



WHANAKE O TE KŌPARA

# IMPACT REPORT

2021-2024

WINNER OF THE 2024 NEW ZEALAND  
SPORT AND RECREATION LEADERSHIP  
IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARD



## WHANAKE

to grow,  
to develop,  
to move onwards  
and upwards.

## KŌPARA

the bellbird (especially the female bellbird), known for its strong, clear, liquid songs.

E te whānau  
Whāia te mātauranga kia mārama  
Kia whai take ngā mahi katoa  
Tū maia, tū kaha  
Aroha atu, aroha mai  
Tātou i a tātou katoa

For this family  
Seek knowledge for understanding  
Have purpose in all that you do  
Stand tall, be strong  
Let us show respect  
For each other

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## RESOURCES

Source | 1. Duarte, T., Culver, D. M., & Paquette, K. (2021). Assessing the Value Created in a Social Learning Space Intervention: Four Vignettes of Parasport Coaches. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, 8(3), 348–361.

Source | 2. Wenger-Trayner, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2020). *Learning to make a difference Volume 1: Value creation in social learning spaces*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Source | 3. Raelin, J. (2016). *Leadership-as-practice: Theory and application*. Routledge: New York, NY.



## REFLECTION METHOD

This report summarises the Whanake o te Kōpara (WoK) programme evaluation. It is based on surveys after each wānanga and digital hui, in-person interviews with participants during the programme, and a follow-up survey sent to all participants who have participated in this kaupapa from 2021 to 2024 (inclusive).

A critical analysis of the programme's impact is based on the Value Creation Framework by Duarte, Culver and Paquette (2021). It covers the journey of these young women, their reflections and quantitative feedback to help enable the sustainability and development of this kaupapa.



# INTRODUCTION

Whanake o te Kōpara (WoK) is a leadership development programme for women aged 18 to 24 who are not currently in leadership roles. Some of these young women have been overlooked for leadership development or not perceived as 'leadership material'.

Due to their limited access to leadership opportunities, priority is given to kōhine Māori, Asian, and Pasifika women, as well as those outside the main centers of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Between 2021 and 2024, Women in Sport Aotearoa and The Shift Foundation co-designed this kaupapa and delivered four six-month programmes positively impacting the young women, their organisations and communities across Aotearoa.

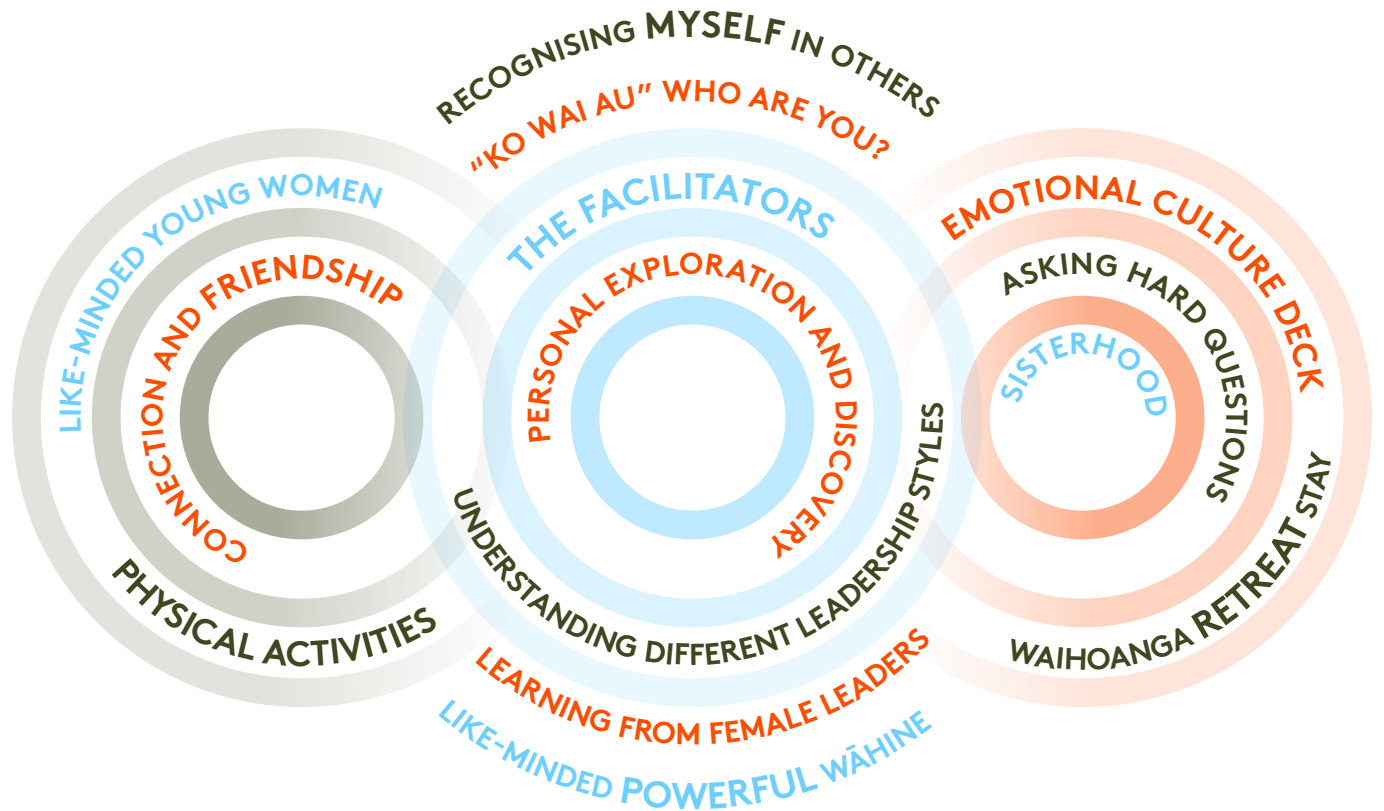
This programme is built on the foundations of human-centred design while delivering social learning experiences that empower the kohine to identify their values and innate leadership qualities.

It provides them with a kete of resources and connections to help amplify each individual's impact, enabling them to create change within themselves, the organisations and the sectors they contribute to, and their wider communities.

WoK is co-designed alongside the participating young women to ensure it meets their unique needs and evolves alongside their experiences.

Participating in this programme empowers young women to know themselves, create change, address inequities, and join a new generation of leaders in Aotearoa.

## WHAT PART OF THE PROGRAMME RESONATED WITH YOU MOST?



[Social learning spaces] means you are all seen, heard and understood as individuals.

**The collaborative approach is meaningful; everyone has a space to speak, share ideas and contribute.** — Leah, 2021.

## PURPOSE

Empowering young women through human-centred leadership and social learning experiences that focus on the journey rather than the outcome.

Offering a safe and empowering space to enable personal growth and professional impact within sport, active recreation, and wellbeing sectors.

### WHY THIS KAUPAPA MATTERS

Young women in Aotearoa encounter significant barriers to leadership within the sport and recreation sector. WoK addresses these systemic barriers, offering a pathway to leadership development that involves all women.

By focusing on personal strengths and motivations rather than prescriptive 'how-to' models, this kaupapa empowers participants to reimagine leadership on their terms. It supports personal and professional growth through diversity, inclusion, and progressive leadership frameworks while providing space for young women to explore their 'why'.



“

**Everybody should have the opportunity to exercise leadership. If you give people the right environment to thrive, then they will do so.”**

*— Sarah Leberman, WISPA Co-Founder*

# PARTICIPATION



**I had never considered being a leader. I now hold several leadership roles, and I honestly don't think I would have come this far this quickly without this programme." — Kendra, 2023.**



## ENABLING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Applications were encouraged from wāhine across Aotearoa who had not previously been accepted into leadership development opportunities or held a leadership position within an organisation or group.

Seventy-two participants from Kerikeri to Dunedin were selected, representing diverse upbringings, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, and ages.

Despite these differences, they shared a passion for physical activity and wellbeing, community participation, and a desire to challenge or change traditional frameworks and structures.



**Before WoK, I didn't identify myself as a leader in the traditional sense (outgoing, confident, holding authority or power). I would hesitate to put my hand up for something like WoK." — Kelly, 2021.**

## REMOVING BARRIERS

WoK worked to provide access to leadership development opportunities beyond major centres like Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, promoting equity and access in regional and urban areas.

To overcome financial barriers, a 'social ticketing model' was implemented. Participants contributed what they could afford, ensuring those unable to contribute received free access, including travel to each wānanga.

This model helped ensure inclusivity, enabling every young woman to participate regardless of location or financial circumstance.



**WoK was so accommodating. They completely removed financial barriers.**

**I was someone who, at the time, could not afford to do the programme, but they said if you're interested, don't feel pressure to pay fees. That's a huge thing that helped me, but it would also have helped other girls." — Te Aomania, 2022**

# SHANNON



**INDIVIDUAL:** "My biggest shift....seeing leadership in everyone."  
**RELATIONAL:** "Applying Tetramapping" (to my communication style with others).  
**ORGANISATIONAL:** "I was able to share the Emotional Culture Deck with my peers."



Growing up in the rural setting of the Wairau Valley in Marlborough, Shannon was raised by a family whose collective love for nature shaped her formative years. From an early age, she explored the great outdoors through hiking and camping with her parents and siblings, experiences that instilled in Shannon a respect for nature and a passion for physical activity.

“

I am a very active person. Sport has always been important to me and something that I always wanted to work within.”

Whanake o te Kōpara (WoK) entered her life after conversing with a friend who had recently completed it.

“

I had the classic feeling of ‘Oh, this is probably not for me’ and could have easily talked myself out of it, but I had a network of people around me telling me to go for it.”

After just one day on the programme, Shannon realised it was exactly where she was meant to be. With a cohort that all connected well within the first 24 hours, Shannon embraced a new take on leadership, embracing new skills, resources, and feedback with the support and encouragement of her group.

“

Traditional leadership courses can be repetitive, following a prescribed format. Whanake was the opposite of that.”

## TRUSTING THE PROCESS

Reflecting on her own experience within the industry, Shannon identified the struggles women face within the sporting sector. For her Action Plan, she aimed to create an online community where these women could feel supported, informed, and empowered. "It was definitely feeling isolated myself and wanting to bring awareness and education to others who might be feeling the same."

While her Action Plan didn't get past the conceptualisation phase, the entire process provided Shannon with several lessons that strengthened her approach to future projects and reaffirmed her commitment to continuous growth and adaptability.

The Action-Planning experience also taught her the importance of being flexible when setting goals. Instead of being let down or feeling disappointed when things don't manifest as she had envisioned, Shannon now finds herself more open to a learning journey that will inevitably evolve along the way, a mindset she applies now to her work and personal life.

“  
**My experience through the Action Plan taught me that you have to go through the process, to work and re-work and just be flexible.**”

## RECOGNISING THE LEADER IN EVERYONE

Like most participants who enter WoK, Shannon didn't see herself as a leader in a conventional sense. Admitting she had a 'narrow view' of what leadership was, she believes this was informed by her experience growing up where a traditional take on leadership was more prevalent.

“  
**Growing up, I always saw leadership positions as one kind of person, who always led from the front.**”

Surrounded by a motivational group of young women and led by empowered facilitators, Shannon discovered the multifaceted nature of leadership and the many ways in which an individual can contribute.

“  
**I always liked how Sarah [Leberman] frames it: that leadership is an action or a verb as opposed to a noun/person. That's been my biggest shift, not seeing individual people as leaders but seeing leadership in everyone.**”

Shannon appreciated the co-design aspect of the programme. Being encouraged to contribute to the schedule and content of Whanake as a group meant each participant found the confidence to speak up and give their view on where they felt the programme should go.

“  
**There was a flexibility with where we wanted to take the programme. We left feeling energised and empowered. We had breathing space to understand what we had learnt.**” — *Shannon, 2022*

Crediting the programme for helping her get to where she is today, she hopes to have the opportunity to encourage future participants to take the chance as she did so that they, too, can start their journey towards realising their full potential.



# PROGRAMME

## ENGAGEMENT

The kaupapa included six digital hui and three kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) wānanga based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington region) and Ōtautahi (Christchurch).

Each participant was asked to develop a concept or initiative to enhance the wellbeing of a targeted group through physical activity or social impact.

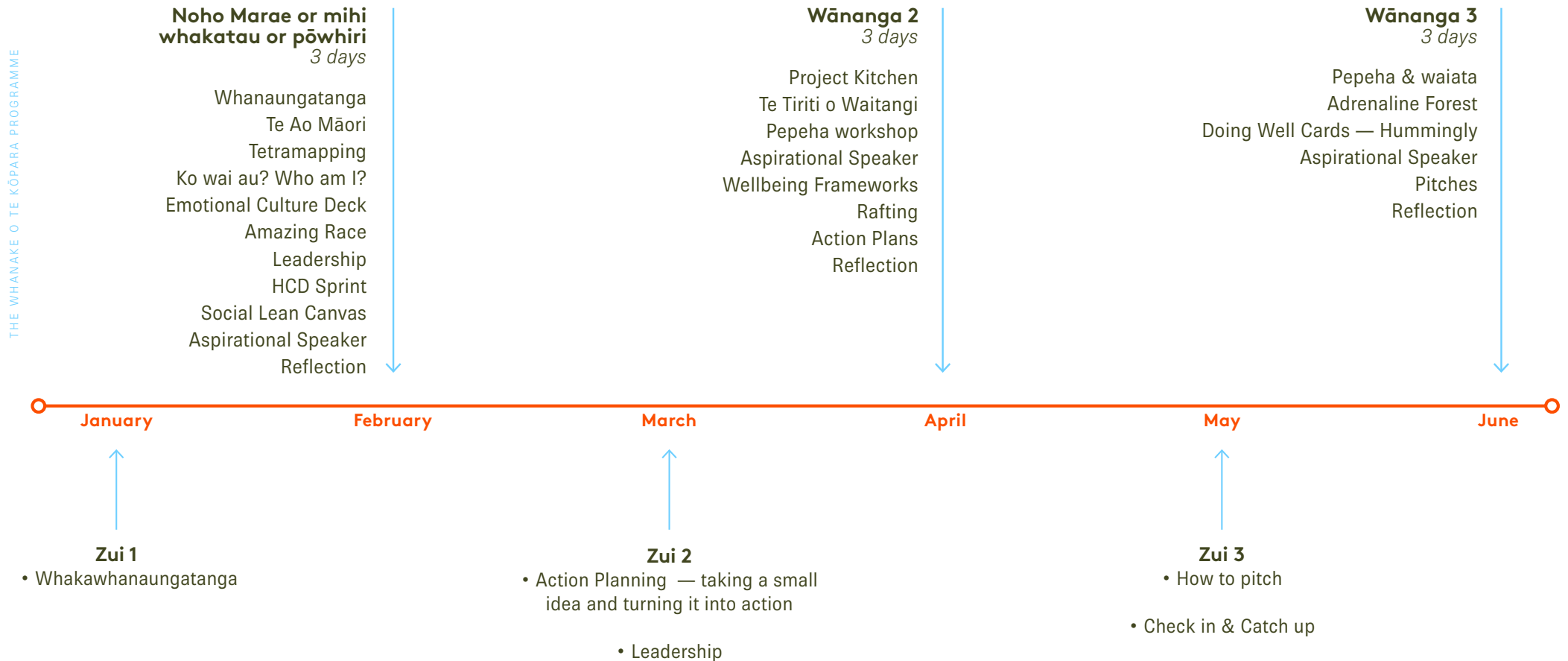
They honed their ideas through ideation, action planning, prototyping, feedback, research and iteration, presenting their journey and initiative back to their peer group at the final wānanga.

Many then applied this learning within their organisations, and some have created initiatives that continue to impact their local communities.



# THE WHANAKE O TE KŌPARA PROGRAMME

Whanake o te Kōpara was co-designed alongside the young woman participating. It's ongoing development included most or all of the following:



\*The dates of each programme between 2021 - 2024 differed slightly to the timeline above, but the sequence of this momentum remained the same.

## TOOLS & FRAMEWORKS

### > EMOTIONAL CULTURE DECK

The Emotional Culture Deck is a simple yet powerful and flexible tool for creating face-to-face conversations about feelings, culture and leadership within any organisation or team.

### > SOCIAL LEAN CANVAS

The Social Lean Canvas is a tool to help social entrepreneurs work out the key attributes of their very early stage ventures, and identify their key hypotheses so that they can be validated.

### > TETRAMAP

TetraMap is a globally proven learning model designed to grow everyone's potential through the use of nature-based metaphors. Understanding our own and others preferred behaviours assist us to develop self-awareness, and also improves team work and communication.

### > HUMMINGLY DOING WELL CARDS

Hummingly create easy to use deck cards and video packs that people, communities and workplaces across the world can access during tough times.

## A SELECTION OF ACTION PLANS



# BRITT



**INDIVIDUAL:** "I discovered the power of listening."  
**RELATIONAL:** "I learnt that I wanted to create space for the voice of my peers and others."  
**ORGANISATIONAL:** Britt is now advocating for cancer support groups.  
**COMMUNITY:** Seeking opportunities in her life (and community) to uplift the voice of kōhine Māori and Pasifika.



Britt is no stranger to powerful women. Raised by a single mum in Papakura, South Auckland, she attended an only-girls Catholic school where the competition between the young women was high. As a result, Britt became outspoken, embracing a competitive mindset that defined her teenage years.

" I feel like I have always been in this frame of mind. Living in the rat race of Auckland, too, has reinforced that. So for me, speaking up and letting my voice be heard is normal to me."

This changed when Britt had the opportunity to join the 2023 Whanake o te Kōpara (WoK) cohort. Encouraged by her boss to apply, Britt expected the programme to 'fit the mould' of a traditional leadership course, with structures similar to universities or corporate businesses. Instead, her experience was the exact opposite.

" In terms of social learning spaces, I have been to uni, conferences, typical corporate environments and businesses - they're all traditional in how you learn and interact - but on Whanake, it was all females, which you don't always see. A completely different and transformative way of learning."

Knowing the strength of her own voice to advocate for herself and others, Britt also discovered the power of listening.

“

It was so cool to hear from other younger women who were so knowledgeable and capable. I also found that when I spoke, it encouraged other people to speak. I could see my growth through this, and by being more open, it allowed other people to feel safe and open too.”

## AN ACTION PLAN TO EMPOWER

Tapping into self-reflection during the programme, Britt acknowledged her privilege in terms of education and opportunities. She envisioned providing the same possibilities for young Māori and Pasifika wāhine through her action plan.

“

I wanted to give them a voice or the space to encourage and guide them through the same process I did, to provide them with the same opportunities where possible.”

As her plan progressed, Britt also witnessed a change in herself. The programme's lessons made her question her current position and whether what she was doing professionally mattered to her.

“

It made me question what sort of impact I want to have on the world.”

After her partner was diagnosed with cancer, Britt reassessed her priorities. Understanding the importance of doing things that made her happy, she stepped back from her full-time role to focus on her personal life and consider her future direction.

“

Whanake showed me that I was worth more than I thought. It gave me so much self-growth and the ability to recognise that I am already capable of more than I give myself credit for.”

## ADVOCATING FOR OTHERS

Currently acting as a voice within cancer support groups, she also hopes to use her Physio qualification and provide free treatment for Māori and Pasifika in her community.

“

I believe I'm here for a reason, and I think that reason is advocacy. I could be naive, but I can make a difference in people's lives. I want to use my powers for good.”

## RENEWED PERSPECTIVE

Since completing WoK, Britt's views on leadership have dramatically shifted. To her, it's not about one person at the top taking on the world's burdens. Instead, it is a collective effort, where filling her own cup enables her to fill others.

“

What this programme taught me was leaders can collaborate. Why take the world's weight on your shoulders when you can have this collaborative approach.”

Having been used to being the loudest voice in a room, Britt is happy to take a back seat and let others fulfil their leadership potential. A competitive edge is

not as important to her as it used to be. Instead, she values supporting and uplifting those around her to achieve a common goal.

“

In the Whanake environment, I learned we can be together as women, celebrating and lifting each other up.”

Quoting Sarah Leberman, Britt describes the potential for leadership to 'come in so many forms, it's happening everywhere, all the time'. For Britt, gaining this perspective, enhancing her communication skills, and understanding herself and others through the programme has fundamentally changed how she views being a leader.

“

Whanake taught me so much. I will never forget it. The impact it had on me was massive. I can't imagine what my life would be like if I hadn't done the programme.”

# PRINCIPLES

The impact of this kaupapa was originally assessed through Culver Duarte's **Value-Creation Framework**, which includes eight value cycles. Collectively, these cycles help evaluate participant interaction within the group, their engagement with the learning experience, personal growth, transformation, and strategic connections or ongoing impact opportunities gained.

WoK upholds the **Value Creation Framework** by enabling self-awareness and self-reflection, group participation activities, diversity and inclusion, and developing leadership capabilities that help create an impact on individuals, peers, organisations, sectors, and communities.

WoK has been co-designed with the young women alongside six guiding principles. These principles overlap with the eight cycles of Culver's Value-Creation Framework:

1. SENSE OF SELF
2. SOCIAL LEARNING SPACES
3. HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN
4. LEADERSHIP AS PRACTICE
5. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
6. IMPACT



# 1.

## SENSE OF SELF

Identifying core values allows individuals to understand what motivates them. Values guide our behaviour in all aspects of our social and professional lives. The participants could discover their 'why' by recognising their key values and identifying what matters to them most.

This 'why' became the driver behind developing their initiatives and supporting action plans and helped inform their approach to leadership.

“

Identifying my values has helped me learn more about myself, who and what I stand for. My moral compass becomes even more important when working with community members.” — *Georgia, 2024*

# 2.

## SOCIAL LEARNING SPACES

Being part of a social learning space involves learning and developing through interactions and social connections (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). It focuses on the process rather than just the outcomes, recognising that interacting with others helps shape our identity.

Incorporating social learning into WoK enabled participants to exchange ideas, ask questions, problem-solve, and explore challenges together. This interaction-based learning allowed participants to appreciate the value and potential impact of their ideas.

“

[The social way of learning helped me] be more confident and comfortable sharing knowledge and learning. It did not feel like a hierarchy, and I felt more willing to be involved.” — *Kelsey, 2023.*

# 3.

## HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

WoK embraces a strengths-based co-design approach that meets individuals' needs and wants to achieve inclusive and relevant outcomes for all.

Human-centred design is an approach to problem-solving and innovation that puts people's needs, behaviours, and experiences at the centre of the design process.

Using a co-design approach challenges the development of traditional leadership programmes, typically designed before the participants' needs are known.

By including the young women in the programme's design through surveys and check-in sessions, they could communicate their wants and needs as individuals within their respective organisations or groups.

Because this co-design approach caters to the needs of each group, the programme will continue to evolve and will not always look the same.

“The whole programme felt authentically co-designed with the wāhine at the heart of it. I had never been a part of something like that before. I loved being involved in the evolution of the programme; it was such a positive aspect.” — *Naomi, 2021*

# 4.

## LEADERSHIP AS PRACTICE

WoK has guided young women to exercise leadership based on actions and behaviours over hierarchy, titles, and positions.

Using Leadership as Practice (L-A-P) (Raelin, 2016) as our foundation, we provided knowledge, frameworks, and practical tools that enabled participants to see leadership as holistic, relational, and dynamic.

The L-A-P framework helps people who may never consider themselves leaders in their daily lives exercise leadership. It moves away from the idea that leadership is exclusive to a privileged few and gives voice to often underrepresented people and cultures.



**Fundamentally, leadership is ‘messy’. Because of this, we need to think about how leadership is exercised in differing contexts to achieve sustainable change for the future.”**

*— Sarah Leberman,  
WISPA Co-Founder*

# 5.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

This kaupapa is committed to embracing the diversity of **all young women** across Aotearoa.

We continue to create space to uplift and support those from a range of backgrounds and lived experience - such as cultural, neurodiverse and rainbow.

We grounded this kaupapa in Aotearoa and tikanga practices, while inviting the young women to deliver ako (learning) sessions that enabled our facilitators and participants to learn through other cultures and belief systems.



**My te reo journey has been hard...for most of my life, I didn't have a sense of belonging. But feeling safe to express myself confidently in this space has helped me so much. To come here and have people look to me for advice in the te ao Māori space is a boost of confidence.” — Ora, 2021.**



### WE DELIVERED THIS BY:

- Inviting participants to lead part of the programme and deliver a learning experience for their peers
- Developing our own tikanga and kawa - mihi whakatau, pōwhiri and whakawhanaungatanga
- Educating programme participants about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and discussing its modern-day implications
- Holding our first wānanga as either a noho marae or on a marae to acknowledge our presence in Aotearoa
- Incorporating hauora - Māori philosophy of wellbeing - into our tools and frameworks
- Writing, practising and performing pēpeha
- Encouraging participants to incorporate their culture (or the culture of others) within their action plans and initiatives
- Practising karakia, waiata and poroporoaki



# 6.

## IMPACT

Over the past four years, we have observed (and evidenced) significant outcomes for the young women involved.

Most participants experienced personal growth and gained a stronger sense of self and confidence. Many have demonstrated leadership in action, positively influencing projects and initiatives within their respective organisations.

For some, their ideas and action plans have impacted their communities, with outcomes extending beyond their immediate networks, environments, or sectors.



**100%** OF PARTICIPANTS **I feel more CONFIDENT**

**95%** OF PARTICIPANTS **I feel MORE EQUIPPED to lead or implement projects**

**93%** OF PARTICIPANTS **I apply KAWA/VALUES-LED thinking to my mahi**

**88%** OF PARTICIPANTS **I SPEAK UP MORE with my ideas or perspectives**

**85%** OF PARTICIPANTS **I consider the human and COMMUNITY before I problem solve**



## INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS:

- Enhanced personal values, beliefs, and sense of self
- Increased leadership confidence and competence
- Deepened understanding and connection to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Tikanga Māori
- Challenged physically and mentally through group and individual activities
- Achieved unexpected outcomes, accomplishing things they didn't think they had the skills or confidence to do

## RELATIONAL BENEFITS:

- Enhanced understanding of diverse communication styles and behaviours
- Equipped with tools and resources for personal and professional growth
- Established lifelong connections with program participants and facilitators

## ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS (LEADERSHIP IN ACTION):

- Understand and address equity issues in professional settings
- Develop a unique leadership style outside traditional norms
- Nurture and encourage others who they recognise as having potential leadership qualities
- Lead projects and initiatives based on established leadership and engagement methodologies

## COMMUNITY IMPACT:

- Be equipped with the tools and resources to create impact in their communities
- Empowered to contribute to social impact and community wellbeing
- Access to a nationwide network of peers with access to the lessons and reflections of other groups, organisations and communities

“Whanake helped me become more comfortable with going outside of my comfort zone. It also developed my confidence by helping me discover my strengths and how to take advantage of them. — Cheryl, 2023

“Since WOTK, I have continued to make leaps and jumps. I continue to hold the many friendships I made with the other participants of this incredible programme. To this day, the teachings of this programme continue to guide me through my day-to-day activities.” — Sable, 2022

“I appreciated being able to learn leadership techniques from strong female leaders who were very supportive.” — Kelly, 2023

“In my police work, I can apply the community idea of 'people-first'. It's about figuring out what they need, looking below the surface level to ask why, to ask what can be done to make things better or different for those in our community.” — Georgia, 2021

# GEORGIA



**INDIVIDUAL:** "WoK reassured me that I know what I am doing and to trust my abilities."  
**RELATIONAL:** "I now listen to different perspectives and see people's passions."  
**ORGANISATIONAL:** "I use Tetramapping in my role to help get my message across." (NZ Police)  
**COMMUNITY:** Upskilling Owaka residents (CPR) / Friday Night Sports Initiatives



We first met Georgia Mason in 2021 when she joined a cohort of 17 young women for Whanake o te Kōpara (WoK). Hailing from the small rural town of Owaka in South Otago, she brought a passion for rugby and a determination to become a better leader for her rural community.

Three years later, we reconnected with Georgia to see how her life has evolved since completing the programme. We explored the valuable tools and resources she still uses and learnt how WoK resonates in her life today.

## UNEXPECTED TRANSFORMATIONS

When Georgia applied for WoK in 2020, she had no idea how much it would alter the course of her life. What she initially saw as a 'typical traditional leadership' course was far more transformative for her and her community than she could have imagined.

“ Even though everyone in our group was at different stages of life, we all felt quite connected. We wanted to head in the same direction. We were just taking a different path to get there.”

Her action plan was centred around her community's social and mental health at a time when they were experiencing a high level of youth suicide, often only connecting at funerals. Owaka, a traditional farming town united by a love of rugby, lacked resources to maintain community connection during the off-season.

“

**The programme reassured me that I know what I'm doing and made me realise that I can do what I want to do. To trust my abilities and just get out there and do it."**

Engaging with six local women, Georgia helped establish Friday Night Sports, an evening where the community could gather, keep fit and play together. Despite initial worries about attendance, Georgia saw a huge weekly turnout, with locals bringing whānau and friends along.

## A NEW WAY TO SERVE

Since completing WoK, Georgia's life has taken a different path from what she envisioned. While sport, specifically rugby, remains essential to her through refereeing and management, her career has changed significantly.

In late 2023, Georgia enrolled with the New Zealand Police.

“

**I had always wanted to be a part of the Police. I wanted to do something community-based, a career where I could give back to my community."**

Transitioning from an office environment to Police fieldwork, Georgia finds applying her WoK learnings to be more tangible.

“

**I use Tetramapping a lot. It helps me to find out how to motivate people. I now understand how different people need to be approached. Having the skills to get my message across and communicate with the community has been really important."**

Georgia emphasises a people-first approach, particularly when addressing family harm and youth issues.

“

**The programme has helped me to apply a certain lens to everything I do. To look further than just the first step has been so important in my work, especially in these small communities."**

## NURTURING COMMUNITY GROWTH

As Georgia's life evolves, changes have also unfolded back in her hometown. While her police duties have paused Friday Night Sports, the social gatherings have taken on their own life, transforming into 'Surfing for Farmers', a funded initiative promoting rural communal surfing.

With her community now connected socially, Georgia is shifting her focus to upskilling Owaka residents. A lack of volunteers and recent funding reductions for vital resources have motivated Georgia to transform social gatherings into training opportunities. She hopes to see locals train to become qualified in CPR, search and rescue, or ambulance drivers.

“

**I'm always asking, how can we better resource ourselves so that we're situated for anything that comes our way? I want to create a space where we can give people the knowledge to survive in our environment if needed."**

From the seed of her action plan planted during the programme, a vision beyond social connection has grown. Georgia sees herself as the bridge in her community - equipping people with the right tools and knowledge and enabling them to look after themselves and those around them.

“

**I've been able to listen to different perspectives and see people's passions but also had the opportunity to play my part. It's important to me to open people's eyes to the lack of resources and support in that part of the country."**

Reflecting on WoK, Georgia says one of her most valuable lessons was discovering how to connect with anyone from any walk of life and communicate effectively. She has been able to apply this not only in her police work but also within her community, finding the best way to bring out people's skills and talents.

“

**Being able to learn from other people about what they're going through but also be an advocate for the community that I live in as well, that's important to me."**

# INSIGHTS & REFLECTIONS



This programme has helped me learn that you can lead in many different capacities and that you don't have to be in those 'leadership' roles to influence people.

I understand now that it's about how you get there and not the end outcome." — *Leanne, 2021*



## INSIGHTS

Through observation, qualitative and quantitative feedback, and evaluation we can confirm that a majority of the young women who participated in WoK now:

- understand that the learning experience and engagement process is just as important as the end goal
- are more adaptable to change and adversity
- are more inclusive of the perspectives of others and mindful of diversity
- understand that networks and connections enable us to create more impact
- believe in themselves and their ability to bring about change in leadership
- have a deeper connection to te ao Māori practices and/or were able to share their own culture and identity with others in the group
- see that leadership comes in all shapes and sizes

“

There isn't necessarily one right way to be a leader, as long as you are trying your best to be open, transparent, honest and connect with your team members in the ways that best resonate with them to form a cohesive team.” — Arna, 2023

WHAT TOOLS DO YOU CONTINUE TO USE IN YOUR MAHI OR COMMUNITY?

TETRAMAPPING

45%

OF PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT KITCHEN

48%

OF PARTICIPANTS

HUMMINGLY  
DOING WELL CARDS

55%

OF PARTICIPANTS

HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

80%

OF PARTICIPANTS

EMOTIONAL CULTURE DECK

83%

OF PARTICIPANTS

## 1. SUSTAINABILITY AND MOMENTUM

The sustainability of this kaupapa remains a critical focus. In the past four years, we have evidenced a new network of leadership forming across Aotearoa that is diverse, inclusive, and far-reaching amongst underrepresented communities.

The value creation model that underpins this kaupapa creates an ongoing cycle of sector support, relationships, and resources. By staying connected and continuing to grow this network (and value cycle), we can invite WoK participants to attend industry events, contribute as co-facilitators during future programmes, and leverage the tools they have gained to establish ongoing action plans and impact models for our next generation of leadership.

This kaupapa has layers of ongoing impact. We must continue the momentum we have gained to remove leadership barriers and create ongoing systemic change.



**I've always thought of leadership as a role given to you - this programme has helped me realise that leadership is more than that - it can be done in more capacities, there's no end goal, it's a continual learning process. There are so many different perspectives and forms it can take."** — *Leanne, 2021*

## 2. BALANCING EXPECTATIONS: IMMEDIATE VERSUS LONG-TERM IMPACT

We have evidenced the 'ripple effect' of group learning and participation, with many of the young women changing work roles, confidently taking up new opportunities, engaging with their communities, or challenging the status quo.

We understand this kaupapa to be a catalyst for some of these changes and expect more impact to follow through their connections, the application of the frameworks and tools provided to each cohort, and the ongoing application of human-centred leadership and social learning practices.



**WoK opened new doors for me and helped me to develop personally and professionally. WoK was a pivotal part of my life that I will forever be grateful for."** — *Kelsey, 2023*



**Attending the IWG on Women in Sport Conference at the end of the programme was something I never thought I'd be a part of, so that was a surreal experience. To see mahi like that on a global and international scale and know that there are many like-minded members of the community championing the same thing was motivational."** — *Tracey, 2022*

### 3. DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP

While grounded in the sports, recreation, and wellbeing sectors, our kaimahi covered a range of ages and backgrounds and contributed different capabilities, knowledge, and perspectives.

The diversity of our participants was matched by the diversity of our speakers and facilitators. Including younger facilitators who lived the day-to-day lives of the participants or contributors from diverse communities and marginalised groups helped support a more progressive learning model that embraced the lived experience of their peers and others.

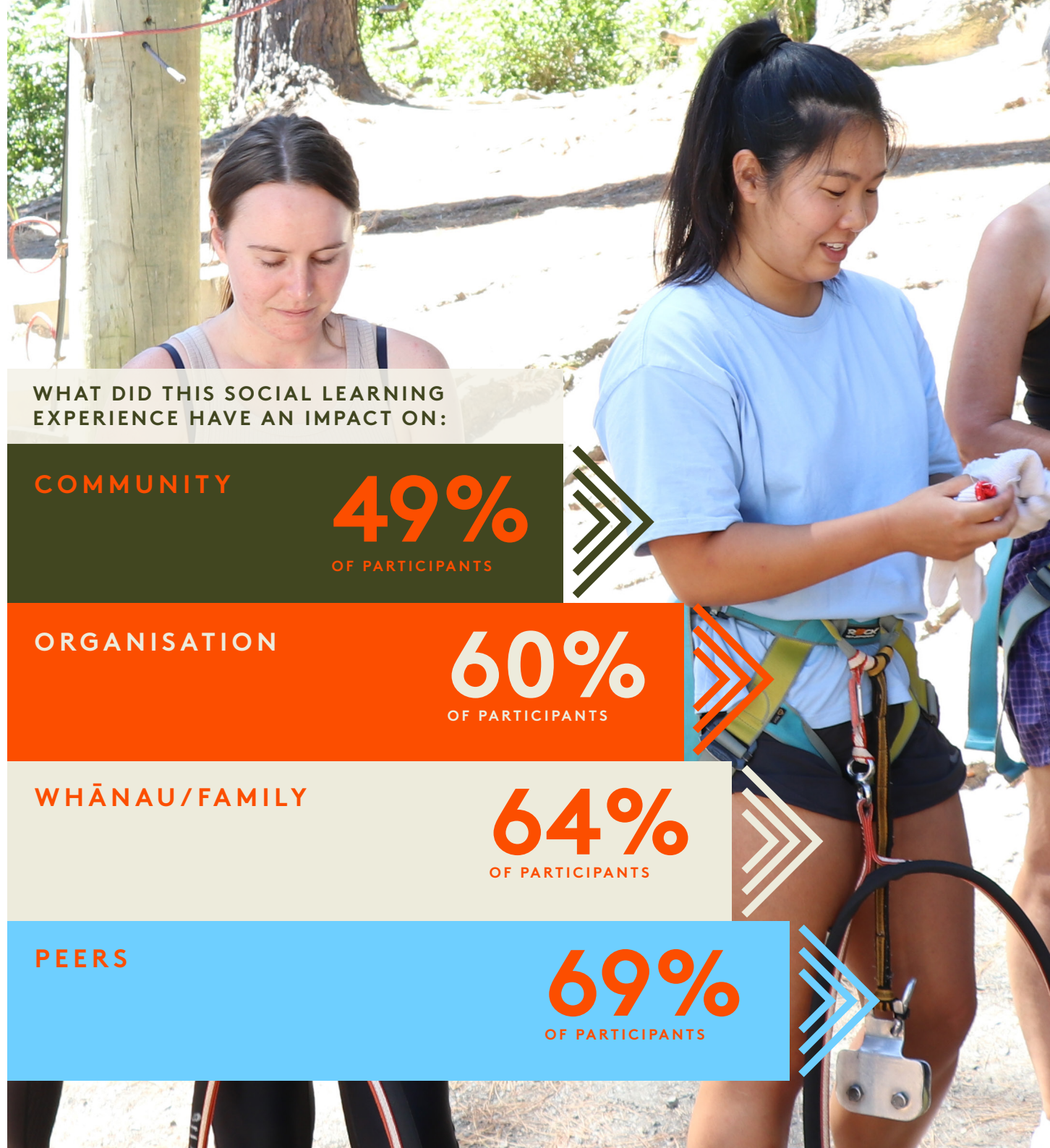


**If you bring together a team that has complementary values but diversity of thought together, then you're going to create something impactful."**

*— Sarah Leberman, WISPA Co-Founder*



**Our facilitators were not only teaching but also learning with us at the same time."** — *Sable, 2022*



WHAT DID THIS SOCIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE HAVE AN IMPACT ON:

COMMUNITY

49%

OF PARTICIPANTS



ORGANISATION

60%

OF PARTICIPANTS



WHĀNAU/FAMILY

64%

OF PARTICIPANTS



PEERS

69%

OF PARTICIPANTS





#### 4. KAUPAPA MĀORI AND INCLUSION

WoK is not a kaupapa Māori programme (for Māori by Māori) but embraces all opportunities to integrate Te Ao Māori into the engagement with each group.

Since its conception, WoK has continued to develop our kaupapa Māori practices alongside our Māori and pakeha facilitators, using tools and frameworks grounded in Aotearoa, our group ako (learning) sessions, and tikanga Māori.

Co-designing our intentions for an inclusive learning space alongside the young women, inviting diverse speakers, and creating a safe environment to share parts of one's culture and identity ensures we continue to evolve as a diverse and inclusive leadership development programme for all.



**My action plan involved working with Māori and helping to understand how physical activity has many benefits outside of the physical.**

**I implemented my action plan through my role with Sport Manawatū through my everyday mahi, and it was one of the most rewarding pieces of work."**

— Cheycoda, 2022

#### 5. REFLECTIVE, IMMERSIVE, AND RESPONSIVE

Many leadership development programmes are held in one location, with traditional presentation formats and a small group of speakers. There is little time for exploring ideas, reflecting on what was learnt, or integrating as a group and network.

The success of WoK relies on our ability to listen to the participants' needs while creating different ways of engaging and learning.

We created space for relaxation and reflection while seeking out environments and activities conducive to exploring culture, confidence and a sense of belonging.

Whether immersed in the tikanga practices of a marae, rafting beneath the Tararuas in Ōtaki, or gathering at innovative spaces such as The New Zealand Campus of Innovation and Sport, the ongoing success of this kaupapa relies on our ability to challenge the norm, uplift the impact of social learning, and meet the young women where they're at.



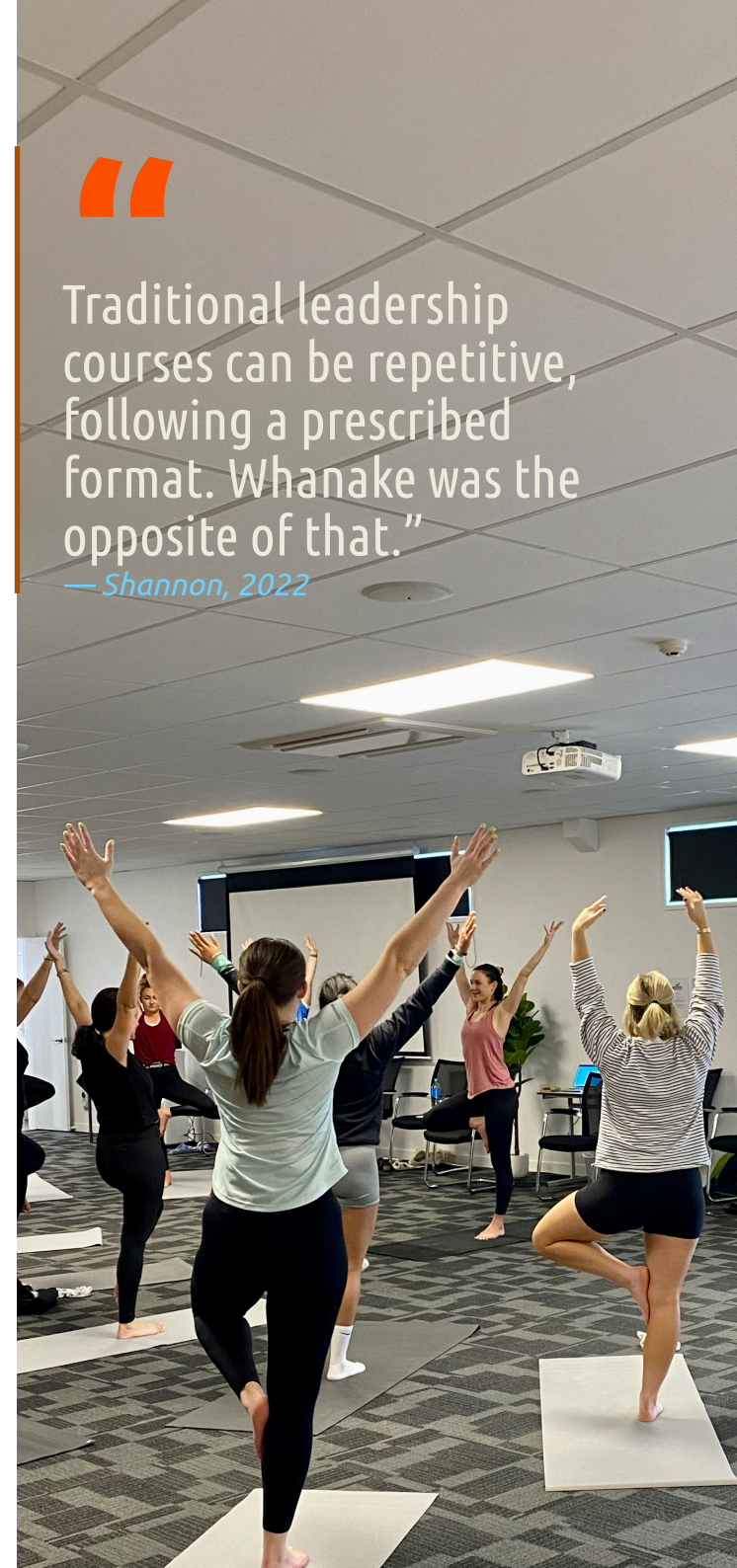
**I enjoyed having an activity (like rafting) that took us out of the 'classroom learning space'. The physical movement to a different location, as well as being outside, helped ensure I didn't feel so drained."**

— Nicole, 2021



**Traditional leadership courses can be repetitive, following a prescribed format. Whanake was the opposite of that."**

— Shannon, 2022



# TE AOMANIA



**INDIVIDUAL:** The confidence to volunteer and coach (netball) next year.  
**RELATIONAL:** "I was blown away by the connection I formed with fellow participants."  
**COMMUNITY:** An app for netball players to access mental health resources."



## FINDING ONE'S AUTHENTIC SELF

Hitting the netball court has been Te Aomania's lifelong passion. Originally from the East Coast but raised in Wellington, she now plays for the top team at Victoria University.

The opportunity to join the 2022 cohort of Whanake o te Kōpara (WoK) came at exactly the right moment for her. Te Aomania had hit something of a lull during her netball season and was seeking a way to reignite her passion and drive for the game.

“

It was focused on young women in sport, emphasising mental and physical wellbeing. At the time, I was going through a rough season with netball and felt like this might help with that.”

She had her reservations going in saying there's 'always an element of uncertainty about who you will be sharing the programme with', but was blown away by the connection she immediately formed with her fellow participants.

“

I didn't expect to be as close to the girls as we were. Twenty-four hours into meeting each other, we were all bawling our eyes out. We couldn't believe we met each other that day and connected well.”

As the programme progressed over the year, Te Aomania found that with every activity or kōrero within her cohort, she was opening up and becoming more vulnerable in ways she didn't know was possible.

“

**I felt so comfortable and was able to be my authentic self.”**

## EMBRACING THE QUIETER SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

When she joined WoK, Te Aomania felt she had a good grounding in leadership. However, the programme also taught her other ways to lead.

“

**One thing that stuck with me was a conversation around quiet leadership. It taught me that I don't have to have a big group behind me to be a leader, I don't have to be the top presenter, I can lead every day in smaller ways and have the same impact.”**

## A MENTAL GAME

Circling back to where she had been when she entered the programme, Te Aomania drew upon her feelings towards netball for her Action Plan. Before joining WoK, she was at a point where quitting the game seemed like the only option. Harnessing the support of her group and the tools she had learnt, she instead looked for a better way through this feeling.

“

**At the time, I was struggling with netball and considered giving it up but decided I still loved the sport. It was about reminding myself why I was playing again.”**

Despite her plan changing several times over the year, Te Aomania landed on a solid concept: a netball journal that players could use throughout their entire season to record how they were feeling mentally and physically.

In addition to providing players with space to record their experiences, the app also contained advice on how to deal with the game's mental aspects, such as imposter syndrome, performance anxiety, and 'bench blues'. Te Aomania even created a QR code that leads players to online resources to help them manage these feelings effectively.

“

**Coaches are always telling us, 'it's a mental game', but then provide no training or insight around this. I wanted to create something that would help players understand how they felt during the season so they could learn and grow from it.”**

Two years after her initial idea, Te Aomania is also close to getting a printed journal produced. Whether it helps players overcome mental obstacles, build confidence, or simply track their progress, she hopes that this resource will positively impact her club and potentially the wider netball community in Wellington.

“

**Through my journal, I'm tracking how my coaches teach, and it's given me the confidence to volunteer as a coach next season. I've been wanting to give back to my club and step up into that position but never had the confidence to do it.”**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The programme would not have been possible without:

## OUR KAIMAHI

Erin Roxburgh, Fran McEwen, Kata Ngatai, Kelly Evans, Maddi McLean & Sarah Leberman.

WITH GRATITUDE AND THANKS TO ALL OF OUR INCREDIBLE CONTRIBUTORS AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS.

## WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM



EMBASSY OF  
THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA



SARAH LEBERMAN MNZM