



Strategy and Innovation

UNCOVERING WHANAUNGATANGA PRACTICES AT TE WHĀNAU O WAIPAREIRA

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Ngā Puhi

Jacqui Harema is the Strategy and Innovation Lead for Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust, Auckland. In her role, Jacqui supports the organisation achieving whānau (family-centric) outcomes that can be measured and reported back on to the community. These are flagship programmes that focus on implementing new whānau outcome assessment tools, designing outcome reporting templates for staff and embedding these across services by cluster: tamariki, rangatahi, mātua and kaumātua. Embedding the seven principles of Social Return on Investment is also a focus to establish an outcomes management culture in Waipareira that supports our accountability to measure what matters for whānau.

Abstract

This article considers the natural and fluid process of *whanaungatanga* in practice within Te Whānau o Waipareira's strategy and innovation unit, Wai-Atamai. Whanaungatanga is viewed as an entrenched way of connecting within Waipareira, leading to the development of the "Ngā Hua o Mataroa —Measuring What Matters/Outcomes Management Pilot", which was developed to understand the impact and outcome of Waipareira programmes for *whānau* by using whanaungatanga to engage participants and realise strategic goals. Truly engaging in whanaungatanga required an all-inclusive approach from the Trust Board, *kaimahi* (employees) and whānau. Whānau involvement was facilitated through *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) interaction and *hui*, leading to 80 whānau participating in documenting their journey on a Waipareira parenting programme and taking ownership of the process. The success of this project includes pioneering outcomes measurement with whānau and kaimahi, informing the identification and development of outcomes and tools,

and increased understanding and ownership. The key factor to success is authentic whanaungatanga as a standard mode of practice.

Key words: strategy, innovation, whanaungatanga, whānau

Introduction

I am excited and a bit apprehensive about writing an article for the very first Waipareira journal *Te Kura Nui o Waipareira* on a topic that is so intrinsic to our daily lives it can often go unobserved—whanaungatanga.

I am also putting a disclaimer at the beginning. This article has been informed from experience-based research—meaning everything written is from team feedback, observation and over ten years' working for Te Whānau o Waipareira in many capacities.

When thinking about what to write, I struggled to link the notion of *whanaungatanga* with our strategy and innovation work and the different projects we are responsible for. In our area of Waipareira (Wai-Atamai) we deal primarily with the “big picture”—reporting to the Board and whānau on how we are progressing against our strategic goals. Wai-Atamai comprises four key complementary work-streams with the overall purpose being to ensure Waipareira is constantly pushing boundaries and is at the forefront of new, innovative methods to advance Māori nationally and internationally. Our area of work is often ambiguous and unchartered requiring a lot of “outside of the box” thinking.

While watching *kaimahi* sit around a table having *kai* and making fun of each other I experienced a light-bulb moment. Whanaungatanga is so entrenched and programmed into everything we do, we don't even realise we are doing it. As whanaungatanga is such a natural part of how we connect and relate to each other, it seems to go unnoticed and the process is taken for granted. In reality, all our daily interactions are underpinned by an element of whanaungatanga.

This article will focus on “uncovering” and “exposing” our taken for granted practices around whanaungatanga. As strategy and innovation is our area of work, this article draws from one of our “big picture” Ngā Hua o Mataroa—Measuring What Matters/Outcomes Management projects as an example of how we implement whanaungatanga.

Whanaungatanga Practices at Te Whānau o Waipareira

Whanaungatanga is a fluid concept which changes according to the individual, their level of understanding and their unique circumstances.

At Whānau o Waipareira our *Te Kauhau Ora* (code of conduct) derived from key cultural values provides the framework in which we are able to self-evaluate, reflect and self-measure our interactions with *whānau* and each other.

Whanaungatanga is a key value in *Te Kauhau Ora* which we have defined as:

Multiple relationship dynamics—Māori methods of interaction and communication with *whānau* and the recognition of the different roles and responsibilities within the structure of the *whānau*.

After having my light-bulb moment, examples of whanaungatanga practices came flying at me from everywhere:

1. **Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust Board** sets the strategic vision and goals which are underpinned by values of *mana*, *whakapapa*, *whanaungatanga*, *kotahitanga* and broadly described as:
 - always upholding the mana of Te Whānau o Waipareira
 - always acknowledging where we have come from and who we are
 - keeping *whānau* at the centre of our world
 - successfully living and breathing change, the key for building successful generations of *whānau*
2. **As a *whānau*** we commence each year with a *pōwhiri* and our annual Whanaungatanga Day welcomes new kaimahi to Hoani Waititi Marae and the broader *whānau*. Further whanaungatanga activities are maintained throughout the year with monthly kaimahi house challenges. These tend to bring out the competitive die-hard components of whanaungatanga helping to further consolidate relationships among house members. At a more individual kaimahi level whanaungatanga occurs daily through spontaneous shared kai, debrief sessions and random games of euchre.
3. **Whanaungatanga with *whānau*** accessing services commences with a *hongi* or kiss and the exploration of common whakapapa (genealogy), connections and shared interests. Relationships are progressed through ongoing, consistent contact and ensuring *whānau* are placed at the forefront of all decision making.

Whanaungatanga is so ingrained in our DNA we forget it is a critical component of how we connect *whānau*, families and communities, create links and build relationships.

Using Whanaungatanga Practices to Bring Life to Strategic Goals

This section looks at a working example of how we use whanaungatanga to engage our kaimahi and whānau to capture their outcomes and realise strategic goals.

Ngā Hua o Mataroa—How Whanaungatanga Supported Whānau and Kaimahi Participation

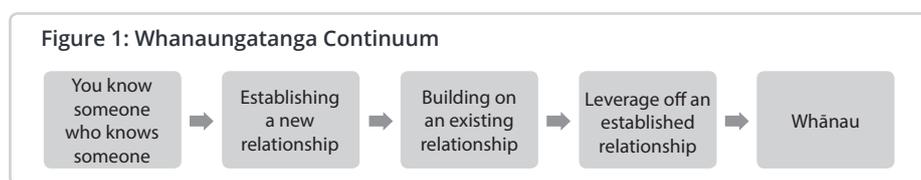
Te Whānau o Waipareira Board wanted to understand changes whānau made as a consequence of participating in a Waipareira service/programme, look at types of outcomes achieved, and finally report on these outcomes. This strategic goal became the “Ngā Hua o Mataroa—Measuring What Matters/Outcomes Management Pilot Project”.

The Ngā Hua o Mataroa—Measuring What Matters/Outcomes Management Pilot is a project that falls into the “ambiguous and uncharted” category. Understanding changes whānau make, measuring impact and subsequently reporting on outcomes is difficult to implement with very few organisations nationally and internationally doing this, or doing this well. So, of course, at Waipareira this ticks all the criteria boxes for our strategic goals and we embarked on a journey of trial and error, mistakes and key learnings and continuous revision.

Meaningful Engagement of Kaimahi

Whanaungatanga requires meaningful and genuine engagement. From the outset of this project it was determined that the best engagement strategy would be a collective all-inclusive approach. Collective and inclusive of the Trust Board (elected from the community), leadership, kaimahi and whānau voices. Trying to engage and entice leadership, kaimahi, and whānau they work with, into a project over and above their day-to-day work and activities can sometimes be difficult. Trying to get them excited and engaged in a pilot project that is unclear and with no end date has the high probability of being impossible.

Fortunately, we were able to leverage off established relations with key kaimahi. Trust, communication and shared experiences already exist which has helped to increase engagement and fast track this project. We met with over 50 kaimahi on three separate occasions who willingly shared their personal and work knowledge. We continuously consulted, verified and confirmed their feedback. Changes to the project were made along the way as a direct result of their contribution. Using whanaungatanga as the tool to engage and value kaimahi expertise has been a critical success factor to the development of this project. This allowed for a shift in ownership with kaimahi taking on the project as their own rather than having it imposed on them. This culminated in kaimahi presenting their service outcome information at an all staff breakfast.



The Power of Kai

The provision and sharing of kai (food) is a common practice for *hui* (meeting) at Waipareira. Upon reflection kai is also a good enticement to initial participation. Supplying good kai reinforces the importance of the project kaimahi are contributing to and acknowledges their input. More importantly the gems of information and knowledge shared during informal kai time are just as valuable as the more formal gathering of information.

Engaging Whānau and Recording Outcomes

Engagement with whānau who we were wanting to participate in the project required a similar engagement strategy. Our team had no relationships with any of the whānau and we were reliant on kaimahi relationships with whānau to break down barriers and provide a platform of trust we could build upon. Kaimahi mooted the idea of whānau possibly contributing to the “outcomes project” emphasising the significance and value of their involvement. The decision to participate in the project and the degree of participation was determined by whānau. By the time our team came to talk with whānau, their kaimahi had already alleviated some of their concerns and made them more receptive to this project.

Kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) is another critical element of whanaungatanga. We instinctively knew whānau had to visually see our team to be able to make a judgment on whether they should trust us. At our first meeting we had a whanaungatanga session where we identified who we are, where we come from and further explained the project and answered any questions.

As a result of our whanaungatanga process all whānau (approximately 80) on the Incredible Years Parenting programme agreed to let our team conduct video interviews documenting their progress and changes they might make. Further consent was gained to screen their videos at their graduation and on social media platforms. Two whānau asked for their videos to be removed which we adhered to. By the end of the whānau engagement component of this project, whānau were authoring their own story by using the iPads, and interviewing and recording each other without our team input in order for their valuable contribution to be voiced within Ngā Hua o Mataora—Outcomes Measurement.

*The Success of Ngā Hua o Mataro—Measuring What Matters/
Outcomes Management Project*

Writing this article provided a good opportunity to reflect upon this project, organise our collective thoughts and look at some of the key success factors and moments. There have been so many successes with this project it is hard to identify them all. Some that stand out include:

- Whānau o Waipareira pioneering outcomes measurement
- identification of 10 key outcomes for whānau and *tamariki* as determined by whānau
- development of outcome measurement tools informed by kaimahi and whānau
- increased kaimahi understanding of outcomes
- substantial whānau participation
- whānau and kaimahi taking ownership of the project
- production of a governance report based on outcomes for the 2016/17 year

The common factor underlying the success of this project, and I suspect other projects, is the way Whānau o Waipareira embraces authentic whanaungatanga as a standard mode of practice.

The purpose of this article has not been to delve into the finer details of outcome measurement and the impact of programmes, but rather look at how whanaungatanga contributes to the overall experience, engagement and participation of whānau and kaimahi. In this context, authentic, genuine whanaungatanga creates relationships that are built on trust, reciprocity, common experiences and, most importantly, places decision making powers with those who are often most disempowered—our whānau.