Leaders for Equity 2026-27: Impact Report (live)

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

leadership lab
Fostering collective responses to complex issues

LINC

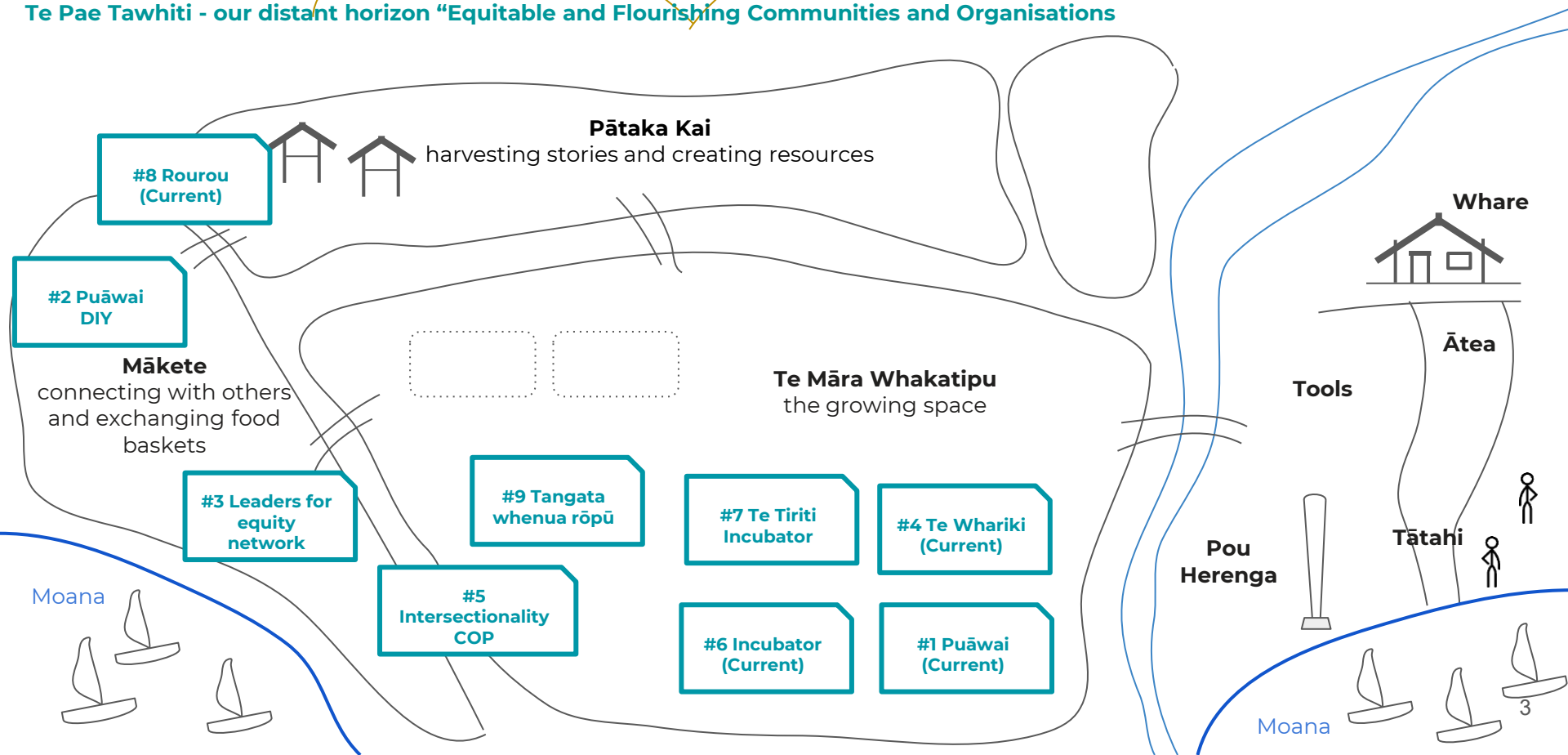


Kaupapa | Purpose

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



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?
Mākete

When: Duration
1 full day Unconference
4 Do Labs
Other aligned events. This year has included Multicultural Ōtautahi

Resources Req: (people, frameworks)

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.
Key focus for 2026: **Social Cohesion**

- Building trust, belonging and collective action in an increasingly diverse Aotearoa.
- How do we strengthen social cohesion in an increasingly diverse Aotearoa

How: process/methodology
The Leaders for Equity Network comprises of a range of events that have the following 4 outcomes guiding each event:

- Connection: Intentional weaving of connections between change makers in the community space in Waitaha takiwā.
- Hope and encouragement: to keep working to committed to equity in their places of influence
- Skill and knowledge growth: deepening understanding of social cohesion
- *Impactful actions:* Groups of change makers taking practical action



Full Day UnConference

November 2026



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. This years topics were guided by the theme of Social Cohesion, and many were seeded at the Multicultural Ōtautahi event held 2 weeks prior. Attendees were able to choose to attend 3 sessions from a selection of 15 options.

Building Public Trust Through Better Communication
How can organisations strengthen their relationships with the public when their work is misunderstood?

Treaty-Led Multiculturalism
What does multiculturalism look like on Treaty ground?

Authentic Youth Participation
How do we move beyond engaging young people to genuinely sharing power with them?

Building Equitable and Adaptable Organisations
What would an equitable organisation look like in practice?

Queer Inclusion, Neurodiversity and Mental Health
How can we create environments where people with diverse identities, minds and experiences genuinely belong?

Pasifika Participation and Leadership in Ōtautahi
How do we create greater safety, confidence, visibility and participation for Pasifika communities?

From Diversity to Belonging
How do we move beyond celebrating diversity to creating genuine belonging?

An Economy for People and Nature
How do we build an economy that delivers wellbeing for people and nature?

Financial Capability as a Wellbeing Issue
Should financial capability be considered a core part of health and wellbeing?

Slow Productivity + Love as Systems Change
Rest, self-discovery, and a full cup as the antidote to our polarised, growth-obsessed world

AI, Social Cohesion and Community Voice
How can Māori, Pacific, ethnic, rural and underserved communities meaningfully shape the future of AI?

Bridges Through Food: A Blueprint in Rescued Food, Social Inclusion, and Empowerment in Multicultural Communities
How can sharing a meal transform a neighborhood?

Critical Thinking, Democracy and Voting
How can we strengthen critical thinking and meaningful participation in democracy?

Diverse Voices, Shared Decision-Making
How do we ensure the people most affected by inequity have genuine influence over decisions and system design?

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: From Representation to Real Change
What would a future where everyone has genuine opportunity look like, and what needs to change to get there?

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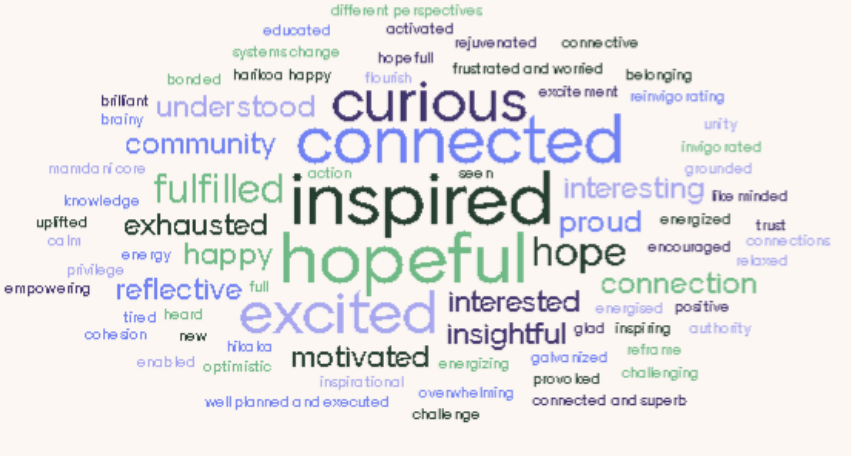




80
Leaders attended and contributed



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





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 the impact of attending.

Connection and relationships	Belonging, diversity and inclusion	Slowing down and self-care	Hope, empowerment and collective action	Co-creation and moving from ideas to action	Change Youth voice and intergenerational connection	Openness and new perspectives
By far the most common response. People valued meeting new contacts, especially in person, and are leaving with follow-ups planned, such as coffees, calls and LinkedIn ads.	Many reflected on what makes people feel they belong. Some committed to having brave, honest conversations and reframing the narrative in a positive way.	A strong thread of permission to rest, breathe and look after yourself in order to sustain the work, with concrete commitments to build rest into schedules.	People left feeling they're not alone and that shared values and stories can drive real change. Many plan to share what they learned with their teams, communities and networks.	Participants valued collaborative formats and want to turn conversation into concrete, doable steps, including joining do-labs and other projects and following up.	A distinct cluster of practical commitments to include young people more authentically, from planning for youth voice in projects to creating a youth seat on a governance board.	The day widened people's views and left them more willing to listen, stay curious and change their mind, with fresh ideas and frames they can bring back to their work.

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Impact of Leaders for Equity Unconference

How can we create more opportunities for young people to authentically join and share in these space - and feel supported and heard while here?

Clarify vision and strategy for intergenerational connections

I think spaces like this, where you embrace diversity, you embrace different perspectives, and you embrace different ways of being in the world and thinking about the world and coexisting together and creating a future, really allows this conflict to dissolve into solutions and into commonalities.

Convince our board to make a youth seat on our governance team

Have a coffee date with at least one person I connected with!

Build a network of people interested and invested in creating the change we want for the future

Share with my work team about this gathering & ensure that others will want to participate to make change happen

Visit groups I don't usually hang out with to learn

Not let long-standing locals shy away from hard and uncomfortable conversations ... we need direct discussions to drive change

Actions I'm inspired to take ....

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Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini

Our strength is not as individuals,
but as a collective

leadershiplab.co.nz