

November 2008

Evaluation of the Tamaiti Whangai Programme

Operated by Te Runanganui o
Taranaki Whanui



Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge my sincere thanks to all those who agreed to be interviewed as part of this evaluation. It has been a privilege to be involved in this project and I wish you well for the future.

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Summary

Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whanui has developed and implemented a Tamaiti Whangai Programme in the Hutt Valley that is now in its fourth year of operation. The Tamaiti Whangai programme has four dimensions, one of which is a rugby league academy aimed at engaging 16 to 25 year olds in tertiary education. This evaluation report identifies the progress made in the first cohort of participants in the academy and identifies the success factors for the programme.

Thirteen participants made up the first cohort coming from as far afield as Gisborne, Waikato and Wanganui. They participants enrolled in a range of vocational qualifications and engaged concurrently in study and rugby league training, sharing their time approximately 60:40 between the two activities. Out-of-town participants were billeted with the programme leader/mentor and were encouraged to develop their life skills within a supportive whanau environment.

The evaluation shows that the programme has been very successful with 85% of participants retained in the programme and doing well both academically and in terms of sporting achievement. Two participants have left the programme, one to pursue employment opportunities and one through personal reasons.

Of the remaining eleven participants, all (100%) are achieving academically and all have made either Wellington or New Zealand representative Rugby League teams. In addition, participants have gained life skills including communication, self management, confidence, leadership, resilience (ability to deal effectively with disappointment), self awareness, teamwork, time management and ability to socialize without excessive reliance on alcohol or drugs.

The evaluation has identified that there are five success factors critical to the effectiveness of the programme:

1. A skilled programme leader or kaiwhakahau with mana and experience if the sporting arena;
2. A kaitiaki or guardian of the vision, in this case the runanga;
3. A kaupapa or common purpose, in this case rugby league;
4. A programme pedagogy based on whangai whanau principles;
5. An expert partner in the field of the endeavour, in this case an education partner – Wellington Institute of Technology.

All these factors contribute to the success of the programme and must be present for the programme to succeed.

The runanga in partnership with Wellington Institute of Technology have developed an effective model to engage “at risk” youths in tertiary learning thereby supporting them to:

- Improve education attainment at a tertiary level
- Develop skills including employability, social and sporting skills;
- Improve their health outcomes by reducing reliance on alcohol and drugs and improving fitness and nutrition; and
- Enhancing community engagement through involvement with family and the development of leadership skills.

It is planned to develop and expand this Tamaiti Whangai model of working further in the future.

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Background

Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whanui has a strategic vision to use a whole of community development model, based on Maori whanau values and practices, to build cohesive, strong and vibrant communities. Using this vision, a Tamaiti Whangai¹ Programme has been developed and implemented by the runanga in the Hutt Valley and is now in its fourth year of operation. This Tamaiti Whangai programme is based on a whole of community approach and the principle that "the practice of supporting and nurturing children - remembering we are all children - responsible to, and for, each other" and aims to develop strong communities. It has four main dimensions of activity based on the age of whanau members – 0 to 5 years, 5 to 16 years, 16 to 25 years and 25+ years.

The Programme dimension focusing on 0 to 5 years builds strong and healthy families through supportive parenting and the provision of health services and has already been fully evaluated. The Programme dimensions implemented for the 5 to 25 age groups focus on Rangatahi development and education support in order to enhance participant's education outcomes; skills development; employment opportunities; and health outcomes, and to promote social cohesion and community development.

The Programme dimensions for these 5 to 25+ age groups are:

1. For the 5 to 16 age group:

- Holiday programmes for school students – these are based in Wainuiomata, Naenae and Pomare have been operating for up to 4 years;
- Homework centre's for after school support – two are in operation and have been in place for 2 years; and
- A mentoring programme which is currently under development.

2. For the 16 to 25 age group:

- A rugby league/ sports academy operating in partnership with Wellington Institute of Technology to develop skills and to provide a link to on-going tertiary study;
- Rangatahi Maia scholarships that provide support for specific trades training; and
- A mentoring programme that is based on the mentoring Rangatahi in schools model.

3. For the 25+ age group:

The development of Tamaiti Whangai mentors/advocates and role models to support Rangatahi development. These participants complete level 3 to 5 programmes to develop their skills as mentors/leaders. Mentor/advocates work with Rangatahi to increase engagement with education and sport to develop skills leading to employment. In addition to this, mentors/advocates support whanau development by assisting rangitahi to actively participate within their whanau, hapu and iwi and provide a healthy and safe environment for whanau and tamariki.

Funding for the entire programme has been provided by a range of sources including Te Puni Kokiri and it is now being tested in three other communities – Wairoa, Turangi and Whangarei. Anecdotal information suggests that it has been successful. This evaluation seeks to formally review the effectiveness of the initiative implemented for the 16 to 25 age group, in particular the sports/rugby league academy, in supporting the achievement of the overall programme goals and vision.

¹ Literally translated Tamaiti Whangai means "Nurturing Children".

The Rugby League Academy Programme.

The Tamaiti Whangai programme based around the establishment of a sports academy for rugby league (Rugby League Academy programme) at the te Runanganui o Taranaki Whanui base at Waiwhetu was developed in partnership with WelTec and ran as a pilot in 2008. Thirteen students have participated in this pilot programme.

The students in the programme all participate in rugby league training and at the same time, study full-time towards a vocational qualifications. The participants split their time between training and study approximately 40%:60%.

Where students have additional learning requirements, for example developing their language, literacy and numeracy skills, these needs are identified and met by the Learning Support staff at WelTec. Eight of the 13 participants in 2008, approximately 60%, accessed this additional support.

Evaluation method

The evaluation method used has been adapted from the Success Case Method developed by Robert O. Brinkerhoff (Brinkerhoff, 2003) that combines analysis of extreme groups with case study and story-telling. The Success Case Method differs from typical more quantitative methods in that it does not seek to learn about the “average” or modal participant in an initiative, It intentionally seeks the very best that a program is producing, to help determine if the value a program is capable of producing is worthwhile, and whether it is likely that it can be leveraged to a greater number of participants. A “success story” is not a testimonial or a critical review. It is a factual and verifiable account – citing evidence that would “stand up in court” – that demonstrates how and how valuably a person used some new method or tool or capability.

The evaluation method involved interviewing 10 of the 13 participants in the pilot sports academy programme and triangulating the "stories" from these interviews with interviews with tutors, and programme administrators and with quantitative data in relation to the student's academic and sporting achievements.

The interviews with the student participants were held in a group format enabling the participants to reflect on each other's input. The interviewer was independent of the programme. Notes were taken at the interviews but the sessions were not recorded. This was felt to be important to ensure that the interviewees would participate freely. No names were recorded and themes from the interviews were extracted and grouped.

Determining what success looks like

A workshop was held with the programme leaders and stakeholders prior to conducting the interviews aimed at identifying the successful outcomes from the programme to be used as an evaluation framework. Participants at the workshop are listed in appendix 1.

As the overarching strategy in which the Tamati Whangai programmes for children and young adults between the ages of 5 and 25 are embedded is one of Rangatahi development, the workshop identified that successful outcomes of the programme have a number of elements. These are:

1. Improved education attainment at tertiary level;
2. Skills development including achieving sport, social and employability skills;
3. Increased employment and a consequent reduction in unemployment;
4. Improved health outcomes including a reduction in misuse of alcohol and drugs; and
5. Increased uptake of community development initiatives including participation in mentoring, support and advocacy activities undertaken by young people.

These success outcomes were used to develop the questions used in the evaluation process.

The participants

The thirteen participants in the Pilot programme are aged between 16 and 19 and came from areas including the Hutt Valley, Levin, Wanganui, Gisborne, Hawera, and Waikato. Eight of those from outside the region (10), were billeted with the key programme leader/mentor, Dave Lomax who has been head coach for the rugby league portion of the programme, the advocate/mentor for the participants and with his wife, he has provided the home base that has been core to developing many of the life skills of the participants.

The qualifications being undertaken include:

- Certificate in Exercise and Recreation Skills L3
- Certificate in Exercise Science L5
- Certificate in Interactive Computing L4
- Pretrade Carpentry
- Certificate in Timber Construction
- Certificate in Electrotechnology L2; and
- Business Management.



Participant profiles

The following table provides the key information regarding the 13 participants including their personal goals:

No.	Age	Prior Activity	Hometown	Academic Study 2008	Personal Goals
1	18	Student Wanganui High School	Wanganui	1. Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3 2. Certificate in Interactive Computing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve with studies. • 5 year plan is to play rugby league in Australia or England. • Assist parents with their business. • Play Rugby League in teams coached by current NZ Junior Kiwi Coach
2	18	Freezing Worker	Wanganui	1. Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3 2. Certificate in Interactive Computing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succeed at WelTec. • Future career in Interactive Computing. • Play rugby league in Australia
3	18	Student Gisborne Boys High School	Gisborne	Certificate in Electrotechnology L2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succeed at WelTec. • Undertake Business studies in 2009 – desire to be able to operate own electrical company in the future. • 2010 – Move to Gisborne and undertake an electrical apprenticeship with Uncle. Take

No.	Age	Prior Activity	Hometown	Academic Study 2008	Personal Goals
					night classes at Tairāwhiti Polytechnic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue rugby league career.
4	17	Hawera High School	Hawera	1. Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3 2. Certificate in Interactive Computing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve with studies. • 5 year plan is to play rugby league professionally
5	19	Student Hutt Valley High School	Lower Hutt	Certificate in Exercise Science L5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete course. • Professional rugby league player.
6	18	Student Waitara High School	Waitara	Pre-trade Carpentry L3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete course. • Professional rugby league player.
7	18	Unemployed	Ngaruawahia	Pre-trade Carpentry L3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete course. • Have a career as a builder. • Professional rugby league player
8	18	Student Gisborne Boys High School	Gisborne	1. Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3 2. Certificate in Interactive Computing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete course. • Have a career as a builder. • Professional rugby league player
9	19	Unemployed	Marion	Applied Mechanical Engineering L3	N/A
10	19	Pre-trade Carpentry student	Lower Hutt	Certificate in Applied Timber Construction L4	N/A
11	18	Unemployed	Lower Hutt	Pretrade Carpentry L3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete course. • Have a career as a builder. • Professional rugby league player
12	16	Student Waiopēhu College	Levin	Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete course. • A career as a professional Rugby League player in Australia.
13	17	Student Queen Elizabeth College – Head prefect	Palmerston North	NZIM Diploma in Management L5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a Managerial role in a Business –possibly one connected with Rugby League. • Within 5 years have a career with an NRL contract.

Three quarters of the way through the first year, eleven of the thirteen students (85%) who entered the programme remain in it. Of the two who are no longer in the programme, one has gained employment in Australia and the other appears to have withdrawn. The eleven remaining participants have been successful in their studies in the year to date although final results are not yet available.

Results achieved year to date

Academic results

Provisional results in the student's academic studies show the following outcomes:

Participant number	Programme of study	Results achieved year to date
1	Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3	Successfully completed

Participant number	Programme of study	Results achieved year to date
	Certificate in Interactive Computing L4	Completed all required assessments.
2	Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3	Successfully completed
	Certificate in Interactive Computing L4	Has completed all required assessments.
3	Certificate in Electrotechnology L2	Is progressing well. Attendance is satisfactory. He should achieve the National Certificate in Electrotechnology Level 2.
4	Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3	Successfully completed
	Certificate in Interactive Computing L4	Has completed all required assessments.
5	Certificate in Exercise Science L5	Progress has been satisfactory.
6	Pre-trade Carpentry L3	Has obtained a total of 58 credits.
7	Pre-trade Carpentry L3	Has obtained a total of 67 credits.
8	Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3	Successfully completed
	Certificate in Interactive Computing L4	Has completed all required assessments.
9	Applied Mechanical Engineering L3	Left the course in October 2008. His attendance and achievements up to the time of withdrawal were satisfactory.
10	Certificate in Applied Timber Construction L4	Commenced programme in July 2008 and withdrew in October 2008. He has re-located to Australia where he has employment.
11	Pretrade Carpentry L3	Commenced the course in July 2008 and will complete the course March 2009. Is progressing well.
12	Certificate in Exercise and Recreation skills L3	Progress is satisfactory. Is on target to achieve certificate.
13	NZIM Diploma in Management L5	Excellent.

Sporting achievements

Participants have also been successful in developing their rugby league skills and pursuing their dream of being professional players. So far this year, one participant has made the under 16 New Zealand rugby league team, three have made the under 18 New Zealand team, one has made the under 19 New Zealand Touch team, 11 have made the Wellington representative teams, and four have earned trials with either the Vodafone Warriors or the Canberra Raiders. Full results are listed in the table below:

Participant number	Sporting Achievements 2008
1	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team Wellington Maori Rugby League Team
2	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team Wellington Maori Rugby League Team. Wellington U18 representative rugby league team.
3	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team Wellington U18 representative rugby league team. NZ U18 rugby league team.
4	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team Wellington U18 Rugby League Team.
5	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team

Participant number	Sporting Achievements 2008
	Wellington Maori Rugby League Team.
6	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team. Wellington U18 Rugby League Team. NZ U18 Rugby League Team. 2008 NZ Warriors Development Team Trialist.
7	Wainui Premier 1, Rugby League Team. Wellington U18 Rugby League Team. NZ U18 Rugby League Team. 2008 NZ Warriors Development Team Trialist.
8	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team. Wellington Maori Rugby League Team.
9	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team. Wellington Maori Rugby League Team.
10	Te Aroha Premier 1, Rugby League Team.
11	Te Aroha Reserve, Rugby League Team. Wellington Maori Rugby League Team.
12	Wellington U16 Representative Rugby League Team. NZ U16 Representative Rugby League Team. Trialist for the U18 Canberra raider's team.
13	NZ U19 Representative Touch Rugby Team. Trialist for the NZ Warriors development Team.

The participant's stories

The interviews used open questions aimed at drawing out the success stories of the participants. Once these stories had been developed, questions were asked regarding what factors were considered to have contributed most to their success and whether there were any barriers that prevented the participants succeeding.

Significant impact

The interview started with an opening question asking the participants what the programme had meant for them and the follow up questions explored these themes. Typical answers followed six themes. These are listed in the table below.

Theme	Illustrative comment
Opportunity to do something different and turn my life around	"Before I came on the course I was temping. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I came on the course and I changed. I had to be committed. I wouldn't have done that before." "It opened up the future" "It got me focused into work, make me someone I want to be." "Course makes me feel better about myself"
Learning opportunity	"It was an opportunity for league and to learn. Need to have skills to fall back on and qualifications." "I was working in the meat works. All I was doing was eating pies. My parents weren't all there. This came along – it was an opportunity to make something of myself." "This has cut a year off my apprenticeship." "It's really good to see young Maori boys in education. I see a lot finishing school and doing nothing."
Opportunity to develop my skills in league	"I can train every day, get fitter and learn new skills. Working with Dave is an eye opener. He has been a professional player" "I do this because I want to go somewhere in rugby league –"

Theme	Illustrative comment
	earn cash"
Build Confidence	"The programme has given me more confidence in the league and outside of the league"
Develop independence and self reliance	"I am more independent now. I used to be a bit of a mummy's boy" "I used to rely on mum and dad. I'm motivated to be more independent and it's a big thing. I have to do my own washing and dishes." "When he came, his mum did everything. He had to learn to do things for himself, even catching the bus. Just little things that have made a big difference".
Family and attitude to others	"Knowing I have the others to help, I am not on my own." "I have the skills to live in people's homes"

Many of the participants commented that they didn't know what they wanted to do with their lives and had not had a good experience with school. The common experience was that school had not been a high priority for them with many saying they only went to school either one or two days a week or just for part of the day. The common theme was that school was not seen as relevant and wagging, drinking and suspension were common experiences for the participants. They also commented that their experience of school was that it wasn't challenging, that they were not expected to do well and no one pushed them. One participant commented that the best thing about school was "the awesome lunches".



In contrast, since attending the rugby league academy programme, participants feel they can focus on one thing and do "stuff" they want to do with a mix of class and practical work – league and study. They have realised that they can learn new things and with the support of each other, Dave, WelTec staff and the rununga, they have made good progress. They commented that they have enjoyed the whanau approach, appreciating being challenged and pushed by each other to do better and to go that extra bit harder.

Skills development and improved education attainment at tertiary level

The participants identified that the programme has given them a number of skills, many of which they consider to be transferable to life after the programme. Skills developed through the programme are listed in the table below:

Skills	Illustrative comment
Time management	"Have to be organised to fit it all in"
Communication	"Its easier to talk to others now. I can talk to anyone" "My communication was bad, I couldn't speak"
Leadership	"When we did the Maori paper, T stepped up and took the lead. From that time onwards all the group stepped up."
Teamwork	"We help each other"
Learning to learn	"I've learnt more this year than in the last three years." "The lecturers can relate to you and the Learning Commons teaching learning skills has made it easy."

Skills	Illustrative comment
	"I've learnt more this year than in the last 3 years".
Working with others	"I am better with people. If there is a problem we work stuff out and don't hold grudges. These guys just kill a bad mood they give you a lot of grief. I've learnt to laugh it off and give it back."
Self management	"I've matured heaps. I don't want to do the things I did before – it's dumb." "I was used to having it easy. I like the challenge, it helps me believe in myself. I like a challenge." "Have learnt to deal with disappointment."
Social skills	"Don't have to drink to socialise."
League skills	"Learnt about weight training, fitness and about the game. It has stepped us up a gear."

All participants commented on the vocational skills they were learning as part of their studies and the use they would put these to.

There was a general understanding of the importance of having vocational skills to fall back on if they didn't make it to the professional league ranks. While some participants talked about using their vocational skills after completing the programme—"I'm going to build a house for my mum and aunty"—others were clear that their future was in rugby league—"even if it only carrying out the water bottles and supporting the trainers". There was also a recognition that the participants did not want to go back to the way they had been before they began the programme. They were "grateful for the programme" and saw that it had "held us all". It "gives us something to do with our lives".



S commented on the additional value the Academy has contributed to the local rugby league community by strengthening the local club and assisting it to build relationships with NRL sides. He sees the strength of the academy and its relationship with WelTec is that it has developed a framework where there is control over the infrastructure and the development programme with the educational development of the participants built into the package.

Increased employment and job opportunities

Of the ten the participants that were interviewed, there is unanimous agreement that the preferred option for work on completion of the programme is to follow a rugby league career. Participation in the programme has, however, cemented home to them how difficult this is and how important it is to have another career to fall back on. All people interviewed commented on the benefit of being exposed to the "real world" dog eat dog world of professional sport and the value of working with someone who has "been there done that". Uniformly, participants commented on the value of learning to deal with disappointment and being able to remain motivated and continue to work towards their goals. Comments that illustrate the participant's views in relation to job opportunities are illustrated below.

Theme	Illustrative comment
Work	"This has got me focussed into work. It's making me into someone I want to be. I choose to do this because I want to go somewhere in rugby league and earn cash. If the league doesn't work out the skills I've learnt can be used in personal wellbeing. Being on a programme focused on wellbeing is more intense".
Vocational skills	"Being on the course makes me feel better about myself. At school I only liked maths. Now I am doing electrical work to be a sparky and I'm passing things. I've got something" "Carpentry, being able to build a house has been good"
Qualifications	"It cuts a year off my apprenticeship" "I have qualifications to fall back on if I don't make it as a professional player." "It gives me other avenues in rugby league, not just as a player but also as a trainer. I could run a rugby league programme."

The academic progress reported in the Results Achieved to Date section above provides concrete support for the participant's comments concerning the impact of the programme on the development of their vocational skills.

Improved health outcomes

Improved lifestyle and wellbeing were common themes that came out of the interviews with all participants. Their willingness to be responsible for their own wellbeing and the benefit they have seen from participating in more healthy ways of living.

Theme	Illustrative comment
Increased fitness and weight loss	"Being on the programme makes the focus on wellbeing more intense" "I was 120 kgs when I came here. Now I am 104. It was real hard trying to catch the others."
Attitude to alcohol and smoking	"We all got into booze before we came here. Now we realise that alcohol effects training and we don't want to let the boys down." "When I came here I got a big shock because the other boys didn't drink. We just chilled out together. Drinking holds you back." "Before I came here I was drinking 3 days a week – every sunny day we would "rock the town". I got a big shock." "People I hang out with now don't drink, I'm more healthy." "I have given up smoking."
Balancing training and study	"Sometimes I worry about the league too much. Dave rebalances work and league. He won't let us do training before an exam – I've learnt to balance things well".
Willingness to be challenged and take on challenges	"All our dream is to play top grade rugby league....now we see it can be done. It's hard. It's challenging. I am used to having it easy". "I like having a challenge it helps me believe in myself". "If I expect them to do well they will do well. If I have high expectations of students they will rise to it."
Self awareness	"Being on the course makes me feel better about myself." "It's comfortable but you have to watch out for the demons, they come in and tempt you but I have the will power to say no now. I realise I don't have to drink to socialize".

The sense of pride and self confidence was obvious in the participants throughout the interviews. Many commented on the pride they now feel in going home and one commented on the disappointment he feels for his mate back home who is still involved in alcohol related activity. The participants believe they have developed the self awareness, skills and social skills to enable them to deal with the stressors of life without having to rely on alcohol.

Community and whanau development

The whanautanga component is a strong core of the programme and is key to its success. Families are bought into the programme from the beginning with the parents interviewed and asked to give their approval for their child to enter the programme prior to the participants acceptance. Parents are asked to sign an agreement demonstrating their willingness for their children to enter the programme. This creates a partnership between the family and the programme administrators that is taken extremely seriously. Signing the agreement also helps the parents understand that they need to let go and to trust the programme.

The importance of maintain trust is also recognized when a participant drops out of the programme. There is a commitment to contact the family when this happens and to formally hand the participant back to the family's care.

The whanautanga component of the programme is also reflected in the following comments from those interviewed.

Theme	Illustrative comment
Leadership	<p>"J had them last trimester and they held back. When we did the Maori paper with them T took leadership and stepped up. From that time onwards all the group stepped up."</p> <p>"The vision for the programme is leadership, respect and continual improvement"</p>
Relationship with family	<p>"At the beginning I just wanted to go home, now I don't want to. I can see what I was. My mates are still like I was. I go home and my best mate is still just drinking like we did before. Watching him makes me want him to do well and change".</p> <p>"My family are cool to see how well I am doing so it's awesome going home."</p> <p>"I have to pass the course to get a scholarship. I didn't get a student loan, instead my parents took a loan. I felt stink about that. I will get a scholarship if I pass and can pay them back."</p>
Relationship with community	<p>"When I was drinking I knew right from wrong but I didn't care. I've matured heaps. I don't want to do the stuff I did before – it's dumb."</p>
Relatedness to others Willingness to accept help from others	<p>"I am better with people now. I know how to work stuff out and I don't hold grudges like I used to. Being with the guys just kills a bad mood, I get a lot of grief. I've learnt to laugh it off and to give it back."</p> <p>"We're encouraged to work with others".</p> <p>"Knowing you got others to help and you are no on your own is great."</p>
Socialisation skills	<p>"The way we socialised up there was very different from down here. Here we have the league, weight training, golf – fun stuff – league. We all work together".</p>
Responsibility	<p>"I have a sense of responsibility. I don't want to waste my time or money. I don't want to go back with nothing."</p> <p>"What I thought was really telling, yesterday E cam to me and said I need to do this and this. He was responsible, he has changed."</p> <p>"Yesterday I was working with 1 boy and 3 others came in with a rugby ball. The other boy turns around and tells them</p>

Theme	Illustrative comment
	to be quiet and left them to their own devices. He chose to keep on working and not be distracted”.

Living with the family of Dave the programme leader/mentor has been key to developing the sense of family and the willingness to take responsibility. The participants acknowledged the commitment made by both Dave and his wife in provided the structure and support that is enabling them to succeed. Comments made included: “He is a good man. He has heaps of time for us and treats us like family. We recognize this and go with the flow”. “He puts our best intentions at heart and knows how to deal with us. He always asks us what we want to do and if we want to do it, he helps us out”.

The participant who has withdrawn

One participant (D) has withdrawn from the programme. D was an older participant who had been training with the Bulldogs in Australia. He did not fit in with the other participants and there were issues of bullying and lack of trust in the home environment. D did not fit in and lost the respect of the other boys. He also lost the trust of Dave the programme leader. D moved to live with another family but without the support of the other participants, has dropped out of the programme.

In line with programme protocols, Dave has been asked to contact D’s family and formally hand him back to the family to manage from this point.

Lessons learnt

The interviews have identified the elements that have made the programme successful and also some of the barriers that have been encountered by participants.

What makes the programme successful

Against all elements of the evaluation criteria the programme has been a triumph. Participants have been successful in developing vocational skills and have progressed towards achieving their sporting goals. They have developed considerable life skills that are able to be transferred to both their future working and sporting lives and to their roles as community leaders and citizens. One participant has already gained employment while another four have gained opportunities to trial for National Rugby League (NRL) franchises.

The interviews sought to tease out the factors that had led to the success of the programme and identified the following components and the key contributions they have made to this achievement:

1. The Programme leader – the kaiwhakahau

The programme leader, Dave, is the key success factor. The participants all commented on the important role he plays in the programme. Attributes he displays include:

- Coordinating additional help when required;
- Pushing and challenging the participants to do better;
- Liaising between teaching staff and students to identify issues and help solve problems;
- Helping the students rebalance their lives;
- Providing advice and sharing his experience as a former player;
- Opening doors and opportunities in rugby league with his connections with clubs;
- Mentoring, advocating and supporting participants;
- Maintaining standards;

- Encouraging the development of independence, self resilience and the ability to handle disappointment; and
- Being willing to grow and develop into the role.

Having Dave and his family providing the whanau base for the programme provides the stable infrastructure that enables participants to take on challenges, learn and grow.

Dave's mana as an ex-professional rugby league player is greatly respected by the participants and is also key to the programme's success. He has provided links to Australian NRL clubs and to national team selection.

Interviewees commented on how Dave has developed in the role over the year and how much he has learnt. He has agreed to expend his participation in the programme for a further two years.

Having a skilled kaiwhakahauri is seen as being essential to the success of the programme and the recruitment, support and training of these individuals needs to be a key priority in sustaining and expanding the programme.

2. The rununga – kaitiaiki of the vision

Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whanui created and continue to hold the vision for the programme. The clarity about the vision and the articulation of the whanau principles that underpin it have been key components of the programme's success.



The programme administrators from the rununga are Wi and Star. They have used the vision and the whanau and whangai principles to develop processes and procedures that enable the programme to be implemented in a way that stays true to these. Wi and Star provide the support and resources that enable Dave to do his job. "We give Dave everything he wants to do the job. We sit with him and explain roles and discuss how things are going and give him guidance and support. We do this one or two times a week. We support each other."

3. Rugby league – the kaupapa or common purpose

All people interviewed commented on the importance of having a common purpose to drive the programme. Many described rugby league as the "glue" that holds the programme together and the means of establishing and maintaining engagement by participants in the programme.

Having a kaupapa based on excellence/high achievement has created an environment that challenges participants to be the best they can be and to strive to do better. Many of those commented on this and how much they appreciated it.

4. The programme pedagogy – whangai whanau supported delivery

The programme pedagogy is clearly based on whanau models of delivery where all students live, study and train within a supportive whangai environment that aims to challenge and develop them to their full potential. Within this pedagogical approach,

participants are expected to take responsibility for themselves and are encouraged to support one another to achieve. The whanau pedagogy develops self-reliance, resilience, self confidence and leadership within the participant.

There are a number of components that collectively comprise the whole whanau pedagogical approach – the family supported home environment whether it is based in the participant's own home or in the home of Dave and his family; the support provided by WelTec through the Learning Commons and Te Whare Awhina; and the support provided by the runanga.

The role of the runanga in providing a whanau base for the participants is a major contributing factor to the programme's success. When students join the programme, Dave meets with their families and makes a commitment to look after the participants. In this way the family's involved pass the care of their children to the runanga and its' support network. The runanga recognise the importance of this and accept that where there has been a drop out from the programme, it is their responsibility to formally return the student to their family to take over the care.

The role of the runanga in ensuring participant's families are engaged in the programme through the provision of their agreement to hand management of the participants to the programme leader provides a clear framework of accountability within which the programme has the mandate to operate. This is a key strength.

There is room in the future to explore further the way in which the broader whanau, including parents, aunts and uncles, can be incorporated into the programme, however, care will need to be taken to ensure lines of authority and accountability that are important for the programme's operation are not compromised.

5. *Wellington Institute of Technology – wananga partner*

Wellington Institute of Technology (WelTec) as a high quality provider of vocational education programmes acting as the wananga partner to the runanga is a further key success factor. WelTec provides facilities and resources for training, a place to study and learn, breakfast and a place to "chill" out as well as the vocational education programmes and qualifications the students study.

WelTec provide support staff for Maori students who make themselves available to discuss any issues arising. They also provide scholarships for students that provide monetary support so that participants can combine study with training. This was seen as important as the participants generally come from underprivileged backgrounds. Being in an environment where participants were able to study and train was seen as important, "If you couldn't do both, I wouldn't come".

WelTec tutors are critical to the success of the programme. They are closely involved with the students and work with the programme leader/ mentor and administrators to ensure the students are given additional support when they need it. The staff recognise that it is very easy for these students who are young and have generally not been successful in the school system to get lost in the system.

In addition, many of the students have additional literacy and numeracy needs. They have received additional support from the WelTec Learning Support team to develop their literacy and numeracy while at the same time, developing their vocational skills.

The partnership nature of the relationship is important. When students are not meeting their study commitments or appear to be struggling, the programme mentor (Dave), the tutors and the Maori support staff at WelTec work together to provide additional support. To illustrate this, the computing tutor commented that before the mid-trimester study break some of the students were beginning to drop away and fall behind in their study.



He provided extra time for the students during the study break to enable them to catch up. Dave also provided support by encouraging the boys to study rather than train.

The tutor, programme support staff and mentor meet regularly to discuss issues and provide a consistent support network for the students. This collective way of working contributes to the strong whanau community that is at the core of the programme. The students commented on how much they enjoyed this aspect of the programme and how important it was to them.

WelTec staff are also key to the physical training component of the programme working with the Dave and Star to develop training programmes for the students.

There is the opportunity in the future development of this and similar programme to ensure that WelTec is a full partner in the development of the programme vision.

It is clear from the information obtained from the interviews that all these five factors operating concurrently, are essential to the success of the programme and all must be present and active engaged if the programme as a whole is to thrive.

The five success factors for the programme identified through this evaluation exercise are supported by and further extend international research that shows that adult mentoring is a powerful factor in youth development and a successful transition to adulthood. Research by Cornell University (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005) has suggested that the best way to provide mentors for older youth is to engage them in goal-directed activities with caring adults. They suggest that creating opportunities for joint activities and establishing community norms that encourage bonding of youth with adults outside their families, with parental knowledge and support are important for the success of mentoring programmes. This evaluation further informs the work of Hamilton and Hamilton by articulating the five success factors underpinning this approach.

Perceived barriers and areas for improvement

The majority of the factors identified through the interviews as barriers to the participants succeeding in the programme have been normal issues associated with moving away from home to take up tertiary study. They include homesickness, illness and the pressure of

competing priorities. These effects of these issues have generally been mitigated by the strong whangai whanau pedagogy associated with the programme so that no participant has withdrawn as a result.

The situation created with the participant who has dropped out of the programme has identified one of the risks associated with hosting the programme participants in a family home. This participant was a disruptive influence on family life, bullying others and behaving in a manner that led to a loss of trust. Again the strong whanau principles and protocols underpinning the programme are seen as essential to mitigating the effects of such behaviours and the formal hand over of the participant to the programme and then back to the family when the trust has been broken as seen as real strengths in the way the programme is managed.

One area that could be improved is the active engagement and understanding of WelTec with the programme. While in general tutorial staff have been supportive, some have not. There has been some issues with getting information about attendance and results and this has made it tough to build a coordinated, support system. One suggestion to improve this situation is to bring all tutors together at the beginning of the year and induct them into the programme so they understand the programme as a partnership between the runanga, WelTec and the participants and the contribution they make to it. Tutors have an important role in developing the leadership skills of the participants.

Concluding comments and recommendations

All people interviewed commented on how the participants had grown through the programme. One of the most commonly cited benefits of the programme from the participant's perspective was an increase in self-confidence, self esteem, independence and self reliance. The following quote illustrates this:

“Their attitudes have changed. At first they had this real mentality – would sulk – now understand that someone is going to give them advice and it's up to them. Their attitude to disappointment has also changed. Need to take responsibility for disappointment and their attitude to disappointment has changed, they needed to understand that we will do our best to give them an opportunity – to get a job and we're preparing them for that, NZ reps and so on. But they are big steps and it's ruthless, dog eat dog. Everyone wants to play NRL and we need to prepare them for that, things may not fall into place. They now handle disappointment much better “.

The programme staff have also note the change in participants commenting that they have seen the participants go from shy teenagers lacking in social skills to confident, responsible young men willing to help and support each other and take responsibility for themselves. Some have really grown into leadership roles, showing a real willingness and ability to support and help others in the programme. Social skills developed have included communication, teamwork, socialising without alcohol or drugs, time management and organisation skills and self management skills including good nutrition, developing a routine, goal setting, self care and home skills such as washing and dishes. Dave believes that one of the most important lessons that the participants have learnt on the programme is developing the ability and resilience to deal with disappointment.

All people involved with the programme commented on how much they had learnt and grown through their involvement with the participants.

The runanga plan to develop the programme further, expanding the sports academic concept to include softball and/or netball. This evaluation shows that in order for the programme to continue to be successful as it is developed there is a need to:

1. Employ skilled programme leaders able to gain the respect of participants and to provide the necessary mentoring and support to maintain a strong whanau approach
2. Explore potential models for training and developing programme leaders/mentors to provide a consistent approach as the model is expanded across a range of programmes.
3. Strengthen the partnership relationship with WelTec to ensure all staff involved with the programme understand and support its purpose and vision.
4. Maintain the scholarship programme that enables students from underprivileged backgrounds to continue to participate.
5. Identify suitable accommodation options that enable participants to develop their social and self management skills in a supported whanau whangai environment.
6. Explore mechanisms that could be implemented to build on the leadership skills developed in participants of the programme so that they share their skills and knowledge with their families/hapu/iwi. In this way the aim of the programme in building strong families through their children, so families make good choices, can be achieved.
7. Provide sufficient human and financial resources to maintain the strong supportive infrastructure created through the partnership relationship between WelTec and the runanga.
8. Develop a Steering Committee to reflect the partnership relationship between the runanga and WelTec and to provide governance and strategic oversight of the programme.

Some concern was expressed during the interviews of the potential to damage the programme by introducing a competing Wellington Rugby League Academy at WelTec in 2009. Any such moves will need to be discussed with the runanga prior to reaching agreement with Wellington Rugby League.

References

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Appendix 1 – Workshop to design evaluation criteria participants

Violetta

Hinemoa Priest

Amanda Torr

Wi

Star

Te Puni Kokiri

Te Puni Kokiri

Wellington Institute of Technology

Wellington Institute of Technology

Te Runanga o Taranaki Whanui

Te Runang o Taranaki Whanui