

Leaders for Equity 2025-2026: Impact Report

Equity doesn't live in isolation – it lives in practice, in people, and in connection



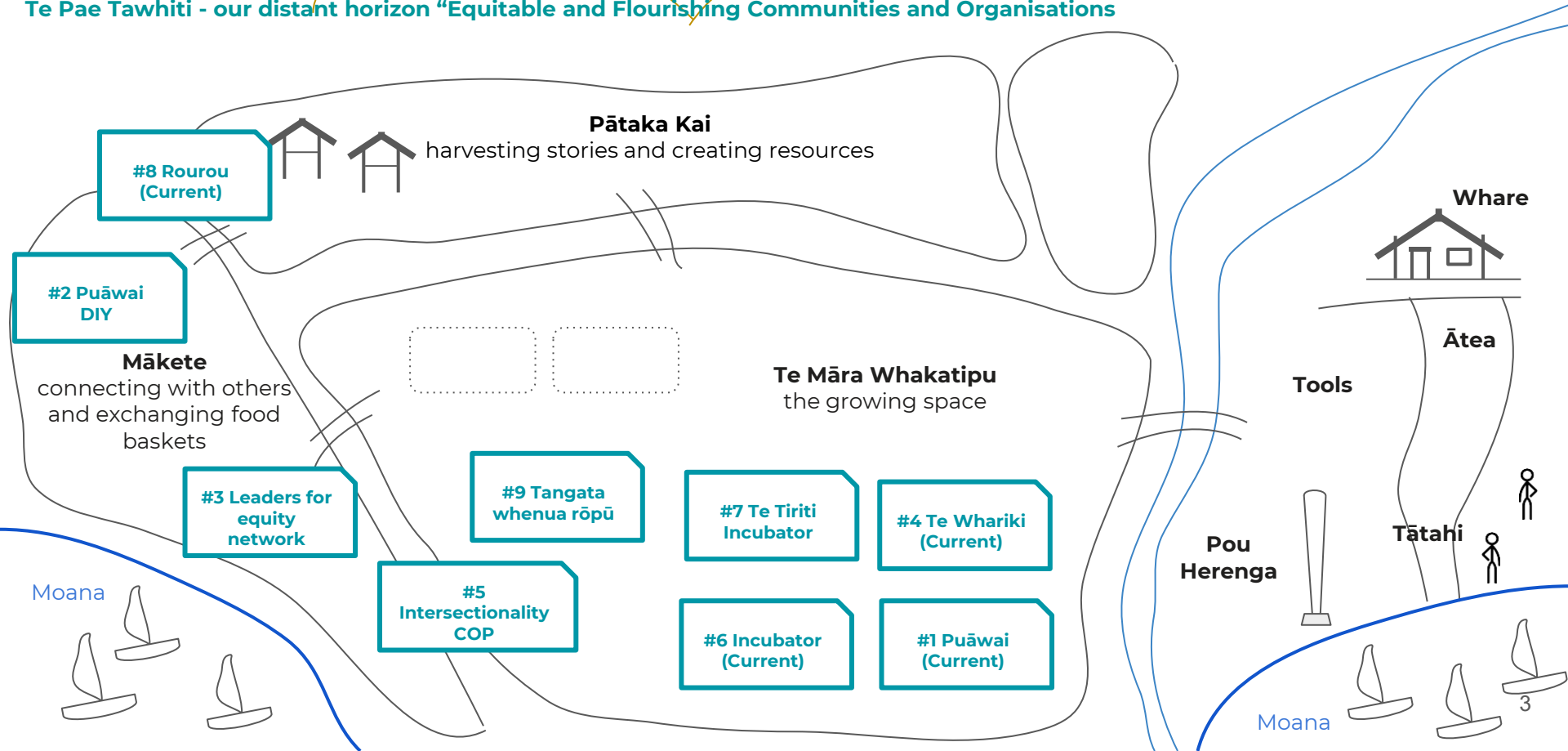
Kaupapa | Purpose

Leaders for Equity is a movement, not just a series - a cross-sector network of changemakers committed to creating a more equitable Aotearoa. Grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Leadership Lab's approach to systems change, this kaupapa supports leaders to dismantle inequities, build cultural intelligence, and reshape dominant narratives. Through connection, shared learning, and practical tools, we activate the collective power of leaders to inspire and influence real change.



Te Māra Framework - Growing leaders for equity

Te Pae Tawhiti - our distant horizon "Equitable and Flourishing Communities and Organisations"



Pātaka Kai

harvesting stories and creating resources

#8 Rourou (Current)



#2 Puāwai DIY

Māketete

connecting with others and exchanging food baskets

#3 Leaders for equity network

#9 Tangata whenua rōpū

#7 Te Tiriti Incubator

#4 Te Whariki (Current)

#5 Intersectionality COP

#6 Incubator (Current)

#1 Puāwai (Current)

Te Māra Whakatipu

the growing space

Whare



Ātea

Tools

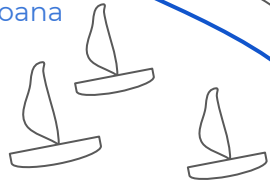
Tātahi



Pou Herenga



Moana



Moana



3

Leaders for Equity Network Concept Overview

Who: Audience

Leaders from all sectors who are focused on the Pae Tāwhiti - "A thriving and equitable Aotearoa"

Where: Which part of the Māra is it?

Māketē

When: Duration

4 evening sessions
1 full day Unconference

Resources Req: (people, frameworks, pūtea)

\$25-30K/year for project management, facilitation team, speakers, venues, catering etc TBC

Why/Purpose: Impact question

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

<https://leadershiplab.co.nz/projects/leaders-for-equity-network/>



What: Detailed description

Leaders for Equity is a cross-sector network of changemakers committed to creating a more equitable Aotearoa. It is a series of gatherings bring together the skills, insights, and commitment of a diverse group of leaders to inspire and influence real change. This year's events have included:

- 4 evening sessions grounded whanaungatanga and deep connection alongside sharing real-world equity challenges and practices.
- 1 full day Unconference using crowdsourced topics and peer-facilitation to foster cross-sector collaboration and grow collective wisdom.

How: process/methodology

Drawing on the legacy of the [Ōtautahi Collaborative Leadership Network \(2018 - 2020\)](#) **Leaders for Equity** is guided by following principles:

- whanaungatanga and networking
- inspirational content from our team (could be mixture of tasters from our LinC content and culturally sustaining leadership, system change,
- Ōritetanga: Leading for equity in Aotearoa communities, Who we are is how we lead etc)



Evening Hui Series

July 2025 | September 2025 | March 2026

The theme for these collaborative kōrero was what it means to honour Te Tiriti and share a range of perspectives on what that looks like in practice. At these hui we:

- Explored what it means to lead from a place of empowerment and mana
- Dived into participant-led conversations on Te Tiriti, belonging, and reimagining power
- Shared kai, perspectives, and commitments to keep equity at the heart of our leadership



Evening Hui Series

July 2025 | September 2025 | March 2026



Grounded, values - led space

Powerful connections and diverse voices



Practical insights and momentum for change

What our network valued about the hui series

Authentic Leadership and meaningful kōrero



Full Day UnConference

November 2025

An Unconference isn't your typical conference. The Leaders for Equity Unconference flipped the script — no fixed agenda, just the people in the room and the collective power we bring. Topics are nominated beforehand, chosen, and facilitated on the day by attendees.

- 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
- Case studies: What's already working?

TIME	Level 1 Function Room Stream 1	Level 2 Function Room Stream 2	Level 2 Art Room Stream 3	Level 2 Workshop Room Stream 4	Level 2 Yoga Room Stream 5
9:15 AM	Karakia & Welcome (Level 1 Function Room)				
9:45 AM (Session 1)	<p>What does applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi really look like in an organisational context?</p> <p><i>How might we bring an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to bear in our day to day civic organisations? What does Te Tiriti mean for everyday practitioners in the sector and for action really look like? How do we figure this out?</i></p>	<p>From multiethnic to multicultural in bicultural Aotearoa</p>	<p>Equity in the emergency space</p>	<p>How do we accommodate people with invisible disabilities across our organisations and communities?</p>	<p>Quiet Space</p>
10:30 AM	Morning Tea (Level 1 Function Room)				
11:00 AM (Session 2)	<p>Unlearning and unstitching ourselves</p> <p><i>As much as we desire to involve creating space for other ways of knowing, doing, being. But, how do we do that instead of the standard model of lecture with us?</i></p>	<p>How might we break down the binary created between equity vs fairness for all framings that keeps decision making/makers stuck</p>	<p>Is how we (the marginalised) respond to fragility, the key to bridging the divide in this polarised world?</p> <p><i>How do we respond to fragility with compassion or is it challenging from and being seen back?</i></p>	<p>How not to start a cult</p> <p>Unchecked charismatic leaders and systems of control can harm the Maori, Māori and other ethnic communities. Let's discuss the red flags in faith based and self-help spaces</p>	<p>Quiet Space</p>
11:45 AM	Lunch (Level 1 Function Room)				
12:30 PM (Session 3)	<p>What stories do our change models tell, and are they helpful for leading towards greater equity?</p> <p><i>This session would acknowledge the power of story and explore the explicit and implicit ideas that can influence us as different change frameworks and models.</i></p>	<p>Equity in Action Case Study: Mō Apōpō Future-Makers</p> <p><i>An experiential initiative with a focus on providing rangatahi with the skills to think and act more creatively, critically, and collaboratively into the future.</i></p>	<p>Weaving the Human Story Back to the Living World</p>	<p>Equity in Action Case Study: Alternative leadership futures through narratives</p> <p><i>Insights from the Ethnic Communities' Leadership Programme</i></p>	<p>Quiet Space</p>
1:15 PM (Session 4)	<p>What does political engagement look like for us as leaders?</p> <p><i>How do we participate in local and national politics? What might be our ethical obligations? How does our commitment to equity inform our political engagement? Let's look at some of the ways we've worked together!</i></p>	<p>How do we measure the change and impact of our equity work?</p>	<p>We are the Future of Aotearoa - what if?</p> <p><i>The future of questions are potential beginnings to building connections with people of diversity, different experiences and ideologies.</i></p>	<p>Children and young people participation in ways that are meaningful</p> <p><i>How can we ensure that voices are heard beyond a token effort and what is their most pressing needs at this point in time?</i></p>	<p>Quiet Space</p>
2:00 PM	Afternoon Tea (grab & go)				
2:45 PM	Collective Synthesis & Emerging Opportunities (Level 1 Function Room)				
	EVENT END				

Full Day UnConference

November 2025



60

Leaders attended
and contributed



"This is the kind of space I want this city/motu to have more of! Especially looking around this room, the diversity of people who show up embody the variety, values, and vision for the future we wish to build in collaboration."



Impact of Leaders for Equity Unconference

At the end of the Unconference, participants were invited to share reflections from their experience, expressing the **value they received**, and what actions they were inspired to take as a result of being part of this.

Change happens through relationships and broader collaboration

“I enjoyed meeting people from many different sectors and learning about different initiatives across the city.”

“Being able to network with lots of different people from different agencies and working in different context to be able to hear about the various projects that are happening in Ōtautahi”

Compassion and curiosity are essential to hold challenge and difference

“The space was safe, welcoming and inclusive. I learned, connected and grew today.”

“I felt heard in the first session I attended (equity in emergencies). I was grateful for the whakaaro shared in the session I facilitated. As well as the general overall vibe of the unconference.”

Actively seeking unheard voices and stepping outside echo chambers.

“I learnt so much from others in the room who come from different backgrounds and perspectives.”

“Importance of seeking out the voices and experiences of those who are not present in our spaces.”

Useful frameworks, ideas, and actions directly applicable to mahi

“Got tangible actions and ideas that are very applicable to my mahi.”
“More models for change culture. Ideas around measurement of impact. A curiosity around invisible disability and how we can help better support those with them.”

Equity starts with self—unlearning, adapting, and committing to ongoing change.

“Shines a light on inequity to challenge systems - it starts and ends with me.”

“Analysing the areas where I need to practice unlearning (probably the areas I hold tightest to - the things I care about most!”

Impact of Leaders for Equity Unconference

Challenge myself to identify when a challenging kōrero is no longer productive. Make a plan for how to deescalate and exit while not ending the relationship.

Strategically approach spaces and people that I haven't previously approached in order to begin these conversations

When working in a group on a project, establish a "Perspective Check" protocol. Before finalising a decision or statement, officially designate someone to ask, "Whose perspective have we not heard from on this topic?" or "If we only include these voices, what blind spots might we have?"

Work with my colleagues to digest the content and see how we can take some of this into our individual jobs and collective action

Stay curious to the people around me and my own biases

Design and incorporate practices that help include people and meet the needs of those who have invisible disabilities

Think about the power of stories we tell (and how we tell them to be perceived by others)

Identify the missing voices and invite them to participate.

I'm sharing my learnings with my Youth Lead who couldn't make it and together we'll figure out what to implement. Keen to carry through connections made.

Actions I'm inspired to take

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini

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

[leadershiplab.co.nz](https://www.leadershiplab.co.nz)