

Puāwai 2024: Impact Report



Poipoia te kākano
kia puāwai

puāwai

Nurture the seed and it
will blossom

Kia ora

Ehara taku toa i te toa
takitahi, he toa takitini



Our strength is not as individuals, but as a collective

We are a Tiriti o Waitangi-led, impact focussed leadership consultancy. We grow leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand who develop equitable and flourishing communities and organisations.



Committed to giving effect to

the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Inspired by our vision to see

Equitable and thriving communities and organisations

Through growing leaders who are

Fostering collective approaches to complex issues

Guided by our values

Mana Ōrite, Kotahitanga and Manaakitanga

This is who we are.

The **Leadership in Communities (LinC) Project** has been supporting community leaders across Canterbury for 9 years ever since the Christchurch earthquakes.

It currently has 4 separate but interconnected programmes:

[LinC update for LSSG Nov 2024](#)



Incubator



Puāwai



Rourou



Te Whāriki

Puāwai Overview

Who: Audience

Cohort of 25-30 rangatahi (15-18 yo)
4-5 Tuākana per cohort

Where: Which part of the Māra is it?

Te Māra Whakatipu

When: Duration

2 cohorts per year

Videos

[Celebrating Puāwai 2021](#)

[Celebrating Puāwai 2020](#)

Resources Req: (people, frameworks, pūtea)

\$40,000 per cohort
Project lead - Tayla,
Facilitation Team: Mahlon, Ata, Libby, Rochelle
Tuākana: Wiki, Rose, Patariki, Mel.

Why/Purpose: Impact question

"How do we support diverse rangatahi who are potential leaders, disruptors and innovators who have experienced discrimination because of their identity?"

<https://leadershiplab.co.nz/projects/puawai/>



What: Detailed description

Puāwai is a leadership experience for 25-30 rangatahi/young people ages 15-18 designed to:

- Connect with others to network, innovate and create change
- Develop real skills, knowledge and confidence with a focus on strengths and knowing who you are
- Provide opportunities for rangatahi from diverse communities, informed by kaupapa Māori principles.

How: Process/Methodology

- 1) Receive Strengths Coaching on their Top 5 Strengths
- 2) Attend a two-day wānanga of workshops, experiences, networking and leadership
- 3) Design and facilitate Activator events – youth-led practical projects



Kaupapa | Purpose

[Puāwai](#) is a five-month experience for rangatahi aged 15-18. It is designed to connect and develop a diverse network of potential leaders, innovators, disruptors, and drivers while equipping them with fundamental skills and knowledge.



Team



Tayla Taylor
she/her



Atarau Hamilton-Fuller
he/him



Mahlon Saumalu
he/him



Wikitoria Kurene
she/her



Rochelle Faimalo
she/her



Libby Davenport
she/her



Rose Cook
she/they



Pātariki Caffell
he/him



Melissa Lama
she/her

Steering Group



Chris Jansen
he/him



Jenn Chowaniec
she/her



Te Ao Marama Apiata
he/him

Kaupapa | Purpose

Puāwai is a leadership experience for rangatahi aged 15-18, designed to connect and develop a diverse network of leaders, innovators, disruptors, and drivers, while equipping them with fundamental skills and knowledge.

The Project connects strongly to [Leadership Lab](#)'s vision to see equitable and thriving communities and organisations, by growing young leaders from diverse communities and developing their capacity to respond to complex issues. Puāwai is informed by kaupapa Māori principles and guided by Leadership Labs values:

mana ōrite, kotahitanga me manaakitanga

Puāwai focuses its impact on:

rangatahi empowered, connected, contributing and influencing in their own community

The kupu 'Puāwai' was chosen to reflect the growth that rangatahi and tuakana experience through their journey during and beyond Puāwai, inspired by the whakatauki:

Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai
Nurture the seed and it will blossom



Twin impact groups - rangatahi and tuakana

Rangatahi

Puāwai is primarily for rangatahi who are 15- 18 years old who have already demonstrated their involvement within their whānau, friend group, school or community, who want to grow their skills and experience but have not yet received leadership development opportunities, due to discrimination or being marginalised.

Tuākana

Rangatahi who join the programme are supported by a Tuākana (mentor) from the community they identify with, who may share some similar lived experiences. Tuākana are also a key impact focus as Puāwai aims to support Tuākana to be equipped, connecting and influencing in their own communities.



Whakapapa of Puāwai

Puāwai originated in late 2019 where some of our Leadership Lab team who were facilitating our post-earthquake incubator for community leaders suggested we offer something similar for rangatahi. Through a process of co-design with a wide range of rangatahi we agreed that we wanted to focus on those who had “*done the mahi but not got the treats*”, rather than the typical “*badges and blazers*” profile of student leaders. We discovered that discrimination and marginalisation was the key issue to be addressed. Consequently Puāwai has focussed specifically on rangatahi who identify with groups that include Māori, Pasifika, Rainbow, Ethnic, Disability, and Care Experienced communities.

Puāwai evolved in 2024 from a 9 month programme to two five-month programmes per year, with approximately 30 rangatahi and 5-6 Tuākana in each cohort. The programme consists of strengths coaching, whanaungatanga hui, a two-day wānanga and Activator events. This shorter-form programme has proven successful, with higher engagement in each component and stronger rates of retention across the span of the programme.



Te Haerenga | The Journey

Strengths coaching

Learn

Receive Strengths Coaching on Top 5 Strengths

Whanaungatanga hui

Connect

Meet and build relationships with other young leaders, identity-based rōpū and Tuākana

Two day wānanga

Explore

Attend a two-day wānanga of workshops, experiences, networking and leadership

Activators

Activate

Use the skills and knowledge gained to design and facilitate youth-led practical projects

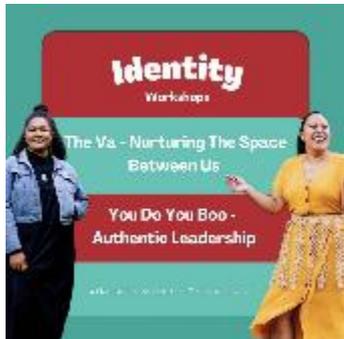


Wānanga

Across both 2024 cohorts, over 50 rangatahi came together to explore their strengths, leadership, and intersecting identities at the Puāwai wānanga.

We dove deep into workshops on tūrangawaewae and belonging, navigating the vā, authentic leadership, building relationships, developing your personal brand, communication styles, and putting our strengths into action. These workshops were facilitated by our Tuākana, providing an opportunity for them to develop their facilitation skills, share their lived experiences, and further connect with the Puāwai rangatahi.

Wānanga also provide an opportunity to begin planning the rangatahi-led community Activators.



Rangatahi-led Activators

He Waka Eke Noa

To celebrate and serve their community, this eastside activation at the Aranui Wainoni Community centred was based centered around the rangatahi leading cultural activities and sharing delicious kai they prepared.

Attendees learnt to weave putiputi (flowers), play Māori kēmu (games), and relaxed with mirimiri (massage).

Watch the event video [here](#).



Voices of Tomorrow

An Open Mic Night featuring rangatahi from Ōtautahi, who shared poems and prose reflecting their unique perspectives as young people growing up in Christchurch.

The audience co-created a senses poem about their experiences as a young person, before five people from the audience shared their own poems to conclude the event.



Rangatahi Connect- Youth Expo

An expo at Hagley College aimed at connecting young people with youth organisations and youth leadership opportunities. This Activator rōpū was motivated to connect more young people to organisations that support their needs after their positive experiences in Puāwai.

Over 300 young people attended the expo over the course of lunchtime. The rangatahi leading the Activator supported the stall holders and cooked a sausage sizzle for the young people attending the expo.

Watch the event video [here](#).



Liked by taylataylor and others
purapurawhetutrust Last Thursday 15th August
Purapura Wētū attended Hagley College's Rangatahi connect event. A great moment for local youth and mental health services to reach out to the students and show our youth, what we can provide to support and guide them through life challenges and assist them in cultivating the gifts and potential they have.

One of our kaimahi shares their thoughts on what was an impactful lunchtime for both rangatahi and kaimahi.

"I was very honoured to be part of the Rangatahi Expo. The rangatahi were keen to talk with us and seemed genuinely interested in the毛利 we do. They engaged with us and shared their personal kōrero, which was eye-opening, particularly in how openly they discussed their well-being journey. Additionally, connecting with other agencies that were part of the kaupapa was valuable. It was encouraging to see many organisations promoting their mahi."



Whakaaweawe | Impact - Rangatahi

Over the course of the programme, rangatahi reflect and provide feedback on their experiences and the skills and knowledge they have developed. The insights gained from rangatahi demonstrate the significant impact Puāwai has had, including improved:

Confidence

“Along the way I became more confident in myself and what I have to say.”

“Knowing my strengths makes me feel more valuable as I now know how I can contribute.”

Leadership

“Learning more about my cultural identity and how I can use it as leadership.”

Understanding of others

“I’m more understanding that people are different and have different strengths.”

“My highlight was hearing from different communities I’m not part of but am a ally of.”

Sense of belonging

“Learning about intersectionality made me feel like I belong in that space, and that was pretty nice.”

Development of real life skills

“Activators helped me to use my strengths and develop self management skills.”

“I know how to respond to conflict better.”

Whakaaweawe | Impact - Tuākana

Over the last six years of implementing Puāwai we have been able to engage and employ a group of 15 incredible young adults in their 20's who also identify with the same groups as the rangatahi. Puāwai is completely designed and implemented by this group in their roles of facilitators and tuakana to the rangatahi in the programmes.

Connection to community

"I love the Puāwai community that has built pretty quickly"

"I feel more deeply connected to my community."

Personal growth

"I have grown a deeper love for my own experiences and struggles in a way that I can use for good and growth, not only for myself but others around me."

Validation

"Seeing young people going from curiosity to understanding and belief - I got to be there for that."

Meaning

"Being able to contribute in an impactful way."





Kōrero Whakaaweawe | Alex's Story

My experience at Puāwai has been a significant part in my journey to becoming an intersectional leader. The programme has taught me valuable teamwork skills and given me a safe space to explore my identity through values, culture and strengths.

Puāwai has been a stepping stone on my journey of personal growth. I have gained a deeper understanding of myself through discovering my strengths and exploring their impact on my everyday life.

It was great to connect with other rangatahi and see how our strengths shone through in different way during the different activities. Working in a diverse team has taught me ways to adapt to situations so my core values are always represented. I love the value Puāwai places on expression of identity which I am excited to explore further through the “Window to My World” project. I am grateful to have been apart of this positive experience and to have worked with such a kind, friendly and dynamic team of rangatahi and Tuākana.

Alex King

Pronouns: she/her

Age / Tau: 18

Whakapapa: Pasifika and Pakeha

I am a student in my last year of high school at Te Puna Wai o Waipapa- Hagley College. I have a passion for connecting and understanding people which I am going to pursue next year through a bachelor of Psychological Science at the University of Canterbury.

“Puāwai has been a significant part in my journey to becoming an intersectional leader.”

Kōrero Whakaaweawe | Gray's Story



Gray

Pronouns: they/them

Age / Tau: 20 (17-20 when completing Puāwai)

Identity: transgender, disabled and care-experienced

Kia ora, I'm Gray, a 20-year-old disabled and care-experienced member of the Rainbow community who has participated in the Puāwai programme three times. I'm passionate about dinosaurs, video games, and animals, and I focus on developing my leadership and people skills while advocating for systems change to create positive impacts for the communities I belong to.

My Puāwai experience was incredibly positive and transformative. I loved meeting other people within the communities I'm part of and learning valuable social skills that helped me feel more connected. It also gave me the opportunity to develop leadership skills and understand how to use my strengths to succeed in my day-to-day life and make a difference in my communities.

Puāwai helped me understand that I'm more than just my labels - these identities are important parts of who I am, but they don't define me entirely. It taught me to embrace the intersectionality of my identities, recognising that where they meet is what makes me unique and shapes my sense of self.

Through Puāwai, I made meaningful connections, including meeting my best friend and improving my ability to connect with others. I also felt a deeper connection to my whakapapa, as Puāwai created a space for me to understand that being Māori isn't about fitting a single mold - it's about embracing who you are and where you come from in your own way.

I've used what I learned in Puāwai to enroll in courses and apply the leadership skills I developed. I've stepped up more in spaces within my community to work towards making meaningful change. Puāwai has also helped me feel more confident in my day-to-day life, empowering me to take on new challenges.

“Puāwai gave me the opportunity to develop leadership skills and understand how to use my strengths to succeed in my day-to-day life and make a difference in my communities.”

Kōrero Whakaaweawe | Dereon's Story



Dereon

Pronouns: He/him

Age / Tau: 18

Rōpū: *Pasifika*

Puāwai helped me understand myself better by revealing my potential as a leader—something I hadn't fully recognized before. Through hands-on experiences and encouraging guidance, I learned that leadership isn't just about speaking up, but also about listening, being authentic, and uplifting others. It gave me the confidence to trust my voice and lead with purpose.

My Puāwai experience gave me the confidence to step into leadership roles and connect deeply with other passionate young people. The supportive mentors and focus on cultural identity helped shape my personal growth and gave me tools to lead with purpose.

Through Puāwai, I built strong connections with people from a wide range of backgrounds, which helped me appreciate different perspectives and experiences. It also deepened my connection with myself, especially in understanding where I come from and how my story fits into a bigger picture. These relationships made me feel seen, supported, and part of a community that values growth and diversity.

“Puāwai gave me the confidence to trust my voice and lead with purpose.”





Kōrero Whakaaweawe | Leo's Story

A key part of my Puāwai experience has been learning about my strengths and making new connections. I was able to learn about my top five strengths, and now feel like I am better equipped to pick leadership opportunities that suit my strengths and that I am more likely to excel at.

Most of my strengths are people-based, so I now focus more on people-based leadership opportunities, and it's felt much easier to confidently take on opportunities now that I've had practise during Puawai and had opportunities to better understand myself.

I really liked meeting like minded people, both from my rōpū and those who had strengths similar to me. I made three new friends who I ended up getting super close with, and we plan times to hang out and do things together outside of Puawai now too, becoming long-term friends

Leo

Pronouns: He/she/they

Age / Tau: 18

Rōpū: Rainbow



“I am better equipped to pick leadership opportunities that suit my strengths.”



Kōrero Whakaaweawe | Tundra's Story

Puāwai has helped me in many ways, especially developing my confidence. It has given me the confidence I needed to put myself out there as a leader and to participate more in social settings.

Puāwai was an enjoyable way to grow my social skills. My highlight was befriending new people and gaining new connections. I built relationships with many great people, including some good friends that I now go to D&D with.

So far, I have used my Puāwai experience to better understand my capabilities and capacity as a leader.

Tundra

Pronouns: She/Her //
Fae/Faer

Age / Tau: 17

Rōpū: Rainbow



“It has given me the confidence I needed to put myself out there as a leader .”

Kōrero Whakaaweawe | Rosini's Story



Rosini

Pronouns: He/she/they

Age / Tau: 18

Rōpū: *Rainbow*

I really enjoyed Puāwai as it gave me more knowledge in leadership and helped me make more friends in the process. I enjoyed every part of it as I felt understood and listened.

Puawai has helped me gain more confidence in my social skills. It let me learn and be more comfortable to be myself around people I have just met which also helped me improve at my leadership skills.

I have made connections with new friends I have made through Puāwai. I've also made a connection with myself and have gained a better understanding of myself. I have gained a stronger connection with my girlfriend in learning how to do leadership together.

I am a bit more confident speaking to people in situations where have to lead. I am able to be myself more when making new friends.

“I enjoyed every part of Puāwai as I felt understood and listened to.”

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini

*Our strength is not as individuals,
but as a collective*

leadershiplab.co.nz