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*Image: Wilding Pine Eradication at Waimahuru with DOC staff*

## Case Study on Ka Hao te Rangatahi Ecological Land Management Programme

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## INTRODUCTION

This case study is about a unique training programme 'Ka Hao te Rangatahi' (KHR) (Ecological Land Management) developed for rangatahi (young people) 16-24 years in Ruatoria. The programme is a collaboration between Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) Tairāwhiti, Department of Conservation (DOC), Nga Whenua Rahui, Gisborne District Council, Ministry of Social Development, Ngati Porou and Waiapu tangata whenua leaders.

The course content was delivered by EIT tutors with support provided by these organisations', local community experts and employers. Oversight of the programme was led by a steering group representing these organisations'. A pilot programme was launched in February 2019 and there have been three intakes (10 each) of rangatahi to the programme to date.

The case study meets the Provincial Development Unit (PDU) reporting requirements of the He Poutama Rangatahi funding. It outlines the programme's origin, implementation and results to date. It is compiled in a format that effectively and specifically answers questions posed by the PDU. Sandra Groves (First Chapter) also conducted interviews with partners and collated quotes from rangatahi and employers.

This case study is divided into two sections:

### **Section One:**

Local context, Purpose of HPR Initiative, Activities and Evidence collected

### **Section Two:**

Key information – what the programme achieved, rangatahi and community stories, learnings from this initiative and how we can improve employment outcomes

### **Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou Board member and Waiapu community leader Tui Warmenhoven said:**

*"Our young people are the custodians of the future. These students have been the groundbreakers and they have become the champions of our mana tieki, our mana motuhake. They are a manifestation of their ancestors and represent what many of us have strived for - our hopes and aspirations to restore the Waiapu catchment and our taiao. They herald the new dawn of kaitiakitanga. Without them our culture, our identity, our matauranga and our place will be lost. They make the world a better place and I salute each and every one of them.*

*Ka pu te Rua ka hao te rangatahi!"*

## SECTION ONE

### LOCAL CONTEXT

#### Challenges of gaining skills and finding employment in Ruatoria

Ruatoria is an isolated, low socio-economic area with a large proportion of Māori youth. Of the population of approximately 769, 15% are under the age of 25. Finding a job is difficult and many young people move away for work, education and training.

Conservation leaders saw an opportunity to connect the needs of rangatahi with the desire to alleviate erosion and improve the Waiapu catchment. In Ruatoria, erosion control and ecological land-care, weed control, pest control and fencing are realistic options for local entry-level work that leads to sustainable employment, career development and a resilient lifestyle. The problem is that local youth often do not have the skills for these roles.

#### Ka Hao te Rangatahi (Ecological Landcare) - Pilot Training Programme

A pilot training programme launched in February 2019 for 16-24 years rangatahi not in employment, education or training (NEET) requiring support to find work. The programme was designed to cater for approximately 50:50 men and women. Targeting rangatahi in Ruatoria and the surrounding district. The majority were Māori and recruitment used existing engagement streams, e.g. hapu recommendations, other training courses such as the YMCA, Ngata College, alternative education and Work and Income referrals.

The programme was designed to develop rangatahi land management skills through conservation and erosion management targeting the Waiapu catchment. The programme supports rangatahi to deepen their connection to their whenua and awa, and introduces them to a suite of fundamental skills required to enhance biodiversity, manage erosion and engage in sustainable primary industry.

Run by Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) at Ruatoria, Tairāwhiti. EIT has been delivering education on the East Coast for 20 years and is well established on the coast. Using Ruatoria as a base EIT worked extensively with local community groups to offer practical education throughout the area. EIT has a long history in delivering Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) and Ministry of Social Development funded programmes.

Local community leaders worked with EIT and DOC to design the programme so it connected strongly with the people of Ruatoria and their role as kaitiaki (guardians) of their land.

Funding received from the Provincial Growth Fund He Poutama Rangatahi Fund was used for a Co-Ordinator, a navigator/pastoral support resource and some programme costs for an ecological land-based training programme linked to jobs, situated at Ruatoria.

Minister of Conservation, Eugenie Sage and Minister of Employment, Willie Jackson attended the graduation of the first cohort in August 2019 and provided support for the programme in the media.

### *Three cohorts (intakes) of rangatahi*

There were three intakes of 10 local rangatahi each to the programme, the first in February, and the second in July 2019. The first two intakes involved six months of training, followed by six months of post-course support. A current intake started in February for an extended period of a year and will conclude in December 2020.

## OUR FOCUS

### Purpose of HPR Initiative

The purpose of this He Poutama Rangatahi initiative is to introduce young rangatahi to foundational land management skills through a training programme enabling them to find jobs locally. They would be able to work with major landholders that are investing in erosion control in the Waiapu catchment. DOC also has an ongoing programme of landcare work that can be done by skilled locals.

*“This programme would enable rangatahi to engage in a programme that is meaningful for them and the community. The relationship with DOC enabled this to happen, and it worked for all the parties involved: DOC, Gisborne District Council, Ministry of Social Development, Iwi etc. and has mostly been successful for the students.”*

***Jan Mogford, Eastern Institute of Technology Tairāwhiti***

### *Youth development and work readiness*

The wide range of learning opportunities and relationships developed alongside a focus on goal setting and self-reflection ensured graduates were supported to follow their dreams. The goal is for the training to lead to a diverse range of employment, including support for specialised training and self-employment or development of whanau properties.

Students acquired experience in fencing, planting for erosion control and restoration, operating chainsaws and LUVs, establishing predator control programmes and learning about environmental and ecological monitoring.

The practical, project-based training is delivered by EIT’s rural studies staff and included special guest tutor sessions from the Department of Conservation, Nga Whenua Rahui, Gisborne District Council and Ngati Porou taiao leaders.

Following the six months of full-time training and learning, the graduates were assisted by the programme’s Pastoral Care Co-ordinator (PCC), Raanie Te Purei for a further six months to identify their next steps. It was also recognised that retention of rangatahi on the programme was an ongoing challenge requiring the support of the PCC and other tutors.

*Exposing rangatahi to a wide range of local leaders, inspiring adults, different career paths and further training options*

Young rangatahi were given the opportunity to learn by attending field trips to a range of locations and hear from guest speakers:

- Te Kuri a Paoa (Young Nicks Head) with Steve Sawyer
- Visits from DOC staff
- Climbing Mount Hikurangi
- Attendance at Māori conservation leaders conference
- Different real-life experiences such as an introduction to the Raukumara and Waiapu restoration projects
- Building relationships with other local youth training programmes including Gisborne District Council's Whaia Titirangi along with drug awareness and education, and goal setting (with Tuhono education)



The following employers were involved with the programme:

- Department of Conservation - provided work experiences
- Nga Whenua Rahui - provided work experiences
- Sentinel a Nuku (DOC led employment-based conservation training programme) – Three applicants recruited to programme
- Hikurangi Enterprises – one graduate employed for Tairawhiti Agroecology recovery project
- Whakaoratia te Mana o te Waiapu/Gisborne District Council – provided work experience for all students, and part-time employment opportunities assisting in the construction of sediment dams
- Native Garden Nursery – provided work experience for one graduate and has agreed to take more
- Eastern Institute of Technology – two graduates received experience as assistant tutors on other programmes
- East Coast Cannabis Company – provided work experience to all students and is currently developing employment opportunities

## OUR INITIATIVE(S)

The training programme was designed for rangatahi to meet the skill requirements for work in conservation/biodiversity/erosion control and identified local agricultural and horticultural roles. As well as practical, it will also involve work experience alongside significant restoration projects. Two full-time EIT tutors were providing a combination of practical and theory.

A variety of activities provided rangatahi with skills, qualifications, training, real-life experience and access to a wide range of local leaders listed in the above section.

These activities included:

### Skills:

- Chainsaw operation
- Nursery work
- Planting for riparian restoration and erosion management
- Fencing
- LUV's
- Plant and pest identification
- Predator monitoring and control
- Ecological monitoring and field skills
- Sediment dam building
- Nga Whenua Rahui field skills
- Te Reo Māori mo te taiao and tikanga

### Qualifications:

- Two embedded qualifications: Level 2 Introduction to primary industries and Level 3 Vehicles, Machinery and Infrastructure (VMI)

### Training:

- Core EIT training in health and safety, primary industries skills and vehicles, machinery and infrastructure
- Real projects within the Waiapu catchment
- Additional context sessions on the Waiapu catchment, erosion, biodiversity
- Additional training according to needs: drivers' licences, outdoor first aid, work readiness
- Students receive continued pastoral support to move into their next steps for at least six months following the programme
- Nga Manu Putaiao Field Skills module with Nga Whenua Rahui

### Real-life experience:

- Introduction to the Raukumara and Waiapu restoration projects
- Building relationships with other local youth training programmes including Gisborne District Council's Whaia Titirangi
- Drug awareness and education, and goal setting (with Tuhono education)
- Designed a unique course t-shirt to celebrate involvement



### Access to local leaders:

- Introduction to hemp with East Coast Cannabis Company
- Field trips to a range of locations and to hear guest speakers as mentioned in the previous section

## OUR EVIDENCE

A range of methods was used to collect evidence to measure achievements and learning uptake of the training programme as follows:

- Students undertake standard EIT training assessments as per standard practice.
- A questionnaire was completed by students which provided a picture of rangatahi needs and progress towards securing sustained employment. This was undertaken at the beginning and end of the programme then summarised into a suitable report by the Finance Manager at EIT.
- A report on students' engagement was also produced by the Finance Manager and provided to the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator monthly.
- Students were supported to develop relationships with both First Choice Work-brokers, Ministry of Social Development caseworkers and if relevant drug and alcohol services.
- Core to the success of this programme has been the active relationship with the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator who provided fortnightly updates relevant to achievement and well-being to the project team.
- The project team maintained regular communication with tutors, work experience providers and project partners related to student progress.

## SECTION TWO

### WHAT WE ACHIEVED FOR RANGATAHI AND EMPLOYERS

The KHR helped rangatahi to meet achievements set at the beginning of the programme in order to graduate, find employment or access further training opportunities:

- On 12 August 2019 the graduation of the first cohort of EIT's new youth landcare programme was held with eight rangatahi graduating.
- Current employment levels for 2019 graduates is 80%.
- A number of students have gone on to further training at EIT.
- Three graduates were also supported to apply for the 'Sentinel a Nuku' training programme designed by the Department of Conservation for rangatahi with a passion for working in environment and conservation.
- Attendance at Māori Taiao conference in Taranaki.
- A number of students are continuing to engage with the programme and assisting the 2020 cohort.
- Relationships that the students have nurtured with Nga Whenua Rahui, Gisborne District Council Whaia Titirangi and East Coast Cannabis Company.
- Engagement with the Raukumara Restoration project team and Whakaoratia te mana o te waiapu erosion control project.



*Image: Cohort 1 Graduates*

## RANGATAHI VOICES

The stories of four rangatahi who participated in the programme, enabling them to return home and make a meaningful contribution to their community:

### *Arapeta Beach*

Arapeta originally from Tuparoa was amongst the ten students taking part in the inaugural six-month programme. He was rapt to return home and be among nearly 30 people wanting to take part. Arapeta went to high school in Gisborne.

“We are learning how to look after the land and our trees and our awa (river)” said Arapeta. “We are Māori and we want to give something back to the land and it’s good to come home.”

He enjoyed the outdoors, and this programme enabled him to work outside. He took part in activities and acquired skills in chainsaw operation and maintenance, pest maintenance and trapping, along with identifying and planting native trees, and LUV operation. He enjoyed work experience with the East Coast Cannabis Company Ltd (Ruatoria) undertaking general physical labour. He successfully completed the programme achieving NZ Certificate in Primary Industries Level 2 (Ecological Land Management) and NZ Certificate in Agriculture (VMI) Level 3 (ELM).

### *David Boyce*

David is from Tokomaru Bay and went to Naenae College in Wellington. He learnt basic land management skills, including native plant propagation, pest and disease control and riparian restoration work, along with how to safely operate equipment, quad bikes and chainsaws. He also had the opportunity to learn about traditional medicinal uses of native plants (rongoa).

### *Raiha Blane*

Raiha previously worked as an Administration Assistant and Early Child Care Assistant before joining the training programme. She achieved 100% attendance on the programme and works well in a team under direction and independently. On completion, she successfully completed the NZ Certificate in Primary Industries Level 2 (ELM) and NZ Certificate Level 3 (ELM). NZ Certificate in Agriculture (VMI).

### *Hinemaurea Ngarimu-Kaiwai*

Prior to the programme, Hinemaurea worked as a wool handler for a local sharing gang and team leader at the Hiruharama Marae, Ruatoria. She successfully completed the course acquiring certificates in Primary Industry Level 2 (ELM) and NZ Certificate in Agriculture (VMI) Level 3 (ELM). Skills obtained range from chainsaw operation and maintenance, pest monitoring and trapping to water monitoring and pole pruning, harvesting and planting. She had a 99% attendance and an excellent work ethic, was able to use her initiative, interact well with tutors and peers.

## COMMUNITY VOICES

A selection of stories received from landowners and programme partners.

### *Landowners stories:*

Wi Mackey said: As landowner/trustee of Waiorongomai and Kia Ora Stations:

*“It is important for our community to be at the centre of caring for our precious landscape and as such there is a need for effective training and employment pathways for our young people. This will ensure they are supported to play their role in tackling these challenges, develop the key skills to manage these lands in a more sustainable way, and can see meaningful prosperous futures for themselves here at home.”*

Elizabeth Ngarimu said: As a landowner:

*“I would like to share with you all the amazing mahi that Ka Hao te Rangatahi have done to help my whanau as well as others back home. They have worked hard all this year with Erosion Control, Riparian Restoration, Nursery and Native Tree propagation and Water Monitoring. They also helped restore our repo, by planting wetland grasses and flax around this special area.”*



**Image: Erosion in Tapuaroa Valley**

#### *Programme Partners stories:*

Sandra Groves conducted interviews with the key partners and a summary of the success and learnings they shared are provided:

#### *Charles Barrie, KHtR Programme Co-ordinator*

It is safe to say that the Ka Hao te Rangatahi programme was a great success. To date two full cohorts have completed the programme with another to conclude at the end of 2020. We have also had funding confirmed for two further years. This success and the obvious progress of all taura would not be possible without the coalition of the fantastic steering group.

#### *Maewa Para, EIT Programme Co-ordinator*

The benefits of the programme were the networks and support people: Gisborne District Council, Iwi, landowners, community as well as Ministry of Social Development and Department of Conservation. Networks work really well as they are able to co-ordinate with each other. Networks and stakeholders are invested because of the kaupapa and need to have the next generation involved in the programme.

The delivery and teaching is successful because we were able to offer more than a normal programme. Charles Barrie and other key people went out to work with employers to ensure rangatahi can get work experience. This worked as long as there was follow-up to ensure the student received the necessary support.

#### *Jan Mogford, EIT Director*

This programme was unique for Ruatoria being an area that is isolated, the need for conservation to take place and for iwi to employ graduates for the benefit of the river etc. There was a huge amount of support from the Department of Conservation which made this possible along with Ngati Porou.

To maintain attendance of students a full-time pastoral care position became 1.5 FTE and we made sure that the right person was in front of the students. Efforts were made to break down barriers as much as possible to ensure students who had pressures to stay at home were supported. EIT also provided computer tablets for students and internet access (where accessible).

#### *Tui Warmenhoven, Director Te Runanganui o Ngati Porou*

I took an interest in the programme from the beginning to the end trying to get rangatahi into paid training and employment. I achieved this for one student in the second cohort. They often come from struggling backgrounds and require more support.

The success of the programme was due to Charles Barrie overseeing it along with the collaboration of agencies and people employed by EIT. The programme provided an opportunity for rangatahi to get out and around and within the catchment. The programme was unique, we had lofty ambitions for success, and we met most of them. I attended the graduation and was amazed at the percentage of students who made it to the end of the programme.

### Kerry Hudson, Gisborne District Council

Most of the Council's work in the Waiapu was environmental based, matching what they did, e.g. tree planting, nursery work, riverbed hill country, sedimentary dam etc.

Training provided an opportunity to build dams for 3-5 months a year with a couple of the trainees involved. Complements the tree planting, fencing and pest control. Opportunity for five trainees that did well to experience practical environmental work with landowners.

I found the tutors at the polytechnic in pastoral care along with the enthusiasm of the people involved led by Charles Barrie made it work. Government initiatives coming up with fencing work funded by MPI along with bee work would also be complementary in the Waiapu. Hurdles exist such as finding employers who are going to stick with it and finding permanent work up there. Nice to have some landowners who can promote work and provide opportunities.

### Karen Bartlett, Ministry of Social Development

MSD works in partnership with communities and other agencies to ensure that whanau receive quality training and employment that achieves their aspirations. Our primary goal is to help. The programme was successful because it is different and all partners believed in the project.

It was good strong partnership between DOC and EIT. A lot of community buy-in as well as family coming together for recruitment skilled events and good community involvement in the recruitment.

It was regular engagements. Rangatahi were involved in interesting and different projects, e.g. bat monitoring and the EIT trainers were flexible. There was a good holistic perspective, so it was unique and aligned with communities wants and needs.

### Hirere Ngamoki, Nga Whenua Rahui

We took rangatahi into the field during an active field survey to show them how we operate. We showed the rangatahi a way of doing conservation that they otherwise might not have known about. They came into the field with us and observed/ took part in real-time; the second intake probably had it harder than the first intake of rangatahi. All these activities, the students were taught the absolute basics so as not to overwhelm them:

- Hiking
- Basic navigation (using a GPS and compass)
- Plant identification (and edible fruits of the season)
- Data collection
- Different monitoring and survey methods
- Identifying healthy ecosystems through different indicator species

Learnings on our part: we would like to involve students in our mahi from the very beginning where we make decisions on where we are going. That way they can get an appreciation of the paperwork that goes into doing fieldwork, the health and safety aspects, planning and letting them see everything that we go through just to get into the field.



*Image: First Cohort Nga Whenua Rahui Camp at Puna Nikau*

## WHAT WE LEARNED AND WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

The learnings from this training initiative have helped to improve the employment outcomes for rangatahi in the following ways:

### Retention of rangatahi within this age group 16-24

The beauty of this funding model is that it enabled this programme to focus on pastoral care. The appointment of a Programme Manager made sure that all the links were made with the various organisations and experts.

Value was also realised in running the programme for 12 months (instead of six) enabling rangatahi to graduate with Level 2 and 3 qualifications. The time in active work and activities that cover the entire year include seasonal benefits for rangatahi which would be quite unique in Ruatoria.

Opportunities for non-NEETS to engage in the programme to support multi-generational learning, diversity of learners, and enable increased benefit for the wider Ruatoria community from the programme. The programme will look to recruit 8-10 (NEETS) rangatahi per year and have capacity to allocate two places to older students.

## Significant projects and industry developments

Since the instigation of the programme some significant projects and industry developments have been initiated in the wider Waiapu area. Notably, the Whakaoratia te Mana o te Waiapu erosion control initiative, a new native nursery proposal and substantial iwi led Raukumara restoration proposal. These projects will be further developed in the 2020 programme.

## Challenges to address

### *Drug use in the community*

Given the challenging social circumstances of some of the rangatahi, in some cases drug use education was needed to be used during the programme. The approach taken was strength-based and involved the incorporation of drug education, access to counselling and an increased focus on goal setting and personal development.

### *Employment*

The Ruatoria community in which KHR is based has a long history of high unemployment and a depressed economy as such securing permanent employment in this area is an ongoing challenge to address. The development of employment and further training sub-group was established for the purpose of collectively employer relationship, removing barriers and to develop effective project partnerships with significant projects in the region such as the Raukumara ecological restoration and Waiapu erosion project.