

Leadership Lab Foundation Report to Funders

November 2025

Vision: Thriving leaders active in flourishing communities

Poipoia te kakano kia puāwai - nurture the seed, and it will blossom

Previous report: [Leadership Lab Foundation Report to Funders June 2025](#)

Overview

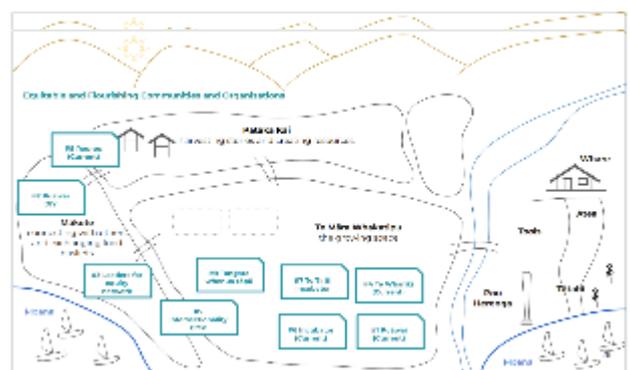
The Leadership Lab Foundation provides the umbrella for the following programmes implemented by Leadership Lab Ltd.

1. Puāwai
2. Puāwai DIY
3. Leaders for Equity Network
4. Te Whāriki
5. Intersectionality and Systems Community of Practice
6. Leadership Incubator
7. Te Tiriti Incubator
8. Rourou

These are all designed to be integrated with the Māra framework, specifically the Leadership Lab's Ecosystem for Growing Leaders, as outlined in the [Leadership Lab Māra framework overview](#). These programmes are situated within the domains of Te Māra Whakatipu, Pātaka Kai, and Māketē as seen in this diagram.

Funding for these eight programmes has been sourced from a range of funders, including:

- Department of Internal Affairs Community Fund
- Department of Internal Affairs Funding for Change
- Todd Foundation
- Christchurch City Council
- The Rātā Foundation
- Simplicity Foundation
- Wayne Francis Charitable Trust
- J R McKenzie Trust



This report shares the updates and impact of each of these programmes. More information can be found in the [LinC Proposal 2025-2027](#).

Project#1 Puāwai

[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. In 2024, we moved from a single nine-month programme to offering two five-month programmes. This shorter-form programme has proven successful, with higher engagement through its strengths coaching, wānanga, and activator planning components.



November 2025 Update

In August 2025 we got the ball rolling on our new Puāwai cohort, kicking off recruitment through schools, social media, and community networks. We were thrilled with the response this year - 28 young people joined the programme, all of whom received their Top 5 CliftonStrengths coaching in September, followed by a 100% turnout at our October wānanga held during the second week of the school holidays. A real highlight for us was seeing three past participants - Grayson Williams, Dereon Maka, and Alex King - return as junior tuākana, stepping into leadership roles to guide rōpū and support the activator creative projects.

This year’s cohort is one of our most diverse yet, with representation from rainbow, disability, Pasifika, Māori, cross-cultural, Filipino, Nepalese, South African, Malaysian Indian, care-experienced, African, and religious communities, and ages ranging from 15 to 18. We also welcomed Dr. MahMah Timoteo as a new tuākana to the facilitation team. The wānanga explored intersectionality, the vā and tūrangawaewae, leadership and identity, communication styles, and how to be “*a villager in the village.*” Each rangatahi has now chosen their Activator project - using collage, art, podcasting, photography, or spoken word to express a window to their world and are meeting fortnightly to bring these to life. [We’re looking forward to celebrating their creations at the Puāwai Showcase on Wednesday 10 December at Tūranga, and we warmly invite funders to join us for this special evening.](#)

Impact evaluation

Impact evaluation was conducted through facilitated reflections at the end of each day of the wānanga, where Tuākana led kōrero within their rōpū about the questions focused on initial learning and experience of Puāwai. These early insights (summarised below) provide a foundation for understanding how effective the wānanga and the associated workshops were, and identifying opportunities for further focus and improvement. A more in-depth evaluation is planned at the conclusion of the Puāwai journey to explore longer-term change and impact.

Key takeaways:

<p>Leading in community <i>“How you don’t have to be actively protesting and commanding to do leadership in your community.”</i></p> <p><i>“The kōrero on how to be a villager in a village gave me a</i></p>	<p>Sense of belonging <i>“Learning more about where I feel I belong and what I need.”</i></p>	<p>Understanding others <i>“To understand new people and be conscious of other people’s beliefs.”</i></p>	<p>Knowledge of strengths <i>“That my strengths can be used in any situation.”</i></p> <p><i>“Your strengths are not only good for you but also for others.”</i></p>
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<i>different perspective."</i>			
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Highlights:

<p>Identity <i>"Strengthening my identity."</i> <i>"Exploring window to world through Activator workshops"</i></p>	<p>Confidence and connection <i>"Coming out of my shell, learning more about my strengths and connecting more with others."</i> <i>"Meeting and making new friends."</i></p>	<p>Improving communication skills <i>"Building good communication skills and confidence in public speaking."</i></p>	<p>Workshops The Vā Strengths talent line up Being a villager in a village Tūrangawaewae</p>
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When rangatahi were asked what they'd like to explore more or suggest for the future, the following themes emerged:

- Longer wānanga - more days
- More workshops exploring strengths and communication styles
- More time to plan activators (this need will be met through fortnightly Activator creation hui)
- More opportunities to learn about Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Project#2 Puāwai DIY

Puāwai DIY supports communities by offering a series of regional training hui throughout Aotearoa, based on the learnings from the Puāwai programme over the last six years. We are also available to provide mentoring for community leaders and professionals to assist them in developing and enhancing their own programmes with rangatahi.

(not live yet) <https://leadershiplab.co.nz/projects/puawai-diy/>

Puāwai DIY is a project that aims to support communities around Aotearoa in developing and strengthening their work alongside rangatahi in their communities. Leadership Lab has designed and implemented the Puāwai programme for 6 years – during this time, we have learnt a considerable amount about working with rangatahi with a focus on strengthening identity. The vision of Puāwai DIY is to share this learning with other communities and rangatahi-focused programmes (ie DIY Do it yourself:)

At this stage, we are planning to offer two x one-day hui in 5-6 locations around Aotearoa. In each region, we will partner with a local youth organisation as host. Please see the draft project overview and event sample above. Proposed content includes;

1. Puāwai whakapapa (how it was birthed? What's unique about it? What have we learnt over 6 years of implementation?)
2. Identity and intersectionality (Ko wai au?, Identity Poetry, Window to our world, etc)
3. Power and privilege wheel (both Ara Taiohi journal version and rangatahi version)
4. Strength coaching with rangatahi (adapting this approach to connect and validate rangatahi)

5. Standing strong in our kawa – boundaries and inclusion (ethics, boundaries, psychological safety, managing risk)
6. Facilitation of safe and engaging sessions (Facilitation Flow, Paulo Freire,
7. Impact storytelling (weaving rangatahi and tuakana narratives, developmental evaluation)
8. Designing rangatahi-led activator events (Puāwai activators, scaffolding and poutama, co-design with rangatahi, etc)
9. Leadership development of tuakana (dual outcomes, ie rangatahi and tuakana, providing pathways for alumni and tuakana to repeat with more responsibility, etc)
10. Mosaic tool (Ara Taiohi) and practice note update re polarisation focus

Project#3 Leaders for Equity network

How do we activate and supercharge a vibrant network of 'leaders for equity' by convening spaces to connect, learn, and be inspired?

Leaders for Equity is a movement (not a programme or series) activating a cross-sector network of changemakers committed to advancing a more equitable Aotearoa. Grounded in **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** and Leadership Lab's approach to systems change, this kaupapa convenes diverse leaders to build cultural intelligence, reshape dominant narratives, and influence environments where equity can grow.



The Problem We're Responding To:

Equity-focused leaders often work in isolation, facing cultural complexity, organisational resistance, and emotional fatigue. This kaupapa creates **relational bumping spaces** where courageous kōrero, challenge, and identity exploration can occur.

Delivery to date across two evening hui (July & September 2025):

- **82 registrations**
- **42 participants attending**
- **51% attendance rate** (we are exploring whether pricing, scheduling, or clearer expectations will strengthen attendance rate)
- **~40% return participant rate** (indicative of early stickiness)
- **6 sectors represented** (education and youth development, local government and public sector, community leadership / social services, migrant leadership and ethnic advocacy, disability and access equity)

Next Phase: Unconference (November 2025)

Already:

- **55 registered** (2 weeks out),
- **28 proposed topics received** (The event will run in an unconference style, meaning participants vote for the topics they are interested in discussing and we will have slots and rooms allocated for these discussions)
- representation expanding into youth voice, leadership identity, narrative change, and inclusion.

The 28 amazing topics fall under the themes of:

- Te Tiriti, Te Ao Māori & Decolonising Practice
- Equity Leadership, Inner Work & Collective Practice
- Systems Change, Frameworks & Mental Models
- Civic Participation, Politics & Power
- Youth, Education & Participation
- Health, Disability & Access
- Economics, Resourcing & Redistribution
- Intersectionality, Belonging & Relational Work
- 3x Case studies: What's already working?

This event will deepen participation and shift ownership further into the network.

Momentum is building. Early indicators — connection, confidence, courage, collaboration — show powerful potential for long-term, networked systems change. Continued support will enable us to deepen the container, sustain participation, and amplify impact across communities, organisations, and sectors.

Impact evaluation

What Participants Valued



Attendees consistently highlighted:

- the diversity of lived experience,
- connection and belonging,
- culturally grounded facilitation,
- practical tools and frameworks,
- time for deep kōrero.

These responses reinforce the demand for safe, cross-sector learning spaces.

Emerging Values & Themes

Participants surfaced values that now shape network culture:

- Building the vā
- Holding discomfort safely
- Mana-enhancing practice
- Healing-centered systems change
- Identity redefinition
- Collective storytelling

These intangible qualities are core to equitable leadership practice.

Participant Contribution Potential

Across both hui:

- **14 individuals** offered to contribute tools, workshops, or resources,

- spanning identity development, civics education, cultural capability, youth partnership, organisational culture, and Māori Crown relations.

This demonstrates *activation*, not passive attendance.

Growing Partnership with CCC

A notable outcome is strengthened partnership with **Christchurch City Council**. While they have supported us as a funder, we have met with Rose, Danielle and Viviana to develop a more meaningful and intentional partnership. For the upcoming Unconference, they are actively promoting attendance internally and inviting staff to listen and host conversations



The Story Emerging

Leaders feel isolated → we create relational bumping spaces → discomfort surfaces safely → beliefs shift → new identity stories emerge → leaders become activated → change ripples.

Project#4 Te Whāriki

[Te Whāriki](#) is a twelve-month learning journey programme for young intersectional leaders based on mentoring, project experience, networking and facilitating activation initiatives. Its purpose is to “*Activate the intersections of identity to lead systems change.*”

Te Whāriki 2024-2025 Completion

This second cohort of 10 participants completed the twelve-month journey with us.

[Click Here to Read Full 2024-2025 Impact Report](#)

Highlights since June 2025:

1) INVOLVE CONFERENCE 2025

Level 1 Workshop (Intersectionality 101 in Youth Work) proposal was accepted for [INVOLVE 2025](#) (national conference for youth health and development in Aotearoa)

We had an overwhelming turn out to the workshop! Over 60+ workshop attendees attended the workshop (room capacity was 50)





The participants were matched with strength coaches for 1-on-1 coaching sessions as well as attend our signature Action Learning Group process in September.



This time, we're actively weaving the ISC COP hui into the Te Whāriki #3 programme as part of the Ko wai tātou component of the journey.

Project#5 Intersectionality and Systems Change Community of Practice (COP)

The Intersectionality and Systems Change Community of Practice (COP) was designed in late 2024 to provide a place for intersectional leaders and allies to critically examine how identities and ecological systems influence power dynamics in systems change initiatives. Together, members will develop strategies, tools, and practices tailored to driving equitable and sustainable change within their unique contexts in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Please read our [Leadership Lab April pānui](#) on *How do we sustain intersectional leaders creating system change?*



Since our first hui in April, we developed a convening format where participants will lead kōrero and share their ponderings, learnings and challenges:

- *Whanaungatanga* - Grounding in connection and values as a practice community with kai
- *Practice Sharing* - Hear real-life stories from fellow systems changemakers using Slam Dunk/Open Space format (whiteboard)
- *Tools & Frameworks* - Explore practical models that can support your mahi (1 or 2 people bring a framework/tool they're using)

Impact evaluation

Participant Feedback:

<p><i>Structured spaces to reimagine society and ways of being are an awe inducing moment that society needs more of. I come away from these events feeling more connected with others, and a sense of alignment whilst celebrating our differences.</i></p>	<p><i>Connecting in a safe space with like minded people who lean in to the tricky stuff, always fills my cup</i></p>	<p><i>The kōrero was deep and energizing, it got me thinking about things in new ways, and it's always great to connect with people!</i></p>
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What did participants learn:

<p><i>I learned a little about some of the issues with the state care system, and there were some great reflections on how we go about systems change and future dreaming.</i></p>	<p><i>The importance of whakawhanaungatanga and puku korero!</i></p>	<p><i>I came away with a question to explore answers to. If we are viewing a collective as a singular, yet complex person while also recognising that culture is informed by values and beliefs, how do we encourage the culture we want to see in Ōtautahi?</i></p>
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<i>I heard others perspectives on social issues and challenges</i>	<i>Seeing things from different perspectives</i>	<i>Was able to hear new perspectives about social issues and imagine ways forward as a community.</i>
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Due to sickness, the programme schedule had to be changed slightly:

- Hui #2 - June 11, 5:30-8:30pm (in-person)
- Hui #3 - October 15, 5:30-8:30pm (in-person)
- Hui #4 - December 3, 5:30-8:30pm (in-person)

As we settle into this rhythm, we're hoping to continue to meet in 2026 with 2 more hui planned.

Project#6 Leadership Incubator

LinC Leadership Incubator is an engaging personal development journey that supports leaders who want to grow equitable and thriving communities. It helps leaders to step away from their day-to-day demands, reflect deeply on their lives and work, and build the personal foundations of leadership to achieve work and community outcomes.

Leadership Incubator runs for 9 months with a team of 36 participants that starts at the time of Matariki (June), a time of new beginnings.



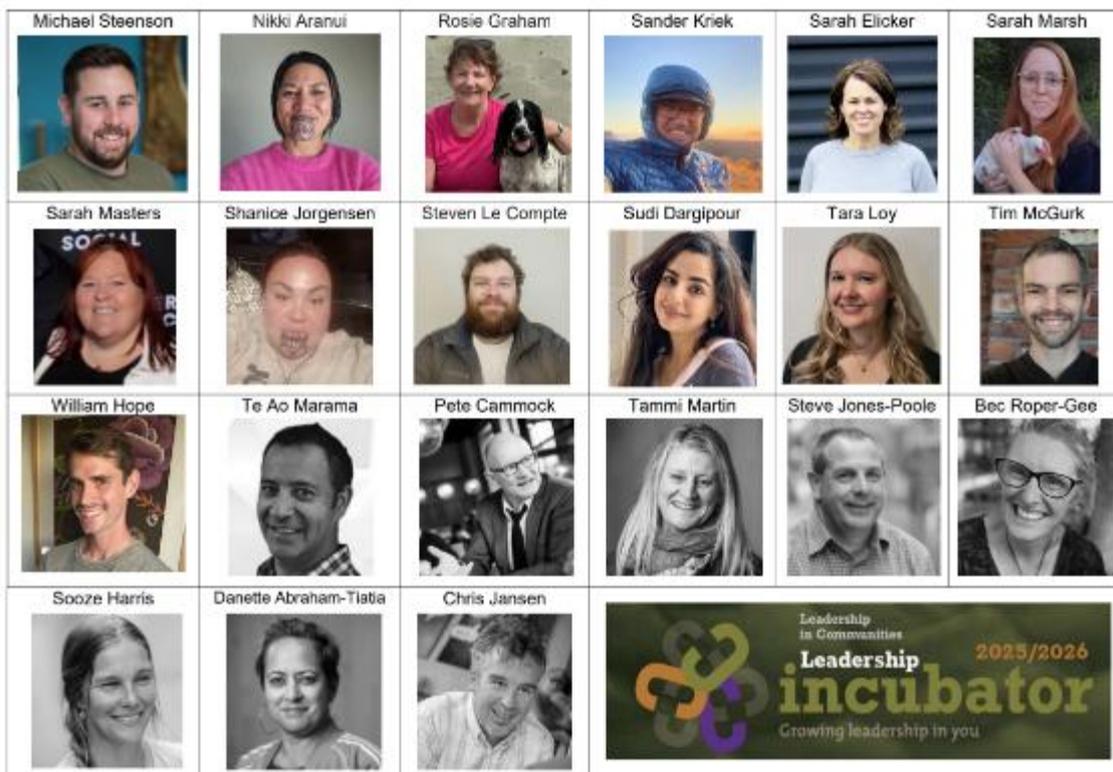
Leadership Lab has offered the Leadership Incubator for 10 years and the 2024/25 cohort of 35 leaders completed the programme in June 2025. See [Leadership Incubator 2024-25 Impact Report](#)

2025/26 Cohort

We are currently almost half way through this cohort. To date we have had the following:

- 2 full day wānanga - Rāpaki Marae, and South Brighton Surf Club
- 3 Action Learning Groups (small groups of 6 - 8) - South Brighton Surf Club, and 2 x participant venues
- 2x individual Clifton Strength Coaching for all participants

LinC Leadership Incubator Whānau 2025-26



Participants:

- We started with 36 participants, but two have withdrawn due to personal reasons.
- Participants range from 20 years to 70 years of age
- Ethnicities represented include 16% Tangata Whenua, 8% Pacifica Peoples, 50% NZ European, with the remaining participants from MELAA or European.

- Participant attendance has been high with an average attendance rate of 90%. High levels of communication, pastoral care, programme promotion and participant selection, are likely reasons for this.

What remains:

Leadership Incubator has the following components remaining:

- Wānanga - 1x ½ day, 1 x full day
- ALG - 2x
- Holiday period suggested ongoing connection and activities.

An additional component that we have introduced this year and will continue to weave in, is video content from Pete C to deepen understanding and reflection around personal leadership. TAnecdotaly, this has been well received and highly valued by many.

Impact evaluation

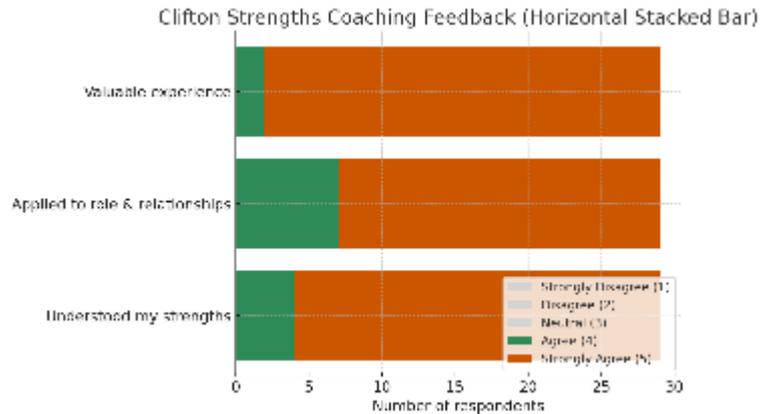
Evaluation is developmental in nature, and this is explained to participants throughout the programme. Clear links are made between evaluation feedback and programme tweaks. So far, evaluation has included:

- 2x Mentimeter evaluations at wānanga
- Post Clifton strength coaching feedback from via the Strengths Network feedback process
- Targeted evaluation of process and impact requested from 2 participants from each ALG.

Clifton Strengths Process

Once again this has proved to be an extremely valuable component of the Leadership Incubator experience. This is clearly demonstrated in the overwhelmingly positive responses as seen in the graph to the right. We are very grateful to the 8 LL Clifton Strength coaches and believe that the fact that all coaches are part of the LL whānau, provides a more integrated and seamless experience for participants.

What follows are some key quotes that demonstrate the transformational impact of this coaching.



<p><i>“Focus on the alignment and balance of my strengths to ensure that I place appropriate boundaries between my roles and responsibilities, ensuring that I DON'T ENCROACH on my own life and learn to value my own time.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Currently, I'm thinking about my future career. Understanding my strengths is helping to guide the questions I'm asking of myself while planning what that looks like. It's challenging in itself, but I'm really enjoying the experience.”</i></p>
<p><i>“Take steps to show my employer that my strengths can help with the overall morale of the team. This can be used to their advantage, especially when there are so many changes in the sector.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I plan to utilise my strengths when I can and work to continue developing my strengths. A direct result of the coaching session is the action plan, which I have been tasked with creating a LinkedIn post, which is something I</i></p>

"Great korero, really put things into perspective and how to use what I have as a taonga"

struggle to do. By achieving this, I hope to reflect on my experiences and, in turn, identify how I have utilised my strengths and ways I could improve."

Wānanga and ALG

The intent for this Incubator journey to provide participants the opportunity to step out of ordinary life (off the dance floor), reflect deeply, and build strong foundations of personal leadership is strongly evident in the feedback gathered during the wānanga and ALG's. Key takeaways from these sessions can be summarised as follows:

1. The Power and Practice of Stillness

Many participants highlighted the importance of pausing, creating space for reflection, and recognising stillness as an active and necessary part of effective leadership and wellbeing.

2. Clarifying Purpose and Authentic Alignment

Participants left with a renewed focus on living and leading from authenticity, purpose, and values—seeing purpose as personal, evolving, and connected to strengths.

3. Adaptive and Balanced Leadership

The exploration of adaptive leadership encouraged leaders to balance hierarchy and network dynamics, shifting fluidly as situations require. The "butterfly" polarity model provided a useful framework for this.

4. Reflection, Listening, and the Inner Voice

Participants valued reflection and deep listening as tools for self-awareness and more grounded leadership. Many expressed intentions to create regular space for these practices.

5. Connection, Community, and Shared Learning

The sense of connection—with others, with purpose, and with life's invitations—was a strong takeaway. Participants appreciated the shared space for dialogue, support, and discovery.

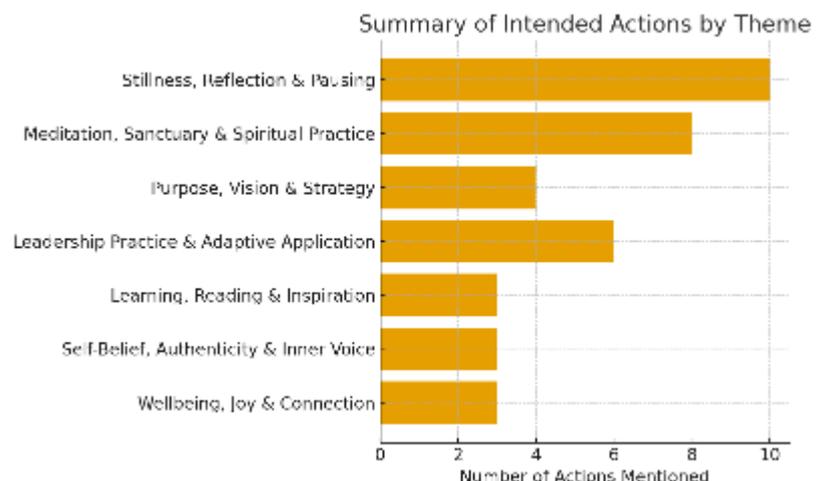
What is one word to describe how you feel about our time together today?



To support these takeaways, participants indicated their intention to take action in a range of areas that are summarised as indicated in this graph.

Feedback for developmental adaptations has been minimal with participants requesting such things as:

- More time to stretch
- Music on during reflective times
- More anecdotes and application
- More practical tools



These have been responded to and addressed at each following event.

Project#7 Te Tiriti Incubator

The Te Tiriti Incubator is a new programme designed by Leadership Lab - an extensive year-long journey for leaders across all sectors who want to invest in their Te Tiriti-based leadership. This unique programme involves 11 days of face-to-face wānanga, which includes 2 x 1-day wānanga facilitated by [Tuahiwi Education](#).

The programme is designed for both Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, where some of the wānanga are combined, and others are in two caucus groups. The detailed kaupapa of the programme can be read in <https://leadershiplab.co.nz/projects/te-tiriti-incubator/>



leadership lab
Fostering collective responses to complex issues

Te Tiriti Incubator 2025 team members

Ali Baré 	Andy England 	Aria Cate 	Atarau Hamilton 	Becky Collett 	Chris Freear
Chris Habinshuti 	Hayley Nicole Tait 	Hiramoana Maniapoto 	Huata Noa 	Jahmi Sheehan 	Jessica Middleton
Justice-Manawanui Arahanga-Pryor 	Kallysa Hollis 	Merv Ransom 	Rachel Haselden 	Rebecca Morland 	Simon Britten
Sinead McGrannachan 	Sophie McInnes 	Tara Hohaia 	Telesia Moale 	Tim Perry 	Victoria Newcombe
Viviana Zanetti 		Danette Abraham 	Gwyn John 	Te Ao Marama Apiata 	Chris Jansen

The programme is currently halfway through and we have experienced the following components

- Two-day noho wānanga at Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi - June

- 1 day wānanga at Rehua marae - August
- 1 day wananga at Tuahiwi Marae (hosted by Tuahiwi Education) - September
- Caucus-based Rōpu groups (¼ of participants in each) have met twice so far
- Te Tiriti focused Strength coaching (current) -October/November

Impact evaluation

A sample of feedback to date includes;

- *Mmm, the first wananga opened something inside me, allowing me to feel, sense, and touch my own colonised trauma on a physical and wairua level. I have been able to put hūpē and help me make sense of it. Since then and coming into the 2nd wananga it was beautiful to meet up with our Māori whanau again as it seems everyone is on the same taumata (awareness). So coming back to the wananga, it's going to teach me how to navigate and not fall back into that colonised state of mind and stand solid in my mana, also how to share the change with my tangata tiriti brothers and sisters, with the hope that their eyes are wide open to hear.*
- *I was reminded again of the reality of needing to accept that there is so much I will never 'know'/fully understand' experience around the reality of being Māori. I experienced connection with tangata te whenua as they shared their reality with me honestly and openly - these connections are key to broadening my own vision/understanding/knowledge.*
- *Encouraging me to step forward fully into the mana of my tupuna.*

Mana mai mana atu, Mauri mai mauri atu, Tapu mai tapu atu, Tiaki mai tiaki atu, Mauri Ora Reciprocity

- *I'm hearing with different ears; I get glimpses of the world through a different lens. A growing level of comfort and trust that this journey will help us grow and deliver us to a powerful place. In a word, hope.*
- *My energy is sitting with being bold and brave to have kōrero with people, even if I am worried I might get too fiery. I think I've always been taught to dim that, but maybe I shouldn't need too, I believe in my people and my whānau, and that mana sits with me to continue carrying forward. So, being honest and having braver conversations.*

Project#8 Rourou / Pātaka Kai



In May this year, Leadership Lab partnered with SaSS (Systems Change Advocacy, Support and Solidarity), Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi and The Systems Sanctuary to host the Scaling Deep Wānanga as part of a national series.

[Scaling Deep Case Stories – Insights from Practice](#) is now live!

Leadership Lab team members (Danette, Chris and Erica) were interviewed as part of the Aotearoa New Zealand case studies on Page 31 - 34: *Working Across Difference at Leadership Lab Aotearoa: Scaling Deep Through Authentic Collaboration*

[Systems Sanctuary Masterclass \(Systems Change Leadership and Practice\)](#)

Thanks to Clare Foundation’s scholarship and the partnership with The Systems Sanctuary hosting Tatiana Fraser - Erica Austin, Cooper Sides (Te Whāriki #1) and Laura Hermans (Te Whāriki #2) are participating in the current 2025 Aotearoa NZ Cohort of this masterclass to continue to build capacity to think and act systemically.