the space and energy looks like in between each of the realms and finally we considered the three realms as a whole, cyclic and natural system. It is from this inquiry that Te Korekoreka emerged.

A more detailed exploration of Te Korekoreka is in section four. Below we briefly introduce the second evaluative framework the Niho Taniwha.

NIHO TANIWHA

Niho Taniwha is a learning system for reflecting critically on where we are in the journey, helping to set and reset the direction of travel. Niho Taniwha is intended to wrap around the design and innovation process the team is following, integrating and encouraging regular small and larger cycles of learning, reflection and critical judgement into daily practice.

Niho Taniwha is organised into three wahi ako or sense-making zones. Wahi Ako/Zone 1 represents learning around specific projects or prototypes with whānau and partners on the ground, Zone 2 is intended as a wāhi ako or learning space for creating learning and connections across those different areas of work, Wahi Ako/Zone 3 reflects the outcomes, learning and strategic direction as a whole. The three zones of the Niho Taniwha sit atop a foundation or whāriki which reflects the values, tikanga and evidence upon which the work is built, and which continues to evolve through the work. For each of the three wahi ako or zones, teams are encouraged to key their sights on three kinds of outcomes: 1) Outcomes for whānau, rangatahi, tamariki; 2) Changes in the system or for those working in the system; and 3) Strategic learning.



THE NIHO TANIWHA, REPRESENTED IN BOTH TWO AND THREE DIMENSIONS, INVOLVES DIFFERENT WAHI AKO OR SENSE-MAKING ZONES REPRESENTING DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACTION, REFLECTION AND SENSE-MAKING.

Like Te Korekoreka, Niho Taniwha grew out of a need to capture learning, progress and impact in ways that are values-based, relevant and responsive to the relational and culturally grounded innovation and change practice of the team. Are we doing the right things and are they making a difference? How are whānau involved in determining that? Are we contributing to families being able to achieve the outcomes that matter to them? If we aren't getting there, then why not, and how can we best reflect on that and change our direction?

It is also a framework or disciplined practice for learning in complexity. The journey of transformational change is ambitious and full of unknowns. Complex systems are not readily predictable, and we are not in control of the context or the behaviours of others. We can only control how we prepare ourselves, and how we act and react throughout the transformation journey. Outcomes may only become clear in retrospect. For The Southern Initiative, one of our guides on this journey is the kōrero of renowned Māori astrologer and kaumātua for The Southern Initiative, matua Rereata Makiha. Matua describes the different stages of a waka journey to new destinations. This includes Te Rapunga, the stage of potential, where we need to be comfortable circling, waiting for a sign or tohu to move us to the next stage. Te Kitenga, the sighting of tohu or markers that move us along. Te Whaingā is a deeper exploration of tohu, where some set out to gather evidence and research about the tohu and potential it offers, this knowledge is shared and used to set or reset the direction of the waka. This kōrero provides

hints about how to 'be' in the innovation and transformation journey. Sometimes we know the direction we are headed, but need to explore more deeply, gather evidence and build our understanding of how to get there. Other times it's ok to feel unsure where to go next, we may need to wait and circle for a while until there is a sign that the time is right to move into the next phase of the journey. Other times we don't know that we have arrived until you hit the shore – it's that emergent.

Along with our collaborators and partners, we are building our knowledge about the destination we are heading towards, deepening our understanding and ability to recognise the tohu that might guide us there.

While we drew upon existing evaluative know-how, the foundational start point for the Niho Taniwha was observing what would support and be responsive to existing innovation practice emerging across The Southern Initiative team. From several years of working alongside community and systems partners, exploring, testing and evidence gathering, the team already carried knowledge of tohu, of desired and potential destinations, as well as those that were less likely to lead to transformation. The practice developed was values-led, grounded in place through practice, recognising and reconnecting to indigenous knowledge, including mātauranga Māori and the innovation practices of Pacific peoples.

We sought a practice, framework or kawa that would respond to what we had learnt in these early exploration and discovery phases and offer a more systematic way to ensure learning was shared, collective and connected to the existing evidence-base.

As we started to sketch out what we thought was needed, we began with a whāriki, or foundation, of values, principles, tikanga and evidence. From this grew a visual representation, eventually representing a physical system of action and sense-making

layers, reflecting different levels of learning and action. The pattern that manifested as we iterated our thinking was the Niho Taniwha which has its origins in Lapita design (early Polynesian). Variations of the pattern can be seen across the Pacific, and it was grounded in Aotearoa by Māori. We saw in this pattern a living knowledge system with the potential to help us understand our own mahi and journey in new ways.

Through kōrero with designers, artists, weavers, carvers, dancers, and kaumātua, a rich history and application of the pattern and its connection to knowledge, learning and whakapapa emerged. The narrative and pūrākau of the taniwha itself also provided important ways to think about the context of our work and of working in complexity. Taniwha play a critically important role in te ao Māori, as spirits, awesome creatures, leaders, power holders, guardians, warnings and living knowledge themselves. They take many forms and often represent histories and knowledge of an area and peoples as well as the deep connections between them.

From this exploration we have understood the Niho Taniwha as reinforcing our connection to different whakapapa across the Pacific, as a connection to a diversity of skills, approaches, stories and learning and as a tool for building and sharing knowledge up and down our physical and unseen worlds. The evolution of Niho Taniwha as a framework to guide us that draws on a range of mātauranga experts and the wisdoms of different leaders, is reflective of our place in Tāmaki Makaurau where there are 19 tribal authorities (mana whenua) as well as matā waka. It also reflects our place in Auckland Council, which is not a kaupapa Māori organisation, but where Māori and Pasifika values and knowledge shape and lead our mahi.

A more detailed exploration of the Niho Taniwha framework is given in part five.

PART 4: TE KOREKOREKA

Principally Te Korekoreka is a framework grounded in Māori ontology for learning. Kawa is normally associated with our marae and cultural rituals of welcome between tāngata whenua and manuhiri. Without an agreed process, chaos would ensue so the purpose of the kawa is to create clear rules of engagement, processes, and rituals to ensure the purpose is achieved and the mana of all those participating is enhanced through the process. Here the ritual of cultural encounter is a metaphor for cross-cultural collaboration, where without a cultural process and structure inevitably results in the well-intended stumbling around blindly, stepping on each other's toes.

The kawa is also developmental in nature, it provides us with a way of approaching our mahi, of understanding the unique context of place within Ngāi Tahu and draws on the work of Ngāi Tahu influential rangatira, Matiaha Tiramōrehu.

Te Korekoreka as a kawa for Māori future-making provides us with a way of moving beyond our expected reality to not only innovate but transcend the expected outcome by actively creating new futures. It provides us with a way of approaching complex change, building mental models, practices and behaviours to approach our work. On a practical level it also provides us with a kawa, a tool, to facilitate wānanga, to approach evaluation and to work as a team.

Te Korekoreka is premised on the importance of working within a complexity framework where interrelated and circular cycles of the kawa inform practice-based evidence. Te Korekoreka allows practitioners to move between quantitative and qualitative paradigms to maximise the strengths of both and to be holistic in their approaches to evidence gathering.

The primary intent of Te Korekoreka is to support innovators to learn as they go, to nurture an evaluative mindset and to build tools to develop systemic insights through practice-based evidence. Systemic insights are crucial to the work of the framework as they point to root causes (upstream impact) as opposed to short-term (downstream) levers of change. They provide a gateway to the accelerated mechanisms for change. The kawa itself consists of a descriptive manual where staff and partners can learn more about Ngāi Tahu history, Māori future-making and how this methodology can be applied to a range of contexts. There is also a living element where we hold workshops and wānanga to actively have an 'experience' with the kawa. These workshops provide experiential learning opportunities with each wāhanga that help participants to recognise the transformative nature of the kawa. Finally, we have a small set of tools that we use to facilitate deep reflective practice, both internally as a team and, externally with our partners. We see Te Korekoreka as a living kawa that is growing as we grow.

Te Korekoreka supports practitioners to work within each of the three wāhanga – the phases of Te Ao, Te Kore, Te Pō – to enable them to gather data and insights at not only a programme level but also at a systemic and transformational level. Our observation is that a lot of evaluation tends to be done within the space of Te Ao (programme level), which is useful and provides incremental growth and new knowledge about how to improve a programme or initiative. Often, however, practitioners get stuck in the trap of too quickly moving through self-reflection (Te Kore) to ideating and developing alternatives (Te Pō) with the intention of making an improvement to their existing prototype or programme. Te Korekoreka avoids this pitfall by carving out enough space to deeply reflect on whether we

are even doing the valuable things and whether and to what degree this is leading to social and systemic changes across the system.

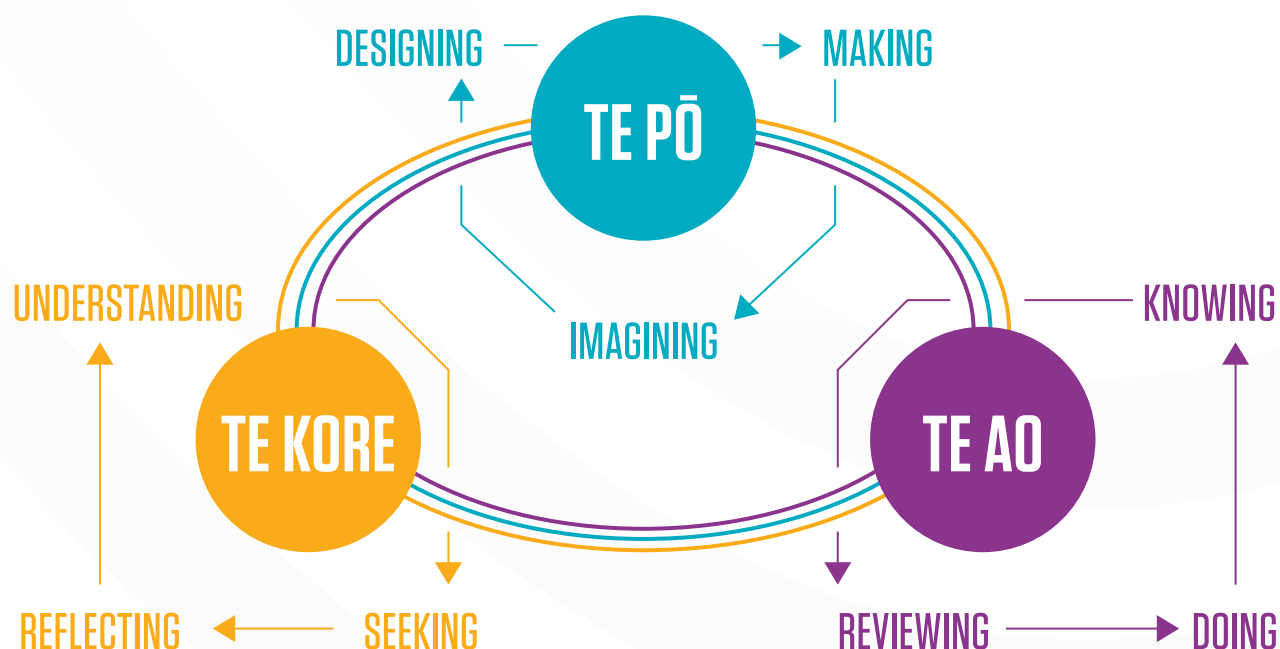
The key feature that makes this different to other organisational approaches to evaluation is that our evaluation kawa is an interconnected part of Te Korekoreka and not a separate framework. One of the primary intentions of a developmental approach to evaluation is to nurture innovation and adaptation. We believe that through an embedded practice we can increase the flow of information between the levels of self, project, and collective, which in turn enables sense-making to develop collaborative systems, whānau and evaluative insights and thinking.

Te Korekoreka guides our thinking, our practice and promotes our ability to not only track our impact and value but to also recognise

transformative levers for change. Throughout 2020 we used the kawa both as practitioners to not only develop our own evaluation capability and refine our critical praxis but also with rangatahi and whānau, organisations, stakeholders, and the wider system to capture programme and practice data.

By building up the learning infrastructure of both us and our partners, our intention is to collectively identify systemic leverage points to facilitate shifts in policy and practice while contributing to our local evidence base.

Below is a short description of each of the three stages of data collection within the Te Korekoreka kawa. Attention is placed on recognising the different experiences we approach our insights and reflection from when moving through Te Ao, Te Kore and Te Pō.





TE KORE: SEEKING – REFLECTING – UNDERSTANDING

The quality of Te Kore asks us to reflect on what has been, what we have learnt, what patterns we have observed and what this experience reminds us of. Te Kore is reflective learning that speaks to the past, and links seeking, insights, reflection, conversation, and critical praxis.

Te Kore is a place of stillness and inward reflection, experienced as an individual or group. In Te Kore we are specifically interested in reflecting on our practice (the work we do in Te Ao) and asking hard questions:

What seems worthwhile and for whom? Who is benefiting and who is not? So what might need to continue, and what might need to change? How am I tracking in relation to my theory of change? How well are my original assumptions holding? What's not working? What needs to change? What is the data telling me about what I might need to keep/ stop doing in order to stay focused on the vision?

Facilitated questioning is useful to provide the richness of introspection needed within Te Kore. These questions require a level of comfort with discomfort. This is often a challenging and at times difficult process. The process of asking these questions within the space of Te Kore means we are coming from a place that requires critical reflection – praxis. It requires a sense of inquiry – questioning, a space often associated with empirical research. Te Kore provides us with a conceptual space to let what needs to be heard clearly (the signal) come through the distraction of daily business.

The context and quality in which Te Kore is undertaken requires stillness, contemplation and a slowing of pace.



TE PŌ: IMAGINING – DESIGNING – MAKING

Te Pō asks us to reflect on what manifests or is discovered in Te Kore and to think about what action(s) we might take based on what we have noticed. Te Pō is a creative space where new ideas and designs begin to emerge. In Te Pō we ask:

What are we imagining? What might we begin to co-design and/or plan to make, co-create or implement?

Te Pō asks us to think about our practices – co-constructing, sensing, reflection, and action. When we move into the context of Te Pō our learning questions shift from reflection to action. Our approach is designed to support kaimahi to capture insights, reflections and learning as they go – this is reflected in Te Pō as the space of

designing, creating, planning, and thinking about insights from Te Kore and applying them to mahi in a way that transforms thinking and practice. At the same time, within the realm of Te Pō, we seek to build capability for the participants (in our case our rangatahi, whānau and partners) by teaching them transferable tools, skills, and knowledge such as action research, design and developmental evaluation. Te Pō is a place of nurturing, incubation, and regeneration. The quality of evaluation within Te Pō is strengths-based, solution-focused, and seeks to support individual growth and collective emancipation. It also seeks to help participants identify where the gaps and opportunities lie. The goal of evaluation within Te Pō is to support leadership and innovation through careful questioning in a way that enhances the creative process.

TE AO: KNOWING – DOING – REVIEWING

Te Ao provides us with the opportunity to take our plans, creations and ideas into the living world and begin implementing and trying them out based on what we have learnt through the cycle of Te Ao, Te Pō, and Te Kore.

Conceptually we come to Te Ao indigenised from our cyclic learning kawa.

In Te Ao we ask questions such as:

What are we doing and with whom? What is their interaction with, and perception of our actions? What practices do we need to keep, change, adapt, transform? How can we transform our programme or practice? In Te Ao we collect stories, lived experience and a variety of data that helps us articulate our overall impact.

Once we leave Te Ao by entering Te Kore as the first step, we enter Te Pō and then head back into Te Ao, we have been through one cycle of decolonisation. Re-entering Te Ao, we enter from a te ao Māori lens as opposed to Eurocentric ways of seeing, being and doing. In theory, our ontology and epistemology has shifted. This delineated process begins to address a core aspect of our work – decolonising minds and hearts and ultimately seeking to support the system to move beyond sustaining colonising practices towards re-imagining the world through indigenous eyes – to indigenous systems so they work for indigenous peoples and purposes.

Re-entering Te Ao, our developmental evaluation questions are designed to capture the implementation, application, and outcomes of the creative process within a te ao Māori paradigm and with measures of success that have been mutually created by the participants. What counts as evidence, whose voice is heard and who is part of the 'sense-making' experience is collaboratively negotiated. Questions such as:

What was created? How and how well was it implemented? What do whānau tell us about how we can improve? Asking questions such as how could we continue to improve this training, model or practice? Improvement evaluation using success criteria that is whānau-centred drive the questioning in this space.

Te Ao comes from a place of holistic being where efforts are derived around articulating value as opposed to simplistic outcomes.

What we are suggesting in Te Korekoreka is that evaluators can utilise this kawa as a revitalising tool for practitioners. By working the kawa staff get to experience all phases of all worlds. As you work your way around the spheres you re-enter Te Ao for a second time from a re-indigenised space ready to embrace change from a future-making mindset as opposed to a future-taking space. Ideally, we want to support the community in which we live and work to move from just accepting 'what is' to positioning themselves as future-makers – creating the life they have always dreamed of. Like the karakia at the beginning of this section we know learning is not linear and nor is evaluation. In complex social environments – change is circular with multiple interactions across light, darkness, nothingness and returning to light. By working the kawa of Te Korekoreka we remind ourselves of the holistic and circular nature of learning. Stepping away from Te Ao enables one to loosen their grip on what they perceive to be fixed aspects of their current reality – we often get trapped in business as usual by constraining outcome measures. Measuring 'what matters' through 'Western eyes' blinds us to the potential of re-imagining an indigenous alternative – beyond what our whānau have experienced to date.

PART 5: NIHO TANIWHA

In seeking transformative systems change it is important to lift our gaze up from programmes and interventions (often aimed at individuals) to the influence of system conditions that hold the status quo in place. Niho Taniwha is a principles and values-led learning and evaluative framework that aims to help teams build their literacy in systems practice. Built out of practice, it helps teams track outcomes and develop practice-based evidence about change. It integrates the process of internal and external reflection, developmental evaluation and strategic learning into the innovation process. In sharing our journey with the still evolving Niho Taniwha, we describe its three parts: a kaupapa, a tool set, and a living and embodied practice. That is:

- A kaupapa about learning and how we work and think about systems change in complex settings
- A (developing) set of tools that help us to navigate and work together, and that help to make explicit some of the perspectives, activities, and ways of working rigorously and authentically in different worlds
- A living practice and knowledge system, a way of working, thinking, feeling and being in the world – It's a practice of collaborative, collective and individual reflection, sharing, analysis, discernment, judgement, synthesis, slowing down and speeding up that involves muscles, mindsets, movement, and ways of working that we often need to practice and build up, a language and wayfinding practice for navigating in complexity

While the motivations and kaupapa were outlined in previous sections, here we share some aspects of the framework and tools. We explore the third part, the way it is a living and embodied practice, in Part Six.

TOHU: LEARNING THE JOURNEY

Niho Taniwha includes wayfinding tools for identifying signposts and other indicators for where we are in our journey. It helps us to think about what to look for, what markers to use to orientate our next steps and what signs matter when thinking about a journey of systems change. Drawing on the work of Mark Cabaj and others, we have adopted a simple three part lens to help teams pay attention to the things that matter when the goal is radical systems change⁷.

Outcomes for whānau, individuals, rangatahi, tamariki

Where, how and whether we are contributing to better outcomes for whānau /families/ rangatahi? How are people better off as a result and in what ways? Which people? What are the indicators, tohu or markers of this that are determined with whānau? 'Outcomes' include those identified by whānau themselves as well as 'established' outcomes from te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā frameworks.

Changes in the system

Where, how and whether we are contributing to implicit and explicit changes in the local and wider system, (including those working in the system, and system partners) that better support conditions for whānau wellbeing e.g changes in mental models, language, power dynamics, relationships and connections, policies, practices and resource flows⁸?

Strategic Learning

What are we learning about how we work, our practice, and about how to 'be' in the work? What we are learning about initiatives and scaling? What works and why/why not? What are we learning about our theory of change (rigorous decision-making about strategy and direction)? What kinds of intervening is worthwhile and why? What are we learning about barriers and opportunities to outcomes and changes in the system including navigating power constructs?

These three lenses speak to the different kinds of markers or indicators that are important on our journey. These lenses prioritise our

focus and accountability to the outcomes that are important to whānau and recognise that achieving them at any scale is based on working at the systems level.

In the same way matua Rereata Makiha speaks of tohunga spending time identifying and gathering evidence and research about tohu, we spend time learning about different indicators and destinations. We start the journey knowing what some of these likely markers are, others we are learning about as we go.

The focus on strategic learning reflects a critical part of the innovation and transformation journey. In speaking about innovation work, Michael Quinn Patton, emphasises the role of strategic learning within complex change journeys.

"While they can only influence changes in systems and impacts on people and environment, social innovators can and should be held to account for ensuring that they pursue rigorous and systematic learning about their efforts and making data informed decisions about what to do next (Patton 2011).⁹

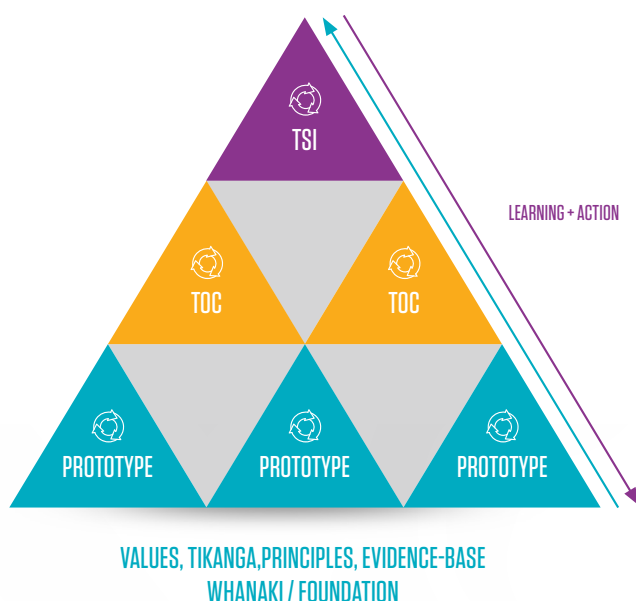
It is important to recognise that a Māori worldview is already systemic – the nature of relationships between people, whānau, environment and beyond are already understood holistically and are interconnected. It is in contrast to existing western evaluative mechanisms and dominant neoliberal perspectives that channel change efforts towards individuals and specific interventions that these lenses are necessary.

⁷ See in particular the framework included here <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/paper-evaluating-systems-change-results-an-inquiry-framework>

⁸ There are a number of ways to categorise 'systems change', these six conditions align to those outlined in The Water of Systems Change. Kania, Kramer, Senge 2018 https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change#download-area

⁹ Quoted in Mark Cabaj, Evaluating Systems Change Results: An Inquiry Framework <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/paper-evaluating-systems-change-results-an-inquiry-framework>

WAHI AKO OR SENSE-MAKING ZONES



As shown earlier Niho Taniwha is represented in the form of a pyramid of three layers, Wahi Ako, or sense-making zones, atop the whāriki, or base:

- **Wahi Ako/Zone 3:** The Southern Initiative as a whole – our broader kaupapa and vision
- **Wahi Ako/Zone 2:** Our different work streams and focus areas and our theories of change for these
- **Wahi Ako/Zone 1:** Specific projects and prototypes and initiatives
- **The whāriki:** Values, principles, tikanga, evidence

Tracking whānau outcomes, systems changes and strategic learning outcomes are important at all three levels. The Niho Taniwha levels can create an organising framework for different initiatives, each needing to be understood independently and as part of a connected whole.

THE SENSE-MAKING WAHI AKO OR ZONES OF THE NIHO TANIWHA

The base layer is a foundational whāriki of values and principles, tikanga and evidence we are building, and building on. All our activities, decisions and evaluative reasoning sit and are judged against the broader context of this whāriki. This ensures that we start by actively making visible the place in which we stand, the whakapapa of the work and the values that underpin it.

- They guide the mahi: what do we already know and what are we trying to learn?
- They guide the outcomes: what is valued as important and by whom?
- And they guide the practice: how do we do the work?

This includes mātauranga as a living knowledge system and tikanga as a responsive and contextual set of protocols that need to be

actively engaged throughout the mahi. In starting initiatives, teams are encouraged to be deliberate in surfacing, naming, and creating a place for different forms of knowledge and evidence, including mātauranga, western science and lived experience, and to identify how these will be engaged in the innovation learning process. The role of whānau in identifying outcomes and success, for example, is a critical part of this tikanga.

The first layer, Zone 1's, are the specific 'on the ground' initiatives, projects and prototypes on which we are collaborating. The Southern Initiative runs several concurrently, using nested theories of change to show connections between the different layers. These are not static, but are shaped and evolve as things are tested and learned, updated to reflect our understanding of change, outcomes and intent as they develop.

The graphic below describes the key steps or discipline involved in setting up a 'Zone 1'. In this zone the learning and sense-making process is focused in the work, through reflection 'in-action' – decision-making, change and iteration on the ground as prototypes evolve through testing and gathering feedback. Zone 1 will include periods of investigation, research and data gathering. What are we

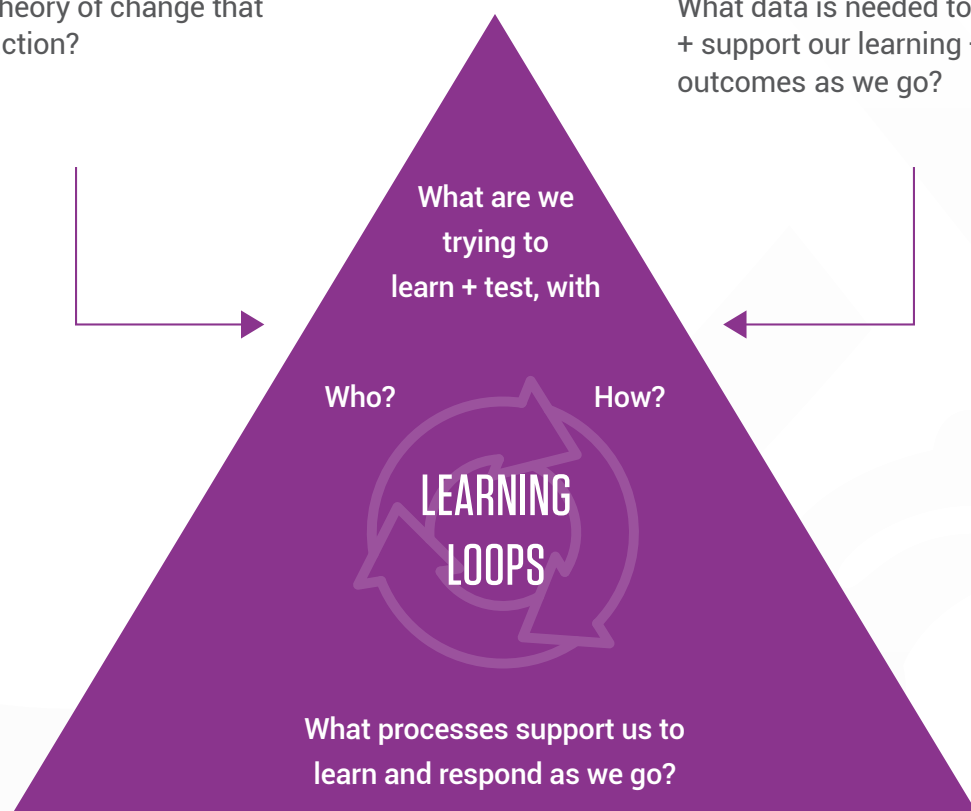
learning as we go? What outcomes and changes are emerging and what does this tell us? How might this inform our theory of change?

Regular internal and external cycles of learning and data gathering support the Zone 1 sense making process, described in the second graphic.

WAHI AKO/ZONE 1

What is the theory of change that guides this action?

What data is needed to evidence + support our learning + outcomes as we go?



What values + tikanga underpin the approach + how we work together with whānau + partners

What evidence across lived experience, indigenous and western knowledge are we drawing on and building on?

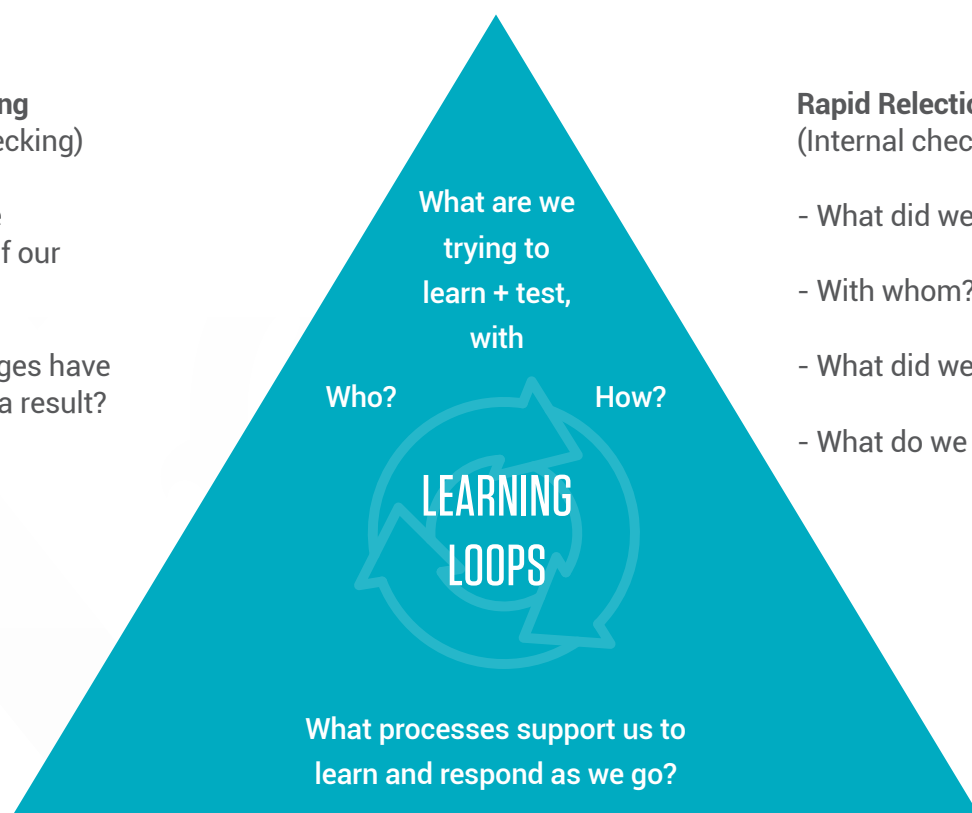
WAHI AKO/ZONE 1

Reality Testing (external checking)

- What is the experience of our partners?
- What changes have occurred as a result?

Rapid Relection (Internal checking)

- What did we do?
- With whom?
- What did we see/hear/feel?
- What do we do as a result?



Bigger periodic learning loops



Regular internal loops



Wahi Ako/Zone 1, the second layer, represents the learning and outcomes that are shared and tracked across initiatives collectively. Zone 2 sense-making involves learning and reflection 'on-action'. It provides the space for wahi ako - learning and sense-making across the different prototypes

In this space we ask:

- What is shared across different initiatives and locations, what is different and why?
- How does this challenge or contribute to our developing evidence base?
- How might this inform our theory of change and how we direct future actions including our prototypes and practice?

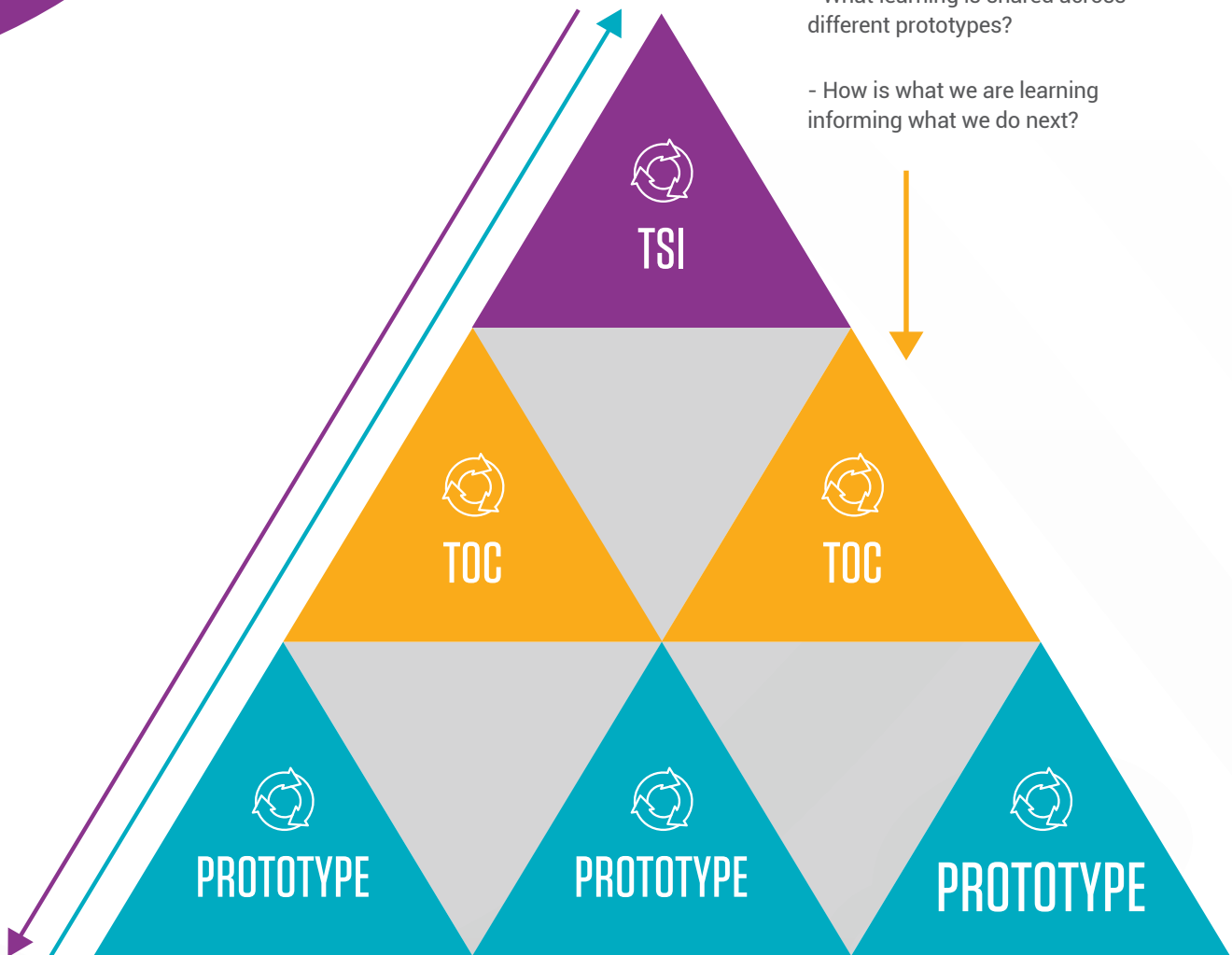
WAHI AKO/ZONE 2

Bringing together outcomes + learning from across zone 1

- How are we tracking against our theory of change?

- What learning is shared across different prototypes?

- How is what we are learning informing what we do next?



VALUES, TIKANGA, PRINCIPLES, EVIDENCE-BASE
WHĀRIKI / FOUNDATION

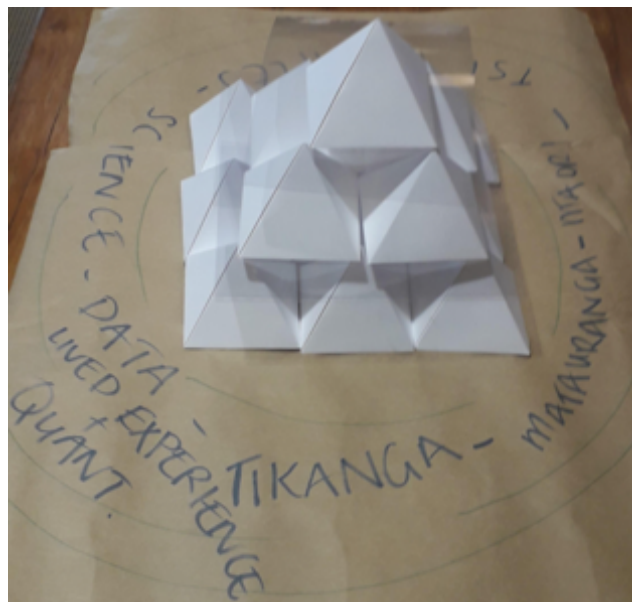
This requires a different kind of thinking and connection building than Zone 1 work. While Zone 1 reflection focuses on the immediate outcomes and shifts from a particular prototype, Zone 2 looks at what is emerging or can be learned from the patterns and outcomes across multiple activities and contexts. This includes building an understanding of how similar kinds of outcomes or indicators may look or show up in different contexts (e.g we can see the idea of 'welcoming' and creating opportunities for whānau to 'lead' is critical across all settings, but it is expressed or experienced and activated differently in different settings). Zone 2 wāhi ako invites us to lift out of the specific mahi and to see patterns and learning about our journey and the tohu across different efforts. For example, what are we learning across initiatives about power sharing and sharing risk and the kinds of supports partners might need to make such shifts in their practice? We can then connect what is shared here to inform or challenge the assumptions we had about our direction of travel and approach.

Zone 3 sense-making is the space to bring all our learnings together and use them to check and retune our direction – where are we headed, what we are learning and how are we tracking in aggregate.

In this zone the learning and sense-making takes as their subject the entirety of our work with regard to our overall direction in relation to others, the context and broader environment as it changes, as well as what we are learning through practice.

In this space we ask:

- Where do we want to head as a whole and why?
- What are we learning collectively and how are we tracking in our journey overall?
- What are we learning about our practice?
- What are we learning about the change strategies we are focused on?
- What is the evidence for this? Are we still heading in the right direction?



A three-dimensional view of the Niho Taniwha that allows us to 'build' the relationships between activities and learning and explore the framework as a physical space and form.

The Niho Taniwha recognises that different teams will be testing and trying different things at the same time. We also need to use the learning from these smaller or specific activities to collectively understand and over time, refine our direction. It deliberately challenges the temptation to overly focus on individual or specific projects or prototypes (Zone 1's) as the solution themselves. They are efforts for learning about the levers for change as much as they are efforts for change. The layers, conceptually, visually and physically, are connected to our values and in turn, help us to ground our actions in value, principles, and tikanga that are inherent in the communities that we serve. In this way, our efforts are collective, collaborative and targeted on the destination of our journey towards holistic and transformative change.

As noted earlier, the Niho Taniwha is also represented in a physical form. When we view the three-dimensional form, the inter-connectedness of the zones is highlighted with each one dependent on the layer below for structure and support. It also makes visible the value of the negative space – the unfilled gaps in the structure. This negative space is analogous to the space of Te Kore; it is the space of potential amongst the solid forms of visible action. These are transition spaces where new connections and connection to place are made between the zones.

The Niho Taniwha helps us to capture, build and share learning, and to critically reflect on where we are in our journey. Understood through the lens of matua Rereata's kōrero, it is about strengthening our capacity as wayfinders (including by working with tohunga). It is our way of scribing, capturing, and giving form and structure to how we gather, store and share the evidence of the journey we are on. It has provided us with pathways to talk, think, feel and identify complexity and to represent our journey. We understand Niho Taniwha as a living framework that respectfully draws from mātauranga Māori and helps to ground us in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa today.

PART 6: TOWARDS A BICULTURAL, EMBODIED, SYSTEMS PRACTICE

Understanding the similarities and the differences between Te Korekoreka and Niho Taniwha is a unique learning opportunity. Several shared themes have emerged: the intent to make visible different cycles and layers of

action and sense-making in social innovation; the importance of evaluative practice being embodied; and negotiating the ongoing learning of a bi-cultural practice.

LAYERS OF LEARNING AND SENSE-MAKING

Whilst the cycles of learning and sense-making are represented differently in Niho Taniwha and Te Korekoreka, there are several parallels that warrant examination. For example, Niho Taniwha Zone 1 contains cycles of reflection and of data gathering where we act and then reflect on action, moving between the known and unknown into a new space of learning. This mirrors Te Korekoreka in the movement between Te Ao (we are doing and trying things), Te Kore (we are reflecting and sense-making about that action), and Te Pō (we are re-creating, taking action, shifting our perspective).

Te Korekoreka and Niho Taniwha are frameworks for similar contexts. They are structurally similar in the sense that there are discrete areas of iterations of particular projects. Both have a focus on learning how to make change as an outcome, and a view to aggregate holistic learning experiences by facilitating collaborative systemic change to improve economic and social outcomes for Māori, as well as the everyday lived experiences of being Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The tracking of outcomes and evaluation is most often focused in the Zone 1 spaces of Niho Taniwha, which represents the projects and prototypes, and the qualities of Te Ao in Te Korekoreka, the space of tangible action, the 'seeable' work or 'programme' level. Moving up into Wahi Ako 2 and 3 of Niho Taniwha means moving into more complex patterns, connections and systemic issues, closely related to the wāhanga of Te Kore and Te Pō. These higher levels of sense-making require deeper spaces of critical reflection, working with the spaces of potential, with the unseen and unknown. This kind of sense-making is often a less familiar space and place for collaboration.

Zone 2 and 3 of Niho Taniwha, like the phases of Te Kore and Te Pō, require deeper reflection and trust to challenge self and practice. As new connections are made and directions reset before we move back into Zone 1 and Te Ao space, activating new learning and perspectives about the destination of travel, or about how we might get there. Both emphasise the need to traverse Te Kore; deeper learning that requires inward and outward looking reflection.

While the logistical narrative of moving between physical and conceptual spaces generating insights for innovation, learning and action are similar and analogous, the respective emphasis of the frames differs. Te Korekoreka emphasises the transformative nature of moving through these spaces, Niho Taniwha emphasises the bringing together of different concrete energies, actions and learning into higher level and collective knowledge building.

One of the challenges we face in evolving and sharing the framework or approach, is how it is represented. For the Niho Taniwha, while the tools have been useful to expose and make the required process explicit, they have also presented a challenge in that they do little to embody the felt aspects or energy of the practice. There is a risk in codifying activity that they become disconnected from the practice, too rigid, oversimplified or used to control (i.e., "fill out this form") rather than invigorate. The toolkit itself is a representation of the practice that needs to be developed and learnt over time and we are still figuring out the best way to bring this to life in different and fast paced settings.

ENACTING EVALUATIVE PRACTICE AS AN EMBODIED PRACTICE

Both the Niho Taniwha and Te Korekoreka ask practitioners to be rigorous in their approach to data collection, outcomes, and capturing the learning and evidence along the journey. Both seek to encourage us to be more intentional about the things that we use to guide and track our journey. While not everyone is expected to be fluent in specific data capturing tools, the process of sense-making at different levels, and drawing on and connecting decision-making to forms of evidence should become integrated into the whole team's practice. Both Te Korekoreka and the Niho Taniwha offer a framework for moving through these different spaces in our work, and learning about the kinds of thinking, reflection and action that can help at different points. Both kawa also emphasise that collecting evidence is equal to the experiential nature of the learning, that is, developing our senses and sensitivities to the different modes and stages of action and reflection. This is as much a physical and embodied one as it is intellectual. As such, both kawa are taught and materialised through living and embodied practice that is intended to engage whole bodies, different senses and forms of knowledge.

Between us we have experimented with a range of different strategies to support team members, partners and whānau to understand the way of working that is embodied in these practices, as well as to navigate the change process from one phase of the sense-making practice or wāhanga to another.

Te Korekoreka draws on the ancient wisdom of incantation or karakia as a tool to bring a mindful shift of state between wāhanga or the spheres of Te Ao, Te Kore and Te Pō. The Niho Taniwha can be created by the team physically as a three-dimensional niho, with projects as objects considered individually and in relation to each other. The physicality of this invites a different kind of engagement with the work and its collective capacity. Both can use making, dance, movement, and embodied experience to feel the spaces and shifts of focus and levels of thinking that are engaged through the sense-making process of different phases or levels.

THE SOUTHERN INITIATIVE TEAM, GUIDED BY JACK GRAY
(ATAMIRA DANCE COMPANY) TO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE
OUR NIHO TANIWHA PRACTICE AS MOVEMENT.



Importantly the kawa tells us (and challenges us) about the natural dispositions we have for one world over another (Te Ao, Te Kore, Te Pō), and the importance of all of them in the process of systems change. Reflection is just as important as action and likewise action is just as important as creation. We know that practitioners have a tendency to gravitate to certain points within each kawa. Some prefer to be on the ground in action, others are comfortable in the space of creation. For others staying in the potential, in the empty or transitional spaces of the unknown or between, or making connections across such spaces is a natural place to be. Critical or deep reflection may require development of new muscles – slowing down to speed up. When we embody this kawa, when we get up and physically experience and move through the different spaces, we learn how to inhabit each world as its separate self and to honour what each space brings to our overall practice. It is the experiential nature of the kawa that supports practitioners to experience each world as a separate entity and with time they begin to identify the 'on ramps', thresholds and transitions between each world. Practitioners begin to get clues when they are ready to move to the next wāhanga of the kawa.

In this way exploring the kawa and the practices within them through movement can be a more meaningful way for the teams to connect to the emotional and felt aspects of the practice than just going through a toolkit for example. Through experimenting with and practicing movement we can explore the feelings of working in complexity, of relationships, pace and connectivity. We can build sensitivity to the feelings that come with pausing and reflecting deeper, with being intentional in making and finding connections and alignment with others, from sitting or circling in the spaces in between or before signs are clear. We can surface and examine the vulnerability of exposing ourselves to others through critical reflection, the fear of trying new things and the fluency, comprehension and mastery that comes from practicing 'moves' and ways of working and connecting that may have initially been unfamiliar. The physicality of each kawa has been critical to understanding them as living knowledge systems in themselves. We have found that it cannot be an intellectual or cognitive process of learning – it is a holistic and living experience that builds the practice into the organisation and within practitioners' consciousness.

ENACTING BI-CULTURAL PRACTICE AS AN ONGOING LEARNING JOURNEY

Tokona te Raki and The Southern Initiative have both drawn on learning and methods from te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā evaluation, innovation, and design practices. Practitioners leading the development and testing of the framework are Māori and Pākehā. Both are navigating what it means to build or operate in a third space and give life to a treaty-based practice, and within this represent processes that attempt to actively engage and prioritise indigenous

knowledge and ways of knowing. Te Korekoreka from its roots as a Ngāi Tahu kawa and the Niho Taniwha as a more divergent reflection of urban and diverse stories and knowledge systems. These practices help provide a navigational guide to learning in complexity that interfaces with the emerging challenges of our current context but one that is located in the deep wisdom of practices that look seven generations ahead and behind.

Te Korekoreka is a tool for indigenisation, by this we mean we are constantly re-indigenising our own thinking, practice, and behaviour through the kawa. We are learning with it and from it, it elevates subjectivity over objectivity and reaches for holistic ways to approach evidence. Like other critical practices, the Niho Taniwha actively brings forward and seeks to unpack and challenge assumptions about evidence, knowledge and innovation practice embedded in conventional and dominant western research and innovation approaches – prioritising or giving prominence to indigenous knowledge and knowing, and different frames of reference. This begins at the beginning, where values, principles and tikanga are understood as the basis or foundation of action and practice – they also set the frame for 'good' practice and rigour. For both organisations this includes whānau at the centre or leading, and tikanga Māori as the basis for practice. In the context of this work – we follow the principles of tika and pono, doing the right things in the right way. Accountability is assessed by asking ourselves if tikanga is being followed? If whānau have been involved in defining success? Does the process reflect the values of whakawhanaungatanga, manaakitanga, ako, rangatiratanga? And most crucially do the people involved experience these things?

Both teams also have the experience of working across multiple worldviews. For Māori and Pasifika practitioners working

across worldviews and paradigms is a daily reality. For Pākehā practitioners there is often a journey to understand and make space for multiple worlds. Together we are building our understanding of how we can give life to bi-cultural practices that create a foundation for multiple perspectives and worldviews and an understanding of knowledge and evidence that reflects the rich histories and lived realities of different communities. The two organisational approaches to learning reflect kaupapa Māori and bi-cultural learning journeys, and each reflects a process of developing a way of thinking about impact, measurement, evaluation, innovation, complexity and change in multiple ways – unlearning as much as learning.

The making and movement of the two kawa as described above, are also an invitation to know, explore and be comfortable with the aspects of our world and work that are unseen and of mātauranga as a living knowledge system. They open up different ways to connect to the practice and to experience the complexity of systems change. Each time we build the Niho Taniwha and sit with a kaumātua, we learn a different story that helps to inform and guide our practice, it is a learning system that is revealing insights in its own right. Likewise, for Te Korekoreka, each time the team listens to the stories of Ngāi Tahu tīpuna Matiaha Tiramōrehu we learn more about the three worlds.

5 CONCLUSION

As was suggested at the outset of this paper, Te Korekoreka and Niho Taniwha perform multiple roles for the Tokona te Raki and The Southern Initiative teams. They set up an approach or container for data and analysis, they create a platform for integrated sensemaking, strategy and decision making, and, as importantly they support team building and coherence in highly dynamic and fast-moving contexts. Further, they are living frameworks where we continue to learn from and within them, testing, trialling, and prototyping different wāhanga across different teams. They also invite collaborative practice across transdisciplinary spaces - having been taken up by other organisations and reshaped to support their practice.

In both cases the frameworks serve to enable teams and others to engage tangibly with the practice of change and make the navigation and tracking of the change and learning across the journey visible and available to ourselves and to others. The kawa supports a kind of reflective practice that enables deep learning, and connections, including connection to place, that can be difficult to make time for in fast-moving innovation contexts. They recognise and support practitioners to work with and through the complexity of real situations, in ways that honour context, history, people and place.

Both organisations understand that we cannot keep trying to fix a colonial model with a piecemeal approach such as implementing a new initiative or programme to solve complex, multigenerational trauma and disconnect – programmes won't shift structures. Instead, we need to look to the systems to make change, not through individual interventions but through a firm systemic gaze, and connection between small actions and bigger visions – acknowledging the interconnectedness between things. As innovation platforms both The Southern Initiative and Tokona te Raki need

a way to connect our prototypes, initiatives, and learning activity to bigger change – they can't accidentally turn into programmes.

Critically important to both approaches is that they seek to engage in the lived complexity of systems and support the multiple perspectives of small and big, past, present and future, immediate and longer-term that need to be held when working with systems. Indigenous knowledge systems do this inherently – but our current western constructs of government and services work counter to the notion of connectivity and connectedness. We need to constantly work to bring these back together and prioritise ways of working that have the capacity to hold the here and now and the future. Prioritising incremental change and radical transformation is crucial in thinking about supporting whānau with what they need today and helping create the conditions for healing and transformation that start now to reshape our future.

It is easy for us to throw ourselves into specific activities and initiatives that we believe are or can make a difference. But we need to avoid getting too attached to specific initiatives and always be thinking (as well) about the broader systems and learning implications. Both organisations see their role as working with whānau and others to test out and model compelling alternatives to the status quo and help build the capacity of the system for working differently. While prototypes should deliver benefits for whānau, they are a way to learn together about what is needed and build capacity for trying new things. They are not the answer in and of themselves. The Niho Taniwha and Te Korekoreka intentionally invite teams to think beyond their initial experience or immediate mahi and to consider what they are learning about the system and about changing the system, to consider the learning

of partners and wider collaborators. It helps to keep in focus an intentional practice and a view on systems simultaneously. We have found the visual language of the Niho Taniwha has helped other agencies and teams put a systems lens and perspective around their own myriad of activities – connecting action with strategy, providing a platform for teams to bring together and consider multiple activities from one organisation in the collective. In some ways a very simple and accessible mindset to a complex activity. In both cases the frameworks seek to enable teams and others to engage tangibly with the practice of change on the ground as well as at a systems level, keeping

both and all in view at the same time, being responsive too rather than seeking to reduce or control complexity.

Both the Niho Taniwha and Te Korekoreka are held as living knowledge frameworks. This means we are learning about them and learning from them as we apply their kawa in our practice. We share these and our learning on this journey as a contribution to social innovation practice in Aotearoa that prioritises social and economic transformation through kaupapa Māori and treaty-based practice.

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GLOSSARY

Ako – reciprocal learning and teaching, a mutually reinforcing learning environment (rather than expert lead)

Aotearoa – Māori name for New Zealand, conventionally called 'Aotearoa New Zealand'

Aroha – to feel love, care, compassion, empathy

Hapū – group of whānau with a common ancestor and shared whakapapa

Iwi – tribe, or group with shared history and whakapapa in a distinct territory

Kaimahi – a member of staff, employee

Karakia – ritual recitation, often in a form similar to prayer. Traditional karakia have specific form and function, for major and for minor rituals, connecting the present with the past, often binding or inviting participants to a shared future.

Kaumātua – a person with status, often an elder, and respected for their wisdom and insight

Kaupapa – theme, generally grounded in a Māori worldview; cf. Kaupapa Māori

Kaupapa Māori – a Māori approach to doing things, involving Māori knowledge, tikanga, and values

Kawa – protocols and customs that tell us how to act and engage with others, often regarding specific formal rituals

Kōrero – story, discussion, or dialogue

Mahi – work

Mana – spiritual and non-spiritual interpretations. The non-spiritual interpretation is that mana is the prestige, authority, influence, status, or charisma one has in the community. The spiritual interpretation is that mana is a supernatural force imbued in a person, a place, an event or an object – it is inherited, passed from its source and form the origins of one's whakapapa.

Mana whenua – tribal authorities, caretakers with jurisdiction over territory. Sometimes interpreted literally as 'people of the land' utilising the sense that as people of the land they have specific rights derived from there.

Manaakitanga – showing care for others, also including respect and empathy; sometimes expressed as a value

Marae – courtyard in front of a Māori meeting house (wharehau), used for formal greetings

Mataawaka – Māori persons that are not in a mana whenua group

Mātauranga – indigenous knowledge

Matua – moniker for much respected person; revered person; chief.

Mauri – the essence of a person or thing; life force

Moemoea – dream or vision

Pākehā – a non-Māori person; New Zealander of European descent

Pono – truth, integrity

Pūrākau – ancient legend; story

Rakatira/ Rangatira – chief, or leader (nb regional dialectic preference 'k' or 'ng').

Rangatahi – young person

Rangatiratanga – value of self-determination

Tāmaki Makaurau – Māori language name for Auckland

Tamariki – young persons; children

Tautoko – to support

Te Ao Māori – The Māori World, inclusive of the lived experiences of Māori, te Reo Māori (Māori language), and tikanga Māori (protocols and customs).

Te Tiriti o Waitangi – The Treaty of Waitangi is an 1840 agreement, in English and in te Reo Māori, between the British Crown and Māori chiefs describing their political relationship and foundations for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Tika – principle for right directed action: acting rightly, in the right way, in the right order, in the right context.

Tikaka/ tikanga – behaviour guidelines for interactions in daily life and in formal cultural

events (nb regional dialectic preference 'k' or 'ng').

Tipuna – ancestors, grandparents

Tohunga – learned person, expert

Wāhanga – sphere, part, section

Wairua – non-physical spirit, soul

Waka – canoe

Wānanga – meeting for discussion and deliberation, learning forum

Whakapapa – genealogy, lineage

Whakawhanaungatanga – process for building and sustaining relationships, relating well to others

Whānau – family group, close relations





The
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