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The Role of Relationships, Respect, and Self-determination in Creating Equitable Research Partnerships: The Case of Revitalise Te Taiao

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Abstract

Forming equitable research partnerships is a well-known challenge, particularly when some partners are indigenous and others have a colonizing heritage of exercising power over others. Our work looked at how a project approach led by shared values of relationships, respect, and self-determination can increase equity in research partnerships, creating a situation where power is 'with' all partners involved.

The context of this study is the two-year Revitalise te Taiao program, focused on improving te Taiao (the natural environment and its interconnections with living beings) in Aotearoa-New Zealand. This paper focuses on how a wānanga (conference/educational seminar guided by indigenous principles) within the program expressed relationships, respect, and self-determination and enabled equity.

Through the emphasis on relationships, respect, and self-determination, the Wānanga foregrounded indigenous voices and perspectives and made space for all participants to contribute, share, and be heard. This enabled vulnerable and authentic discussions about the process and impact of colonization in Aotearoa-New Zealand, and how we respond to this today.

While contention strategies, such as protests and media engagement, are established methods to minimize power differences between low and high-power groups, we propose that this can also happen through higher-power stakeholders, like research organizations, prioritizing values of relationships, respect, and self-determination in partnerships. Following these values can provide a way to limit power 'over' partners and ensure power is 'with' all partners involved.

This study also indicates potential practical steps that research partners can take when forming and working in research partnerships. These include early consideration of relationships, respect, and self-determination and what they mean to all involved when planning partnership events.

Glossary

Aotearoa	The Māori-language name for New Zealand. Literally translates to the long white cloud, which was what signalled sighting of land for Hine-te-aparangi.
Atua	Ancestor with continuing influence, God, supernatural being. Māori trace their ancestry from atua in their whakapapa (genealogical connections) and they are regarded as ancestors with influence over particular domains within the universe.
Hapū	Can mean to be pregnant, as well as a kinship group, sharing the same origins from a common ancestor. Hapū were the primary political unit in traditional Māori society.
Karakia	To recite ritual chants, prayer, a form of meditation. Used to bring everyone into a safe space spiritually and physically, and allow everyone to focus on the content required from those gathered.
Kaupapa Māori	Having a Māori approach, agenda, principles, ideology.
Kōrero	To speak or any of a wide range of kinds of speech, including narrative, story, discussion, conversation, and discourse.
Mana	Prestige, political power, spiritual power, status, influence. Mana cannot exist without the ideas of tapu (sacredness, intrinsic value) and mauri (life essence).
Mana Motuhake	Self-autonomy, but important to note that sense of self within the Māori worldview is seen as being a part of a social community. Self-autonomy may look like individuals' actions influencing a thriving hapū society.
Mana whenua	The Māori people who have the authority or jurisdiction over a territory/land. Usually referring to the local hapū.
Manaakitanga	Generosity in the form of mutual respect and through actions of reciprocity. Primary words being mana (prestige) and aki (to protect).
Manuhiri	A visitor or guest, especially someone visiting a marae (Māori meeting house).
Māori	Originally meant to be normal, common, natural. Has been used to categorise the indigenous nations within Aotearoa-New Zealand into one people, one group.

Marae	A communal complex of traditional Māori houses for meeting with iwi (larger tribe), hapū (kinship groups), and or whānau (family).
Mātauranga Māori	A Māori knowledge system that includes knowledge from Māori ancestors, Māori worldview and perspectives.
Mihi whakatau	Official welcome setting that is less formal than a pōwhiri (welcome ceremony), formalities are more relaxed but follow the same structure.
Ngā Kaihoe	Literally translates to 'the paddlers' within a canoe, in this case, they are the parent programme team within Revitalise Te Taiao.
Ngā Kaiurungi Taiao	Literal translation is 'the steerers/navigators/pilots' within Revitalise Te Taiao. They are the pilot teams within their respective projects.
Pākehā	English or European descendants of the British settlers who migrated during the 1800s and 1900s.
Pepeha	A way of introducing yourself in Māori. It tells people who you are by sharing your connections with the people and places that are important to you.
Taiao	The natural world systems and natural resources that encompasses all that surrounds us. The land, water, climate, and living organisms.
Tangata Tiriti	Treaty people. Non-Māori living within Aotearoa-New Zealand. Their citizenship recognised under the original signatories (the British crown).
Tangata whenua	People of the land. The indigenous people of Aotearoa-New Zealand, Māori. People born of the whenua, i.e., of the placenta and of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried.
Te reo Māori	The Māori language.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The treaty was signed on 6th February, 1840 in Waitangi, Aotearoa-New Zealand, between different hapū chiefs and the British Crown.
Tikanga	Correct procedure, custom, lore, method, practices. The customary

	system of values and practices that have been developed over time and embed Māori cultural considerations.
Waka	Canoe.
Wānanga	To meet, discuss, consider, learn, and share learnings. Has similarities to seminars, conferences, and panel forums and involves people gathering under the tikanga and guidance of tangata whenua.
Whānau	Family including extended family.
Whanaungatanga	The maintaining and establishing of relationships that are guided by tikanga, whakapapa (genealogical connections), and history. Generally, the deeper the connection, the more fruitful relationships will be for both sides.
Whenua	Placenta or land.

Introduction and Background

Forming equitable research partnerships is a well-known challenge, particularly when some partners are indigenous and others have a colonizing heritage of exercising power over others. In Aotearoa-New Zealand, most research is carried out by Crown Research Institutes and universities, both of which are funded partly or fully by, and accountable to, the Aotearoa-New Zealand government. These organizations operate in ways that reflect their colonial heritage, and thus, they often privilege Western approaches and knowledge over indigenous values and approaches (Kukutai et al. 2021; Hudson & Russell 2009). There is an increased appetite within Aotearoa-New Zealand for addressing these imbalances, but this is often difficult to achieve in practice (Rauika Māngai 2020).

This paper looks at how a project approach led by shared values of relationships, respect, and self-determination can increase equity in research partnerships. We focus particularly on how a wānanga (conference/educational seminar guided by indigenous principles) within the program demonstrated these values and supported equity between partners, helping create a situation where power was with all the partners involved. This paper uses Māori terms throughout in order to avoid meaning being lost through translation. A brief description of each of these terms, relevant to the context in which they occur, is given in parentheses in the text, and they are also further explained in the glossary.

The context of this study is the two-year Revitalise te Taiao program (hereafter called the program), focused on improving te Taiao (the natural environment and its interconnections with living beings) in Aotearoa-New Zealand. The program was co-developed over a 10-month period by a working group that identified core principles for successful place-based

change (Stokes et al. 2021). Notably, this process was conducted Wānanga-style on Marae (complex of traditional Māori meeting houses), following Tikanga Māori (correct practice from a Māori worldview). This Tikanga-led wānanga approach empowered the Māori involved to feel that it was not a Western-centric program and helped New Zealanders of English or European descent (Pākehā) to see how their values connected with Māori values and Tikanga. From this foundation, the working group sought community-based pilot projects that aligned with these values and core principles (Stokes et al. 2021).

The principles identified during the program's co-development process are outlined in the Taiao Manawa Ora diagram (Fig. 1). These were derived from both Māori and Pākehā culture and were used to guide the project team priorities, interactions, and decision-making. Taiao Manawa Ora is centered on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, an agreement signed between the British Crown and chiefs of Māori kinship groups (hapū) in 1840, as the foundation for weaving Māori and Pākehā perspectives together. The top half includes principles held by tangata tiriti (people of the treaty), and the bottom half covers a selection of important, related principles held by tangata whenua (people of the land, indigenous). The Taiao Manawa Ora structure illustrates how tangata tiriti and tangata whenua principles reflect each other and that they are related, though not identical. Together, these sets of principles can provide a strong foundation for a meaningful research program. While tangata tiriti and tangata whenua principles can operate independently, combining the two provides opportunity for richer outcomes and supports the development of holistic solutions needed for environmental challenges.

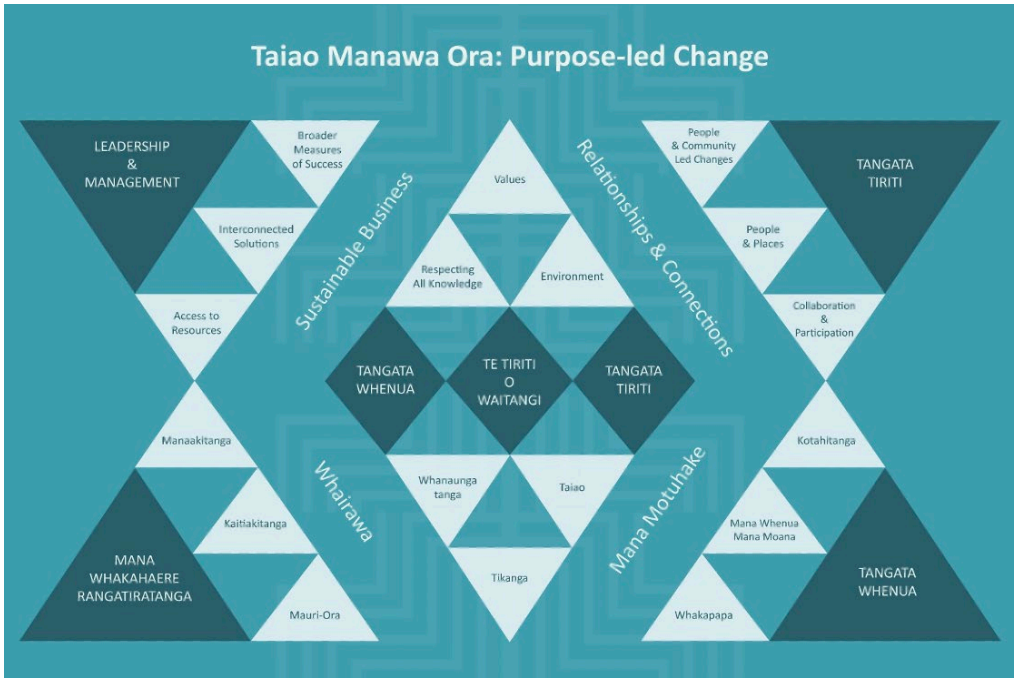

Fig. 1: Taiao Manawa Ora: Purpose-led Change. This diagram identifies principles from indigenous and non-indigenous cultures that could provide a strong foundation for a meaningful environmental research program, creating richer outcomes than would be possible from either culture alone. The top half includes principles held by tangata tiriti (people of the treaty), and the bottom half covers a selection of important, related principles held by tangata whenua (people of the land, indigenous). It centers on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, an agreement signed between the British Crown and chiefs of Māori sub-tribes (hapū) in

1840. Tangata whenua principles include whanaungatanga (relationship-building), taiao (the natural environment and its interconnections with living beings), tikanga (correct practice in the Māori worldview), whairawa (pursuit of resources, goods, wealth, or bounty), manaakitanga (generosity), kaitiakitanga (guardianship, stewardship), mauri-ora (life force, essence of life), mana whakahaere (ability to skilfully bring people and resource together), rangatiratanga (chieftainship, right to exercise authority), mana motuhake (self-determination), kotahitanga (unity, togetherness), mana whenua and mana moana (authority over land and ocean), and whakapapa (genealogy). Image credit: Murray Hemi (used by permission).

While all the values outlined in Taiao Manawa Ora were important to the program, this article will focus on three groupings in particular: relationships (whanaungatanga), respect (manaakitanga - generosity shown through mutual respect and reciprocity; Tikanga; and respecting all knowledge), and self-determination (mana motuhake). These three groupings of values were particularly prominent in the first year of the program as these are foundational to forming genuine and meaningful partnerships and formed an initial focus for the program. It is important to note, though, that these values did not operate alone but were dependent on the presence of other values in Taiao Manawa Ora. For example, respect is manifested in people and communities having access to resources and knowledge that enable them to collaborate and lead change to realize broader social, cultural, environmental, as well as economic success.

The program consisted of three pilot projects (hereafter 'pilots') spread across Aotearoa-New Zealand (Fig. 2). Each pilot was led by a community-based group seeking to improve te taiao in their local area, with each at a different stage on that journey - established, emerging, and conceptual. They were led by a Māori whānau (extended family)-owned seaweed fertilizer company, a Māori hapū, and a not-for-profit community organization focused on local water quality.

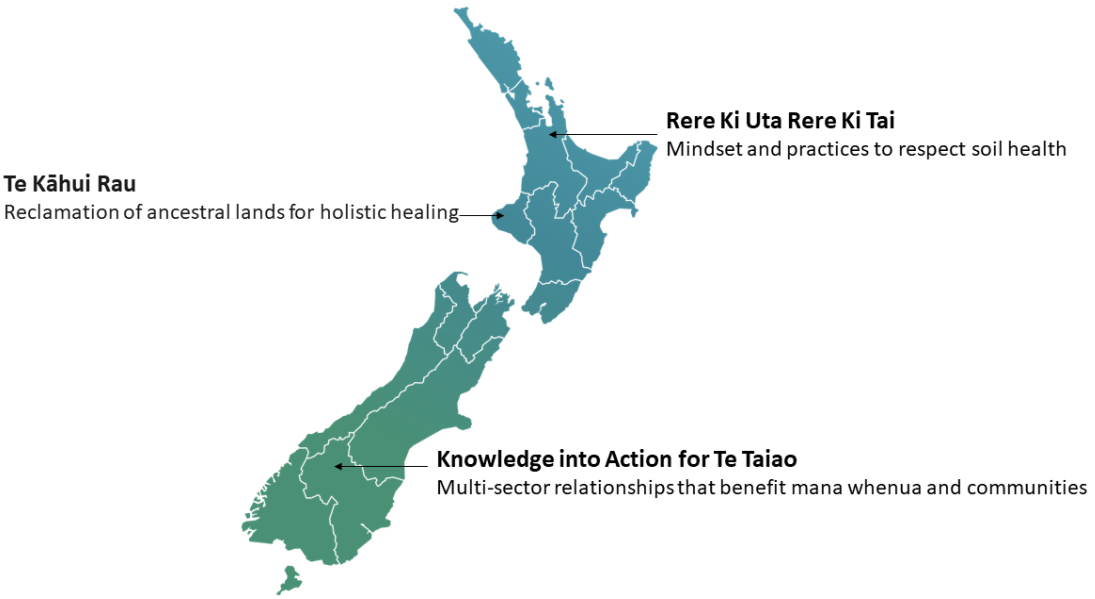

Fig. 2: Locations of the Revitalise Te Taiao pilots within Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Reflecting the principles of "community-led change" and "people and place," the program's structure was designed to empower the pilots to work on improving te taiao in ways meaningful for their place. The pilots were initially invited to be part of the program based on alignment with the principles identified by the working group. They were then set up to be self-directed projects supported by a 'parent' team, which included members of the original working group with experience in social science, value chains, agricultural systems, and communications. Each pilot developed its own research plan and was funded to hire staff and bring in researchers and other necessary expertise. The pilots were required to report to the parent team and funders based on their research plan but were able to change and adapt milestones as needed.

This attempt at an empowering program design was reflected in the Māori names the parent team and pilots were given. Using the imagery of a Māori waka (canoe), the parent team was called 'ngā Kaihoe,' the paddlers, reflecting their supporting and enabling role and the pilots were called 'ngā Kaiurungi Taiao,' the navigators for the environment, reflecting their role in leading and directing. The waka imagery highlighted the necessity of both roles to arrive at a destination, in this case, an improved taiao.

The pilot leads were committed to attending six-monthly wānanga that brought together ngā Kaiurungi Taiao, ngā Kaihoe, and others with an interest in learning from or supporting the program. Over the first year of the program, these wānanga were hosted in each pilot's home location in turn: Paeroa (Hauraki, upper eastern North Island), Ngā Motu (New Plymouth, Taranaki, western North Island), and Wānaka (Otago, southern South Island) (Fig. 2).

This paper examines the nature of the three shared values of relationships, respect, and self-determination in our program, how they were demonstrated at one of our wānanga, and what they enabled at this wānanga. The paper concludes with reflections on how an approach led by shared values compares with other approaches to increasing equity and how this approach could be applied elsewhere.

Methodology and Approach

As a program team, ngā Kaihoe supported the pilots to develop their projects and interconnections. Regular online meetings and other connection points hosted by ngā Kaihoe enabled the pilots to build relationships and share insights among themselves. Ngā Kaihoe also supported the pilots to host, in turn, one of the six monthly wānanga, which provided further opportunities for building connections.

At each wānanga, our social scientists had specific responsibilities to support reflection and collect monitoring data. Reflection and monitoring facilitated participant learning and enabled us to assess the effectiveness of the process and the impact of the program. Specifically, we were monitoring the effectiveness of wānanga, progress towards program objectives, extent of implementation of key values, and degree of learning amongst the pilots.

This article centers on experiences at the second six-monthly wānanga, held in Ngā Motu (Taranaki, western North Island) in 2022. This wānanga was chosen due to the significant conversations that occurred, as well as the amount of monitoring material we gathered for reflection.

The wānanga was hosted by Te Kāhui Rau, the Taranaki pilot led by ngā uri o Ngāti Tāwhirikura (descendents of Ngāti Tāwhirikura). They brought a group together to begin planning for this wānanga well in advance, considering the format and style and which speakers to invite at least eight weeks in advance. From the outset, the key consideration was space for connections and relationship-building, and they built talks and activities around this. The final format had a varied texture, incorporating times to connect in different ways, opportunities for learning and sharing, and spaces for discussion. This started with a mihi whakatau (official welcome ceremony) at Katere ki te Moana marae, where the hapū welcomed manuhiri (guests) into the space. After the formalities, we were given the opportunity to introduce ourselves through the process of whakawhanaungatanga (relationship-building). The rest of the program included the option of walking hapū whenua (land) or watching a documentary about the history of colonization in the area (NZ Wars: Stories of Waitara), as well as talks on overcoming historical and intergenerational trauma and 'positionality' from the perspective of a project leader, a Māori researcher, and a Māori artist. We had time to hear updates from each pilot and discuss value chains and markets and how these connected with each pilot's approach and values. The wānanga finished with information on funding opportunities.

We captured reflections on the wānanga through a range of approaches, both written and verbal. During the Wānanga, these included written notes added to a sticky wall, facilitated reflections using the focused conversation/ORID format (Stanfield 2000), informal interviews with key wānanga participants, and written reflections from participants at the end of the wānanga. We also gathered reflective material after the wānanga, including multi-page, individual reflections by ngā Kaihoe members soon after the wānanga, notes from ngā Kaihoe debriefs after the wānanga, and social scientists' notes during the wānanga on discussions and interactions that occurred in the sessions.

This paper draws on a combination of this wānanga monitoring data and our experiences of being involved in planning and attending the wānanga. Rather than presenting a formal systematic analysis, we instead give some initial insights and reflections.

Key Values in Action

Relationship Building: Whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga, the Māori value of building and maintaining relationships, is a key principle of Taiao Manawa Ora. This literally means to build/make relationships with a similar kind of closeness as kinship connections. Typically, in a te ao Māori setting, it starts with, "Where are you from?" rather than, "What is your name?" This helps to identify mutual connections (e.g., others who might be from the same location, currently or ancestrally) and also understand where people belong in a deep, ancestral sense. Whanaungatanga for Māori goes beyond the surface level of relationship-building as it reflects that sense of self and individual well-being are determined and influenced by the communities/people we engage with. For example, in his well-being model Te Whare Tapa Whā, leading Māori health researcher Sir Mason Durie defines one of the pillars of a healthy person as their taha whānau, social aspects (Durie, 1994).

At the Taranaki wānanga, the schedule placed high importance on whanaungatanga. The wānanga opened with a mihi whakatau at the host's marae. We manuhiri were welcomed onto the site and given time to formally introduce ourselves, using te reo Māori (Māori language) and/or English, as we felt able and comfortable. This formal introduction was followed by informal time together with a cup of tea and abundant food. In addition to this initial relationship-building, we had time for conversations while walking the land, during break time, and over meals. While there was a lot of content covered, the pace was slow enough to give us time to connect.

Our parent program and pilots came from diverse backgrounds and locations, and without a focus on relationship building, we might have remained disconnected, especially in a typical output-oriented research program. Instead, whanaungatanga enabled space to develop deeper connections with each other and the taiao. Additionally, program participants included both Māori and Pākehā, who are culturally distinct and have different inherent levels of power in New Zealand society. Intentional relationship building guided by Māori values and practices made Māori members comfortable to engage and enabled Pākehā members to develop a deeper understanding of these values and practices. This was essential for forming stronger partnerships. This particularly showed in the difference between the first wānanga (earlier in 2022) and the Taranaki wānanga. While some pilot members were uncertain and reserved at the first wānanga, at the second wānanga, all seemed more comfortable and relaxed, with a much greater depth of discussion.

Pākehā culture – including research programs – generally defaults to transactional, task-oriented processes, e.g., being driven by milestones, but intentionally reflecting on and prioritizing relationships as a core value meant the emphasis became relationships among people and doing things at the right time. While a milestone-driven approach does not preclude strong and trusting relationships within a partnership, taking a relationship-oriented approach made for a program where collaborators felt more like family and valued friends and were able to share at times at an emotional level rather than staying on intellectual topics.

Respect: Manaakitanga, Tikanga, and respecting all knowledge

Another group of values in Taiao Manawa Ora centres around respect, and includes manaakitanga, tikanga, and respecting all knowledge. Manaakitanga involves respecting the integrity of a person through practices like hospitality (e.g., offering and sharing food) and active listening. Tikanga is a foundational and rich Māori concept meaning 'correct practice and protocols.' While it can refer to the practices thought appropriate in any place or culture, here it specifically applies to following practices laid out by the Māori worldview, including mihi whakatau and karakia. Tikanga involves much more than respect, but elements of Tikanga are very important for showing respect. Respecting all knowledge particularly refers to the three knowledge systems involved in the program: scientific knowledge, practical farming knowledge, and mātauranga Māori. The program sought to respect and value each of these ways of knowing and allow all ways of knowing to contribute to discussions.

In the Taranaki wānanga, respect was demonstrated by excellent hospitality and generosity (manaakitanga), actively listening, following Tikanga, and involving and learning from diverse knowledge systems. The hosting pilot did an excellent job of organizing suitable venues and good catering and welcomed us into their space, onto their marae and their land. Key elements of Māori tikanga were followed, including opening the wānanga with a mihi

whakatau and opening and closing each day with karakia (ritual chant, prayer). Talks drew on a variety of knowledge systems. For example, talks about overcoming historical trauma drew on personal experience of being Māori in a colonized country, knowledge of Māori culture and worldview, Western social science, and Kaupapa Māori research. Discussions about value chains and markets were grounded in consumer science but included rich and diverse definitions of 'value.' During the wānanga, some participants also took the opportunity to dig holes to look at the soil, bringing the experience of biological farming into contact with Māori perspectives.

At this wānanga, respect was enabled by multiple factors. The program had been set up with an awareness of Tikanga and had employed a cultural advisor to support Pākehā and less experienced Māori members in the program. The program also provided sufficient resourcing to support manaakitanga. For Te Kahui Rau, the hosting pilot, Tikanga, and manaakitanga were a normal part of how they operated rather than being an additional consideration. Respecting all knowledges was built into the program structure, with a research question focused around the implications of respecting and weaving different knowledges. Additionally, the program leadership came from both Māori and Pākehā cultures and modeled valuing multiple perspectives and knowledges.

Respect was vital in this program due to the diversity of cultures and knowledge represented. If mātauranga Māori or farmer know-how were not given an equal place alongside science, discussions would have lost some of their depth and educational value, and holders of these knowledge systems may have felt undervalued and that they could not freely share or contribute. Conversely, Tikanga Māori created a comfortable setting for Māori program members, with manaakitanga helping everyone feel welcome, even if the Tikanga was less familiar for them.

Self-determination: Mana Motuhake

Mana motuhake, the ability for people to have autonomy and self-determination, is the third key value. This was seen in the program design, with each pilot choosing their focus, who to employ/contract, and how to implement their research. It was also seen in the program structure and the Māori names, 'ngā Kaihoe' and 'ngā Kaiurungi Taiao,' given to the parent and pilot groups. Additionally, mana motuhake was shown in the emphasis placed on the using te reo Māori in the program, as Māori participants were free to use te reo when they thought appropriate, and Pākehā participants supported this Māori self-determination by giving their pepeha (self-introduction) in te reo. Speaking te reo in the wānanga was made possible by efforts of past Māori leaders through, for example, Te Petihana Reo Māori (The Māori Language Petition) in 1972 to revive te reo Māori, a language that was threatened with extinction. This also reflects the role of the vitality of te reo in the vitality of te taiao by being able to speak the Māori words and concepts that represent the natural world in te ao Māori. In the Taranaki wānanga, mana motuhake was demonstrated by the pilot-led nature of the wānanga. Members of ngā Kaihoe (e.g., facilitation and communications specialists) were invited to have input into and support aspects of the wānanga, like helping develop a connection- and learning-centered schedule, but the choice of speakers and approach was with the hosting pilot. Additionally, te reo was spoken for the formal elements of the mihi whakatau, as well as parts of many of the participants' pepeha.

Alongside relationships and respect, Mana Motuhake helped to reduce the power differences within the program by empowering community groups. Typically, research programs involve researcher-directed projects in which communities are participants or co-designers, but in this program, the projects were led by community organizations. There were still reporting lines and accountability for funding, but the organizations leading the projects had the ability to make their own choices rather than have these determined by the parent program or funder. This included the ability to choose which language was most suitable during different times in a wānanga.

Outcomes and Implications

The emphasis on relationship building and whanaungatanga at the wānanga and, in the preceding six months, built a sense of family amongst ngā Kaihoe and ngā Kaiurungi Taiao. The addition of respect (manaakitanga, Tikanga, respecting all knowledge) and mana motuhake helped to move people toward equal footing, as we and our perspectives were all welcomed. Rather than power being exercised over others, power began to be shared, enabling us to move towards a collective goal. A couple of ways that these values enabled more equitable research partnerships included foregrounding Māori voices and perspectives, as these voices are often left on the edges by Western research programs, and making space for all wānanga participants to contribute, share, and be heard.

Foregrounding Māori voices and perspectives

This wānanga was led by ngā uri o Ngāti Tāwhirikura and focused on 'positionality' (how your experience and position in the world shape how you view the world) and experiences of colonization and efforts to heal the trauma caused. As the hapū chose who would present, what they presented, and how, participants heard the stories from the speakers' perspectives. The speakers also opened up about their experiences in this respectful, Tikanga-led setting. In one poignant moment, a speaker shared his sorrow about not being able to see himself in the land that birthed his culture and had to pause to gather himself. From a Māori perspective, such heavy kōrero is most safely expressed within a Tikanga-led setting, as this allows the discussion to be guided and appropriately handled with care, with their atua (ancestor with continuing influence, God).

This wānanga was clearly impactful for some participants, leading them to reflect on the realities for Māori and how those influenced equity. Comments in the final reflection on the wānanga included:

- Learned about the pain and trauma of our mana whenua. I 'knew it' intellectually, but *I felt it.* I have cried most mornings, processing the Pākeha guilt and privilege, the love and strength of our tangata whenua;
- The extent of the devastation around colonization and the opportunity to move forward from that adversity; and
- Opportunities to revitalize Te Taiao by Tangata Tiriti ceding power and control for mana whenua.

For some of the co-authors, this wananga also created an opportunity to challenge their assumptions about power and roles in research by providing a historical understanding of the past and present impacts of colonization on Māori participation in research. This was

different from past research, where these assumptions about power and roles were not challenged.

Making space for all to contribute

While the focus of this wānanga was on Māori perspectives and voices, it was also a space where all were welcome to contribute through our reflective sticky wall and discussions. We set up and introduced a 'sticky wall' for reflections at the start of the wānanga. To give it more meaning and depth, we introduced it as a kete (basket) and gave each section of the wall a Māori name: Kete Whakaaro, the kete of ideas, thoughts, and feelings; Kete Whakairo, the finely woven, 'red carpet' kete; and Kete Mātauranga, the kete of knowledge and learning. We were regularly encouraged to write questions, thoughts and feelings, learnings, and applications from the sessions and add these to the wall. The kete was well-used, with over 70 notes added during the main two days of the wānanga and people regularly looking at the wall to see what had been added. It was a space where we could express our thoughts and have these respectfully read. Reflections included questions about how these ideas could and would be applied ('How will the ideas shared today be seen/expressed in this kaupapa 12 months down the line?'); values that we needed to prioritize, like listening, learning, and relationships; and new insights or outstanding points ('Healing relationships = healing people = healing land').

As the wānanga progressed, we had many meaningful group discussions where the values of respect and relationships came together. For example, in a discussion following a talk on co-designing architecture with indigenous groups, questions came from both Māori and Pākehā in the audience, touching on both deepening understanding of the talk and applications in our context. The question explored how to have conversations about what is important to people, developing deeper connections to place, and frameworks for co-design. Some of the questions were answered directly, while some questions had their underlying assumptions challenged. The discussion remained respectful and attentive throughout, and everyone seemed engaged, whether directly contributing or listening.

Comparison With Other Approaches to Reducing Power Differences

Contention strategies (e.g., protests, using media to change public perception) are well-established ways to minimize power differences between low and high-power groups. Gray, Purdy, and Ansari (2022) argue that contention strategies are a key, often successful technique to reduce power differences. However, our experience suggests this can also happen through higher-power groups, like research organizations, moving away from exercising power 'over' others by following values that instead support power to be 'with' the partners involved. This perspective is in line with the 'calls for humility on the part of science' described by Turnhout et al. (2020, 17).

International work highlights the importance of devolution and sharing of power to promote inclusion and equity for successful research partnerships with indigenous people in Australia (Barbour and Schlesinger 2012), Canada (Iwama et al. 2009), and wider (Proulx et al. 2021). Chen et al. (2023) describes research collaborations in Cherokee landscapes that emphasize relationality. This acknowledges the relationship we have with each other, nature, and past and future generations, which is similar to the Māori concept of whanaungatanga. Relationality is a necessity within these research relationships as we try to understand

reducing power imbalances (Chen et al., 2023) while acknowledging the different perspectives and positionalities of those involved.

In our wānanga, we saw an indigenous-led approach that enabled a range of discussions and contributions, which is not necessarily the default outcome of bringing together a mixture of researchers and Māori and Pākehā community groups. Whanaungatanga, a form of relationality, allowed us to collectively reflect on historical injustices in the local area, encouraging us to understand the challenges faced by indigenous people in Taranaki and the position from which we each looked at the situation. We believe that having shared values focused on respectful relationships and self-determination at the center of our program and ensuring those values informed the design and implementation of this event enabled increased equity.

Potential Applications of This Approach

This study has shown how shared values of relationships, respect, and self-determination can increase equity in a research program wānanga, with broader implications for the overall equity of the partnership. Practicing these values resulted in a relationship-focused, community-determined event that respected the Tikanga of the cultures present. Respect and relationships were also inherent in the wānanga format, as in this format, people gather under the tikanga and guidance of tangata whenua.

Our example highlights two important considerations for other research partnerships. Firstly, it indicates the importance of understanding what relationships, respect, and self-determination mean to research partners, why those values are important, and how they could be applied in a partnership. It also points to the positive outcomes that can result when shared values of relationships, respect, and self-determination are used to shape processes.
Based on this study, we suggest several practical steps that could help relationships, respect, and self-determination to foster equity. Firstly, we advise people planning events as part of their research partnership to consider how relationship-building can be an integral aspect of your event early in the event planning process. Starting with the space needed for relationship-building and then planning other activities around this can be helpful. Secondly, we suggest that you consider which practices and approaches to relationship-building your event participants may bring. This is relevant to any setting where multiple cultures or subcultures may be represented but needs particular attention if you are working with indigenous partners. There may be certain practices, or tikanga, that would help some participants feel safe and comfortable, and preparation may be needed for other participants who are unfamiliar with these practices. Additionally, we recommend you intentionally build practices into your event that respect the cultures and knowledge systems that participants may bring. This may influence how the event begins and ends, which languages are used at different points in the event, and which sources of knowledge are highlighted in presentations. Finally, we see that it is important to allow research partners to lead and own events, realizing that your overall research purpose may need to be worked out in different ways in different contexts. Provide support and guidance as needed but take an enabling rather than directing role.

In conclusion, we have seen that shared values of relationships, respect, and self-determination have supported equity in one of our research program events. We propose that these are core values for other research partnerships to consider.

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