Lewis (Ngāpuhi) is a project manager in the Change and Transformation Team of Wai-Atamai. In this article he discusses how Social Value Aotearoa (SVA) developed from its early stages with the aim to change the way in which we measure value with our whānau and community, to leading this change locally and having the voice of Waipareira in the global movement to value social outcomes.
In September 2018 Social Value Aotearoa (SVA) hosted Richard Kennedy, the Chair of Social Value UK and Co-Chair of Social Value International (SVI). His first time in Aotearoa was a whirlwind week, which saw him host a New Zealand exclusive ‘Maximising Value’ training, attend the Whānau Ora 2018 conference as a keynote speaker, immerse himself in the kaupapa of Te Whānau o Waipareira (TWOW), as well as slotting in a bit of sightseeing in the gaps. SVI recently assured TPM’s Indigenous Social Value Whānau Ora Accreditation Framework, which has built-in responsiveness and is the first framework of its kind globally, while at the same time specifically focused on maximising positive impact for the Māori community. During Richard’s time with us he could see this in action.

Richard’s quote (opening this article) is really the icing on the cake for reaffirming the work we have done through Social Value Aotearoa. Initially, through the lens of Te Whānau o Waipareira, Social Value Aotearoa was driven by our ambition to be at the forefront of changing the way society accounts for value with our whānau and community at its core. As SVA has transitioned into our own separate New Zealand-wide entity with Waipareira as a member organisation, we now have an organisation that has moved from the theoretical to practical, one which is working successfully with a whānau-driven framework.
Richard’s quote, although chronologically more fitting to an ending, is appropriate to start the story of Social Value Aotearoa, because the icing always tops the cake and the layers beneath are the foundations. Underneath is a cake that has taken a long time to form, and it is still a work in progress. Initially we knew the ingredients needed to create our network but we had to look internationally for the recipe. We had to use the experience and the knowledge of our international network to get to a point where we ourselves could develop our own recipe for creating a New Zealand community of best practice, using local ingredients.

The formal launch of Social Value Aotearoa in June 2015 was a chance to showcase international best practice. Launched by John Tamihere, the Chief Executive Officer of Te Whānau o Waipareira, we were benefitted by the ability to pull in international peers as keynote presenters who were experienced in social value measurement. Bringing in established international partners from our network gave attendees a chance to see what shifting how we measure impact looks like in practice. We had government, NGOs, charities and consultants in attendance, who could all see from international experience that #measuringwhatmatters was in action globally. Our attendees saw the benefits, real life change described by our speakers put across our vision and from this we had established ourselves with what would be the first members of our network.

A big part of our early days was whanaungatanga – to build our Social Value network we had to connect and engage in order for us to grow our community, our knowledge and our engagement here in New Zealand and internationally.
We were the ‘newbies’, relying heavily on our international relationships for best practice and seeking our place in the global community, while also trying to find our local New Zealand identity. We looked to SVI as they already had an established global network and a proven framework called Social Return on Investment (SROI), which focused on stakeholder engagement at the core of its process. The aspirations of Waipareira and our vision for a whānau-driven framework aligned with SVI and social return on investment. From this tuakana-teina relationship with SVI we could collaborate, learn and share knowledge to build a local context, but it also allowed us to have our own voice in the global movement to value social outcomes.

We attended the Critical Mass conference in London in October 2015, which not only gave us a look at what social value looked like around the world but helped us to build relationships and give them the opportunity to meet us and put a face to the name of the new network.

In 2017 we travelled with TWOW to present at Social Value Matters – AMPLIFY STAKEHOLDER’S VOICES, SVI’s conference and member exchange in Turkey. Mentored by SVI, community and relationships were built which gave us confidence and helped us to know who we were as a network and informed how we could contribute to international conversation.

Establishing these networks (Hong Kong, Russia, Italy, UK, USA, Hungary and the Netherlands) was crucial to our development as it connected us with experts who shared their knowledge and skills with our members through training, webinars, visits and blogs.
As we have matured we have been able to leverage off the learnings of these members and connect with a wider range of organisations across many sectors who are now seeking to understand their own impact – sometimes driven by funder’s requirements and other times by their own sustainability.

“Connectivity and engagement” were Waipareira CEO John Tamihere’s words at our launch. Now we are more connected than ever. Our relationship with Social Value International has gone from strength to strength and our collaboration has now reached a membership level where our members have access to the same benefits as a SVI member – they can utilise the international forum via the member’s area to discuss their ideas with a global network.

Working within the Social Innovation Hub at Wai-Atamai has been integral to the growth of Social Value Aotearoa as we have been able to utilise the skills and knowledge of the various teams that work around us. In the social innovation hub, everything becomes an incubator for SVA, it allows us to work in a live laboratory with direct access to insights as they occur. This has never been more apparent than with the Taitamariki SROI analysis.

Under the tutelage of SVA partner, Social Ventures Australia, Waipareira were guided through the process of informing and embedding outcomes measurement and evaluative culture across the organisation. We combined their SROI expertise with our inhouse research and strategy teams sitting in Waiatamai who provided rich and thorough research and a constant emphasis on stakeholders throughout. Furthermore, to allow our message to be conveyed effectively and vividly our film team produced a video further articulating the value of the analysis. Working within the Social Innovation Hub helped us better evidence outcomes and gave us a structure to help us contract our service out. We had a design for outcomes.

As we began initially we knew we had to establish ourselves as a brand, similar to that of Social Value International and Social Value UK. We had to be identifiable, we felt our branding had to synergise with our network but also have a distinct ‘kiwi’ feel to it to represent our community. That’s where we were able to utilise the brand and design team here in Wai-Atamai. With a knowledge and an understanding of cultural competencies and potent branding, they were able to work alongside us to create the branding for our logo and our website and provide us with our identity as an organisation. In other circumstances we would usually need to outsource such work but within the unique workspace we work in, we can collaborate with specialists who live and breathe the work we do.

When we launched, we focused on having speakers who could share knowledge with us and our members. Now, we tell our own story. We now hold trainings facilitated by international experts. Our members have the capacity to tell their own story. Through our SVI community we have elevated our storytelling to a point that it is a common approach. SROI provides a strong framework through which our members can measure their own impact and it gives them a way that they can be understood by everyone, from funders to frontline that is internationally recognised.

Over time we have also seen a shift in our membership, more specifically the variety of organisations that now make up our network. Originally, as our foundations in changing the way we measure value were in our Māori context, our membership grew with similar indigenous providers who were committed to embedding a managing to outcomes approach and looking towards better understanding the impact of their services for the community they serve. Through networking and whanaungatanga we have met with other organisations who work in a variety of different spaces who all have become aware of their need to change the way they account for value.
From humble beginnings SVA has grown into a dynamic network through its trainings, member networking, accreditation and experiential learning. We initially formed specifically to measure value in a Māori context, putting stakeholders and community at the heart of it. As we've grown as an organisation we found that there has been a universal shift in the way society wants to account for value which is reflected in the increased membership uptake from a broad spectrum of organisations around New Zealand. As we have grown, the strength of our network has enabled us to better support our members in a reciprocal relationship where their development in turn further boosts our own capabilities.