

Intensive Response

Mai i Te Kore, ki Te Pō, ki Te Whai-ao, ki Te Ao Mārama

From possibility to actuality:
Developmental evaluation (Synthesis report 2021)

“Mai i Te Kore, ki Te Pō, ki Te Whai-ao, ki Te Ao Mārama”

- Te Kore is the nothingness and with that there is potential for growth
- Te Pō is the darkness and in our context, it is the area of ongoing development, not knowing, trial, and error.
- Te Whai-ao is the glimmer of dawn – the breakthroughs that are being made
- Te Ao Mārama – the understanding and knowledge that comes from the light.

The title of this report comes from the karakia that welcomes the newborn child, acknowledging its journey into the world. Te Aranamunamu ki te tai ao (The fallopian tube). Ki te whare wahi-awa (the breaking of the waters). Ka whakaputa ki te whai-ao, ki te ao marama (the head is crowning and baby is brought into the light). Tihei mauri ora, mai oha atu! (Baby sneezes and takes in its first breath from Io. Mai Io te ha manawa).

The use of this title and the kōrero above illustrates through metaphors, the development of the Intensive Response projects and the work being done to bring understanding to light.

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The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau.

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Contents

Executive summary	3
Executive summary.....	4
Principles of partnering.....	4
Creating an authorising environment for partnering and making change	7
Background	10
Introduction to Intensive Response.....	11
The Intensive Response Developmental Evaluation	11
Key finding: Intensive Response has been a journey of learning about partnering authentically to find better solutions.....	13
Six principles of partnering have emerged through the Intensive Response partnering journey	15
Building and strengthening the foundations of relationships; this is fundamental to ongoing partnering	16
Acknowledge and respond to context and the whakapapa of relationships	19
Resource the aspirations of your partner	21
Don't make assumptions about what partners want.....	23
Take the time it needs	25
Partnering is a relationship process rather than a destination. Long-term commitment and sustainable organisational structures are required to maintain these relationships over time.....	26
Key finding: An authorising environment is needed for partnering and making change	28
Trust in each other that de-risks many interactions and processes	30
Commissioning is inclusive and grounded in whānau and community perspectives	30
Policy development that is values-based, locally-led and grounded in voice and lived experiences of tamariki and whānau	32
Organisational structures and processes that support change, innovation and learning across the system	33
Conclusion	36
Appendices	38
Appendix A: Methodology	39
Developmental evaluation usually unfolds in phases and follows an adaptive cycle	39
Kaupapa Māori Developmental Evaluation.....	40
Timeline and nature of DE activity	40

List of figures

Figure 1: Developmental evaluation guiding principles	12
Figure 2: High level developmental evaluation adaptive cycle	39
Figure 3: Kaupapa Māori developmental evaluation	40
Figure 4: Summary of developmental evaluation mahi 2019-2021	41
Figure 5: The activities of a developmental evaluator at each phase of the Intensive Response development.....	41

Executive summary



Executive summary

Over the past two years, Oranga Tamariki has sought to partner with Māori and Pacific organisations and the wider community sector in specific locations to design and deliver intensive support services that ensure tamariki will be safe at home with their whānau. The Intensive Response cabinet papers¹ identified that Intensive Response would include active partnership opportunities with iwi, Māori organisations, and services within the community sector. Partnering was considered vital for sustainable change, and much of the learning over the past two years has been about partnering.

The impetus to create and strengthen partnering relationships² is grounded in a strong desire to ensure tamariki are safe and whānau are supported to care for their tamariki. There is acknowledgement in recent reviews of Oranga Tamariki that the Western-framed care and protection system used by successive governments in Aotearoa New Zealand is failing at-risk tamariki and whānau. Further, it has been identified as conflicting with the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Responding to the reviews of Oranga Tamariki and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi are powerful motivating factors for a Te Tiriti-based partnering approach between Oranga Tamariki, iwi, and Māori providers to enable better support for tamariki and whānau Māori.

The application of a partnering approach as a mechanism for more effective support is a new way of working for those involved in Intensive Response, particularly Oranga Tamariki. Working relationships between Oranga Tamariki and external organisations have typically been based on contracting for services rather than partnering. As such, Intensive Response has enabled changes in practice and mindset and has been a significant journey of trial and error. Much has been learned about what Oranga Tamariki can do to become a more effective Treaty partner with iwi and a pro-equity partner with other agencies. There has also been considerable learning about the systems change required and the organisational conditions that support a partnering approach between Oranga Tamariki (national, regional, and local) and Māori, iwi, and community organisations.

Principles of partnering

Six principles of partnering have emerged through the Intensive Response journey to date. These principles reflect what is needed to create and strengthen an authentic and effective partnering relationship between Oranga Tamariki and external Māori, iwi, and community organisations. These principles are:

- build and strengthen the foundations of relationships; this is fundamental to ongoing partnering

¹ Office of the Minister for Children (2019). Cabinet paper: *Transforming our response to children and young people at risk of harm*. Paper One: Overview

² We use the term partnering relationships in this report to reflect the practice of partnering in Intensive Response. This terminology recognises that partnering between organisations happens within the context of an ongoing relationship.

- acknowledge and respond to the context and whakapapa of relationships
- resource the aspirations of your partner
- don't make assumptions
- take the time it needs
- partnering is a relationship process rather than a destination. Long-term commitment and sustainable organisational structures are required to maintain these relationships over time.

Build and strengthen the foundations of relationships; this is fundamental to ongoing partnering.

Intensive Response identified several practices important for building the foundations for partnering relationships. First, partners need to turn up with an intention to listen carefully to each other, to community visions, and whānau voice. A willingness to create spaces for partners to listen and to understand the perspectives and aspirations of others improved the possibility for change. With an understanding of each other's vision and values, partners can then develop and agree upon a shared vision, set of values, and ways of working. Finally, once there is an appreciation and understanding of the aspirations of partners, Oranga Tamariki must commit to the aspirations of their partners to build the foundation of the relationship.

Acknowledge and respond to the context and whakapapa of relationships.

In a partnering approach such as Intensive Response, context matters. The specific context and history of relationships in place, between Māori, iwi, community agencies, Oranga Tamariki and whānau needs to be acknowledged and taken into consideration. This was highlighted in Intensive Response in three main ways:

- The history of the partners can heavily influence how the partnering process happens in practice. This is particularly relevant when thinking about the readiness to partner. The process and expectations of partners may be different in places with strong working relationships between Oranga Tamariki and external organisations compared with places where relationships have historically been more contractually driven.
- The history of Crown engagement with iwi, community agencies, and whānau has a significant influence on how partners regard each other. What has come before will influence each other's expectations about working together.
- Intensive Response highlighted the value of enabling locations to design and deliver something that reflects each location's unique sets of relationships.

Resource the aspirations of your partner.

Working as partners takes dedicated capacity and depends on the relational capabilities of those involved in the partnering relationship. Oranga Tamariki has a significant mandate and resource compared to most, if not all, partners to provide dedicated capacity for engaging in and maintaining partnering relationships. When asking partners to collaborate, there needs to be an acknowledgement and resourcing for the significant time it takes to participate in collaborative design and

implementation. Flexible use of resources to enable dedicated engagement in the partnering process for all partners is also essential. Furthermore, flexible funding models that can respond to local aspirations are beneficial (e.g., commissioning that keeps whānau voice as a central touchpoint for decision-making).

Don't make assumptions.

Those participating in Intensive Response were clear – don't make assumptions. Intensive Response has created opportunities for those with different worldviews to meet and work together more effectively. Yet, this also opens the door for misunderstandings because of assumptions partners make based on these different worldviews. All partners need to acknowledge their worldviews and beliefs and be willing to explore and challenge each other constructively. Reflective practice has assisted Oranga Tamariki staff to do this.

At a more practical level, it's worth clarifying what partnering means to different partners, including roles and responsibilities. This applies to internal Oranga Tamariki relationships (i.e., between national, regional, and local offices) and relationships between Oranga Tamariki and external partners. Roles and responsibilities will change over time, so explicitly revisiting roles and responsibilities as the context changes and the phase of the project progresses will help partnering relationships endure.

Take the time it needs.

Building a trusting and authentic partnering relationship takes time, and each partnership will grow at a different pace. Collaboration is not straightforward; sometimes, things will stall or take longer than expected. At other times the process will race ahead if something shifts or changes. Each partnering process needs time and space to whakawhanaunga, come to a shared understanding of values and ways of working, and know what these mean in practice, recognising this is not a one-off, but an ongoing process. All partners need to be ready to partner, both in terms of resources and mindset. When tensions and challenges arise, the partnering relationship can fracture and go backwards without the appropriate time and space. This is why going at the pace dictated by Māori, iwi, and community partners has been critical in Intensive Response. Each partner's readiness and the context will typically determine how effectively the partnering relationship progresses.

Partnering is a relationship process rather than a destination. Long-term commitment and sustainable organisational structures are required to maintain these relationships over time.

Clear organisational strategy and buy-in from senior leadership and decision-makers helps support long-term commitments to resourcing partnering. Organisational strategy and leadership buy-in helps create an environment where maintaining relationships is considered a valued part of a job. Maintaining relationships may even be made explicit in job descriptions at national and local levels of Oranga Tamariki. Throughout Intensive Response, partnering relationships have been formed at the local level to facilitate operational work; and the work of those at National Office

helped support and enable these relationships. The individuals at each of these levels of the organisation have been responsible for holding the relationships.

However, regular staff turnover, common in government agencies, creates challenges for the sustainability of relationships. Having relationships with partners at multiple levels within an organisation, from senior National Office decision-makers to local Oranga Tamariki site staff can help to minimise the impact staff turnover has on a partnering approach.

Creating an authorising environment for partnering and making change

This evaluation has identified aspects that help create an authorising environment for the partnering process and the systemic changes needed for change. An authorising environment ensures that support and buy-in from key people, legislation and organisational structures empower the process to “achieve its objectives, at critical moments throughout the process”.³ The Oranga Tamariki role as a Crown Agency and Treaty partner and its responsibility for stewarding Intensive Response and the partnering approach provide the impetus for creating an appropriate authorising environment. Oranga Tamariki stewardship is enacted by honouring obligations to partner with Māori, iwi, and community organisations to benefit tamariki and whānau Māori. Within Intensive Response, stewardship is made visible in the actions of individual staff and Oranga Tamariki more generally. They create the authorising environment for partnering and making change.

Aspects that help create a suitable authorising environment for partnering include:

- trust in each other that de-risks many interactions and processes
- commissioning that is inclusive and grounded in whānau and community perspectives
- policy development that is values-based, locally-led, and grounded in lived experience and whānau voice
- organisational structures that support learning and innovation and change across the system.

Trust in each other de-risks interactions and processes.

Most of those involved have emphasised the importance of trust between partners throughout the Intensive Response journey. Trust is necessary for a partnering process to be successful. It builds over time and is grown through the actions that people take. Some people involved in Intensive Response have worked together in high-trust relationships for years. In contrast, others have had to build trust through their day-to-day interactions and the processes involved in working together on Intensive Response.

³ Australian Public Service Commission (2021). Understand your authorising environment. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/taskforce-toolkit/governance/understand-your-authorising-environment>

Relational trust between people de-risks many aspects of the Intensive Response context. Improving Crown agency trust in iwi and local solutions requires a significant mindset and practice shift. It requires changing from seeing the local community or iwi as risks to be mitigated to understanding that trusting in their experience and expertise will result in better outcomes. The partnering approach of Intensive Response has intentionally set out to improve the levels of trust between Māori, iwi, local communities, and Oranga Tamariki. There have been some shifts in practice, but there is still a long way to go.

Commissioning that is inclusive and grounded in whānau and community perspectives.

Commissioning and procurement for Intensive Response have been more inclusive and flexible compared with traditional commissioning approaches used by Oranga Tamariki and many other government agencies. Decision-making has included whānau and community perspectives and a broader range of information. The procurement process has been flexibly tailored to local context and need. Together, these aspects have contributed to an authorising environment conducive to partnering.

Policy development that is values-based, locally-led, and grounded in lived experience and whānau voice.

Through Intensive Response, we have learned that the policy approach can significantly impact the creation of an authorising environment. A values-based, bottom-up, and locally-led policy development process effectively creates an authorising environment that enables locally-led change. Less prescriptive, values-based policy development allows greater flexibility to adapt to local context and explore and test what it takes to support tamariki and whānau. Keeping a connection to whānau voice throughout policy development and implementation is valuable because it anchors implementation and supports Māori and whānau-centred practice. Building capacity and capability in local communities for 'bottom-up' policy development to occur is beneficial to the authorising environment. Building and resourcing internal capacity at local levels for partnering, project management, and local implementation is also needed.

Organisational structures that support learning, innovation, and change across the system.

Learning and innovation are important features of an authorising environment that supports partnering and systemic change. Innovation needs people to move beyond current and dominant thinking patterns. Intensive Response highlighted the need for additional capacity and capability to create an environment that enables a new way of working and system change. The National Office Programme Team actively supported Intensive Response locations with tools and resources, and of equal importance was the work done to help critical reflection of staff. The Learn and Grow approach of Intensive Response allowed people to adapt and iterate as they went, and the Developmental Evaluation supported critical reflection, particularly at locations.

A long- term commitment to funding and prioritising learning and critical reflection is needed to create better services for tamariki and whānau. Long-term commitment allows ongoing adaptation and iteration as partnering relationships develop and innovate in an often restrictive and legislative environment/culture.

Over the past two years, the Intensive Response journey has created significant learning about how Oranga Tamariki can be an effective partner in a locally-led, centrally-enabled initiative, and create an authorising environment for change.

In a future where partnering approaches are integral to better-supporting tamariki and whānau wellbeing, these learnings can help inform future decision-making about partnering processes in different contexts.

Background



Introduction to Intensive Response

Intensive Response (IR) is a new approach initiated by Oranga Tamariki in 2019. It is still being tested and developed with Māori and Pacific organisations and the wider community sector. The purpose of Intensive Response is to better support tamariki to be safe at home with their whānau/family, particularly for “whānau who are at risk of having their tamariki taken into care.”⁴ The desire for the programme is that with better support, “more tamariki and whānau can stay together and thrive.”⁵ Intensive Response is connected to a wider change programme within Oranga Tamariki and complements and furthers the organisation’s strategic goals.

As the name suggests, Intensive Response set out to partner with iwi, Māori, and community providers to co-design and provide wrap-around and more intensive support for tamariki and whānau. Four locations were initially chosen by Oranga Tamariki for Intensive Response: Tokoroa, Ōtautahi (Christchurch East), Ōtāhuhu, and Horowhenua. These four places are referred to as the Phase One locations in this report. In addition, Oranga Tamariki has worked in Intensive Response-like ways in other locations, strengthening and extending existing local relationships and practices to realise an Intensive Response-like approach.

There are three foundational aims and interdependent aspects to Intensive Response:

- developing partnerships with iwi, Māori and Pacific organisations and the wider community sector to co-design, develop and implement intensive support for tamariki and their whānau
- further developing and strengthening the relationships of local Oranga Tamariki offices with local iwi, Māori, Pacific, and community organisations
- supporting locally-led solutions that reflect local whānau, hapū, iwi, and community needs and contexts.

All three of the above aspects combine in different ways depending on the context. For example, in Ōtautahi, the local Oranga Tamariki Christchurch East office is leading Intensive Response in partnership with Ngāi Tahu and with local NGO’s. In Tokoroa, Raukawa Charitable Trust, the Social Services arm of the local iwi, leads Intensive Response and works collaboratively with the local Oranga Tamariki office.

The Intensive Response Developmental Evaluation

Oranga Tamariki adopted a Learn and Grow approach for the initiative that included developmental evaluation. Oranga Tamariki took this evaluation approach to support critical learning and engagement with Intensive Response partners, participants, and stakeholders. Kaupapa Māori (a Māori way of doing things) underpins the developmental evaluation (DE) approach used for Intensive Response.

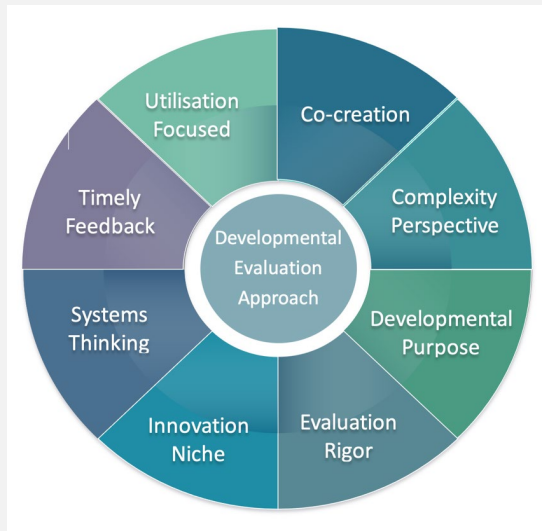
⁴ Oranga Tamariki (n.d). Intensive Response for whānau. <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/support-for-families/intensive-response-for-whanau/> Accessed on 17th March 2021.

⁵ Ibid.

Developmental evaluation (DE) is an evaluation approach that brings together evaluative thinking and evidence and works alongside those developing and implementing innovative initiatives in complex situations. It is an approach, guided by a suite of principles, that sits alongside and supports emergent, innovative, and transformative development and ongoing adaption.

The DE approach used in Intensive Response saw two DE team members dedicated to working with and walking alongside each local teams. Their primary role was to support reflective and critical practice alongside the development journey and capture the journey at each location. For more information on the Intensive Response Developmental Evaluation, see Appendix A.

Figure 1: Developmental evaluation guiding principles⁶



⁶ Patton, M.Q., & McKegg, K. (2016). *Developmental Evaluation: A Practitioner's Introduction*, Canadian Evaluation Society Conference, St. Johns, Nova Scotia.

**Key finding:
Intensive Response
has been a journey
of learning about
partnering
authentically to
find better
solutions**

Intensive Response is grounded in a desire to improve outcomes for tamariki and whānau who come into contact with Oranga Tamariki. In the original cabinet paper, Intensive Response⁷ was conceptualised as a programmatic response that would provide greater wrap-around support to whānau at risk of having their tamariki placed in care. In 2018, when the cabinet paper was released, Oranga Tamariki intended to create a “bold overhaul”⁸ of the care and protection system. Intensive Response was one of the ways that Oranga Tamariki sought to implement new ways of working to support all tamariki to be safe at home.

Since then, five reviews⁹ of Oranga Tamariki in the past three years each concluded that transformational change is required to better support tamariki and whānau, particularly Māori and Pacific tamariki and whānau. Most recently, the Oranga Tamariki review ‘Hipokingia Ki Te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te katoa’¹⁰ and the associated Oranga Tamariki Future Direction action plan recognised the need for Oranga Tamariki to support the strengthening of “collective Māori and community responsibility and authority” (p9) and also to work internally to rebuild the “mana and professionalisation of Oranga Tamariki social workers” (p10).

There is widespread acknowledgement that the Western-framed care and protection system used by successive governments in Aotearoa New Zealand has conflicted with the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki holds legislative obligations for how the organisation supports and engages tamariki Māori. These obligations seek to ensure better outcomes for tamariki Māori, by recognising and affirming the mana of tamariki, whānau, hapū, and iwi, and seeking strategic Te Tiriti-based partnerships with iwi and Māori providers to better support tamariki and whānau. These obligations are another powerful motivating factor for Oranga Tamariki to work in partnership with Māori, iwi, and community organisations.

⁷ Initially, Intensive Response was referred to as Intensive Intervention. So the original cabinet paper uses the name Intensive Intervention. For ease of understanding, we have consistently referred to it as Intensive Response (IR) as that is its current name.

⁸ Office of the Minister for Children (2019). Cabinet paper: *Transforming our response to children and young people at risk of harm*. Paper One: Overview p.1.

⁹ These reviews are: Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2020). *Te Kuku O Te Manawa: Ka puta te riri, ka momori te ngākau, ka heke ngā roimata mo tōku pēpi* Reports One and Two.

Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (2020). *Ko Te Wā Whakawhiti, It’s time for Change: A Māori inquiry into Oranga Tamariki*

The Office of the Ombudsman (2020). *He Take Kōhukihuki, A Matter of Urgency: Investigation Report into policies, practices and procedures for the removal of newborn pēpi by Oranga Tamariki*, Ministry for Children.

Waitangi Tribunal. (2021) *He Pāharakeke, Te Rito Whakakīkinga Whāruarua: Oranga Tamariki Urgent Inquiry* (Wai 2915). waitangitribunal.govt.nz/publications-and-resources/waitangi-tribunal-reports

Oranga Tamariki Ministerial Advisory Board (2021). *Hipokingia Ki Te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te katoa*.

¹⁰ Oranga Tamariki Ministerial Advisory Board (2021). *Hipokingia Ki Te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te katoa*. Accessed from: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-09/SWRB082-OT-Report-FA-ENG-WEB.PDF>

Since Intensive Response was conceptualised, there has been increasing attention on equity across government agencies, which has influenced a growing focus on the development of government or Crown-Māori relationships and partnering.¹¹ Given this context, Intensive Response changed early on from being an Oranga Tamariki designed and delivered programmatic response, into an opportunity to test a partnering approach that could be regionally and locally-led with National Office operating in an enabling role.

At different locations, various local offices (and some regional offices) began learning what it takes to partner with Māori, iwi, and community organisations to co-develop a locally-led form of Intensive Response. This way of operating is consistent with new Government imperatives and recommendations from the Oranga Tamariki reviews. It also reflects the evidence presented in Hipokingia Ki Te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te katoa¹² that:

“[C]ommunities, hapū, and iwi have made clear to us that it is their role to lead and protect their people, and that the role of preventing harm to tamariki and their whānau rests with them. They say Oranga Tamariki’s role is to support the kaupapa, to stand aside and enable iwi and others to respond and provide services and support to tamariki and whānau.” (p9).

Partnering to design and deliver new services and approaches for whānau and tamariki is a new way of working for many involved in Intensive Response, particularly those in Oranga Tamariki and some in non-government organisations. As such, it has been a significant journey of trial and error. Oranga Tamariki has found ways to work and respond more effectively as a treaty partner with iwi and a pro-equity partner with other non-Māori community agencies. It has also learned about the systems change and conditions within the organisation (national, regional, and local) that support a partnering approach. These are the areas of learning discussed in this report.

Six principles of partnering have emerged through the Intensive Response partnering journey

Six principles that support and guide authentic partnering emerged from the experiences and journeys of those involved in Intensive Response. Fundamentally, authentic and effective partnering capabilities are developed in relationship with partners. In the case of Intensive Response, recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi was a foundational starting point for the relationship-building we observed between iwi, communities and Oranga Tamariki.

Partnering is a fundamental tenet of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Oranga Tamariki Future Direction Action Plan produced to meet the Minister’s priorities and the

¹¹ Te Arawhiti, Building closer relationships with Māori, <https://www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/tools-and-resources/building-closer-partnerships-with-maori/>

¹² Oranga Tamariki Ministerial Advisory Board (2021). *Hipokingia Ki Te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te katoa*. Accessed from: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-09/SWRB082-OT-Report-FA-ENG-WEB.PDF>

Ministerial Advisory Board's recommendations strongly communicate this tenet. As an organisation, Oranga Tamariki is looking to create a deep commitment to partnering effectively with Māori, iwi and community organisations in the future.

The principles of partnering discussed in this report (listed below) may be a valuable guide for Oranga Tamariki in future partnering with Māori, iwi and community organisations.

The six principles to emerge were:

- build and strengthen the foundations of relationships; this is fundamental to ongoing partnering
- acknowledge and respond to the context and whakapapa of relationships
- resource the aspirations of your partner
- don't make assumptions
- take the time it needs
- partnering is a relationship process rather than a destination. Long term commitment and sustainable organisational structures are required to maintain these relationships over time.

Building and strengthening the foundations of relationships; this is fundamental to ongoing partnering

The synthesis report from the first year of Intensive Response¹³ highlighted partnering as the foundation of Intensive Response. It outlined two emerging types of partnerships: strategic or governance partnerships (Mana-ki-te-mana) and operational partnerships (Mahinga or Mahi-ki-te-Mahi). There was also emerging internal 'partnership-like' relationships between the National Office Programme Team and local Oranga Tamariki offices. One year on, partnering is still a critical part of Intensive Response. All the partnership and relationship types highlighted above and in the first synthesis report are needed to support success within Intensive Response. An additional realisation in 2021 is the importance of relationships and partnerships with the regional offices because they help create an authorising environment for the local offices to work with iwi and community partners.

In the past year, those involved in Intensive Response, particularly Oranga Tamariki employees, have identified the need to work in a new way and learn what takes to partner genuinely and authentically to design and deliver services. Evaluation findings have highlighted three practices in particular that have helped build and strengthen the foundations of partnering within Intensive Response. These are:

- Turning up with an intention to listen carefully.

¹³ The Knowledge Institute (2022). *Intensive Response, Developmental evaluation (Synthesis report for 2020)*. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children.

- Focusing on creating a shared understanding of vision and values.
- Committing to the aspirations of your partner.

Turn up with an intention to listen carefully.

When all partners turn up with an intention to listen carefully, partnering is supported. When key people at all levels within Oranga Tamariki, iwi, Māori, and community organisations exhibited a willingness to create spaces for partners to listen to understand the other's perspective and aspirations, the possibility for change was improved.

Historically, Oranga Tamariki has determined the boundaries of programmes, and defined and specified contracts for delivery with organisations. However, in a partnering process, listening to understand the perspective and aspiration of partners is critical. This understanding creates the opportunity for partners to develop mutually beneficial relationships, which build the conditions for both parties to realise their aspirations. For Oranga Tamariki, this requires a mindset and practice shift from leading, directing, and speaking, to listening carefully before responding to communities and partners. It also means shifting from determining a response to offering, supporting, or contributing as a genuine partner. These shifts require a willingness to be flexible, let go of control, and share power and resources between partners.

Intensive Response aimed to enable locally-led approaches, having locally generated solutions at the forefront of the work. Māori, iwi, and community organisations bring a commitment to the kaupapa that goes beyond what a Crown agency can often make. For example, they bring an intergenerational vision and set of obligations to the wellbeing of their tamariki and whānau, far more than what is possible within a government three-year political term. Therefore, long term sustainability and success is supported by having local perspectives and people at the heart of Intensive Response.

However, stringent requirements for the intervention specified in the Intensive Response Cabinet paper constrained early engagement in the Phase one locations. This posed real challenges for the stated aims and outcomes of Intensive Response. However, Oranga Tamariki demonstrated an ability to reflect, listen, and act flexibly and adapted Intensive Response.

Oranga Tamariki added a range of Phase Two sites where intentionally broad conversations between partners were a feature of early engagement, with the agenda set by iwi or communities. These conversations focused on how both partners might contribute to improved support and better outcomes for tamariki and whānau. In some instances, where a partnership and relationship already existed, new programmes were developed; in others, conversations focused on strengthening existing programmes. Creating spaces to listen and understand how partners can work together for the benefit of tamariki and whānau sets the groundwork for a mutually beneficial partnering relationship. When both partners' aspirations and needs are considered and acted on, this leads to a more successful and long-lasting relationship.

Partnering processes are anchored by a shared understanding of visions and values, particularly when things get hard or go off track.

Early in the partnering journey, getting clear on the kaupapa of the initiative, establishing shared vision and values and agreed-upon ways of working together can anchor the relationship. For example, in Otāhuhu, a whakapapa centred design kaupapa was created to acknowledge the importance of relationships between Māori and Pacific. Discussions are also essential to determine the elements of a successful relationship, what success means, and what constitutes a mutually beneficial partnering relationship. The uniqueness of each location means these discussions need to be had by each location and with each set of partners.

Agreeing on these aspects of the partnering relationships in the foundational stages means that when there are challenges or times of tension, revisiting the kaupapa, shared vision, values, and agreed ways of working can be used as a frame to unpack challenges and tensions and make decisions about the best way forward. Particularly pertinent in Intensive Response was the shared focus of getting the best outcomes for tamariki and whānau and how the partnering relationship can best contribute to this.

In some of the Phase One locations, reaching an early agreement on the kaupapa, shared vision, values, and ways of working was not prioritised. In contrast, the successful long-term partnering in some of the Phase Two locations highlighted the value of establishing shared agreements early on in a partnering process. Some Phase One locations went through this process more latterly to resolve emerging tensions and challenges, finding it very helpful. Establishing a shared understanding of the kaupapa, vision, values, and ways of working has now become an integral part of the partnering journey for Intensive Response.

Gaining understanding and reaching agreement on the kaupapa, shared vision, and values has worked most effectively as a collective activity with an external facilitator guiding the process. Two things stand out as essential. First, be mindful of bridging the gap between different perspectives, different ways of working, and different worldviews of the partners. Secondly, it's important to be aware of the blocks and boundaries that may constrain each partner. For example, some of the legal and structural constraints that Oranga Tamariki works within are set or not able to change in the short term (e.g., legislation). Similarly, iwi may have mandates and aspirations that influence how they work. For example, some iwi do not want to provide social services directly, preferring to leave this to other agencies. Establishing and understanding these boundaries and restrictions creates an environment of understanding and awareness and helps alleviate misunderstandings between partners.

Committing to the aspirations of your partner is key.

Establishing the kaupapa, shared vision, values, and ways of working in Intensive Response was not always about developing something new with the partners. Sometimes Oranga Tamariki buying into existing community vision was a meaningful way to show their respect for iwi and community perspectives. This also illustrated an understanding that Māori, iwi, and community organisations know what is best for

their tamariki. For example, Māori working in Intensive Response believe Intensive Response has been an opportunity to support tamariki and whānau in ways they have wanted to for a long time but were unable to because of system constraints.

Another example of Oranga Tamariki demonstrating a commitment to the aspirations of their partners is the broadening of the original narrow eligibility criteria in the Intensive Response Cabinet paper. Originally, Intensive Response was only to be offered to high-risk tamariki and whānau, necessitating a Family Group Conference. However, discussions between National Office, local offices, and external partners identified that this approach did not match the way local offices and their partners wanted to work. Changes were made that extended the scope of the partnering process to enable local partners to engage tamariki and whānau in Intensive Response earlier, i.e., through Hui-a-whānau¹⁴ and in some instances at the initial Report of Concern stage.

Acknowledge and respond to context and the whakapapa of relationships¹⁵

In a partnering approach, understanding and taking account of context is essential. Intensive Response has highlighted that one of the most important aspects during a partnering journey is the context for partnering between Māori, iwi, and community organisations and Oranga Tamariki. The history between partners can profoundly influence how partnering happens in practice and needs to be taken into consideration when thinking about readiness, ways of working, and what is designed and delivered.

When thinking about readiness to partner, a deep understanding of the history and operating environment and the context of current relationships is crucial.

Developing a deep understanding of the history of the relationships and operating environment makes a difference. Intensive Response highlighted a substantial difference in readiness to partner between those who have developed long-term relationships with external agencies compared to those who have contractual type relationships. Intensive Response demonstrated that partnering relationships are possible in either context. However, early engagement will be quite different, and therefore people's expectations should also be different, particularly about what can be achieved and by when.

Partnering with iwi and mana whenua as part of Intensive Response required Oranga Tamariki to learn about the different contexts and structures these groups and organisations embody. They also had to learn and understand the desires, aspirations, intentions, and needs of mana whenua and iwi. For example, most iwi already have structures in place aligned with government processes, making it easier for the government to step back and make "Iwi" the formal authority (i.e.,

¹⁴ A Hui-a-whānau is a collective hui that is undertaken very early in the process of Oranga Tamariki receiving a report of concern regarding a child or young person

¹⁵ In this report, the phrase 'whakapapa of relationships' refers to the historical relationship between partners.

Rūnanga) responsible. However, stepping back requires Oranga Tamariki to relinquish power, responsibility, and resources. A further example is the need to understand the different relationships important to particular localities, i.e., mana whenua status versus iwi corporations. Every location will be operating with a different political and organisational landscape that needs careful consideration.

Intensive Response has provided some excellent examples of constructive, mutually beneficial relationships between Māori, iwi, and community organisations and Oranga Tamariki. These relationships have typically developed working together over a long period and are often held by key people in organisations who have a high level of relational capability. The relational capabilities found in Intensive Response that enable successful partnerships include:

- understanding power dynamics and building trust through allowing time and space to kōrero
- listening and learning
- willingness to create necessary change in response to issues identified by iwi and partners
- ability to respond and adapt to circumstances and needs of partners, and to work through sensitive issues together
- ensuring the pace works for everyone
- investing in relationships and whakawhanaungatanga
- anticipating and identifying important differences in perspectives to discuss and resolve early on.¹⁶

The history of Crown engagement with iwi and community agencies significantly influences how partners regard each other, including how they expect to work together.

All Intensive Response partners have needed to examine the history of their relationships during the partnering process, at a systemic level (i.e., history of Crown engagement with Māori, iwi, and community organisations) and whānau level (i.e., history of Crown engagement with whānau).

A history of contractual relationships at a systemic level means a greater focus on coming together as equals is needed in the partnering journey. In contracting relationships between the Crown and external agencies, the Crown is usually better resourced than external partners who have historically been less well-resourced. For an effective partnering relationship, the disparity in power dynamics between the partners also needs to change. Intensive Response took steps to rebalance some of the power dynamics by shifting resources to partners, supporting capability development, and through critical reflection.

¹⁶ Atkinson, M., & Goodwin, D. (2021). Intensive response developmental evaluation: Year one reflections on collaborative design and partnerships in Christchurch East-Ōtautahi. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children.

The history of Crown engagement with tamariki and whānau needed to be acknowledged and responded to as part of the Intensive Response partnering journey. Hipokingia Ki Te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te katoa¹⁷ affirmed that the current care and protection system does not meet the needs of tamariki and whānau and, in many cases, can cause further damage.

“[T]he evidence is clear that the needs of tamariki Māori and whānau are not well served by the current system. Coming into contact with the current care and protection system, even if only briefly, can reinforce and cause further damage to already vulnerable and hurt tamariki and their whānau” (p9)

This history has created significant mistrust of Oranga Tamariki and its staff by people working within iwi and community organisations and among tamariki and whānau. With acknowledgement of history and the mistrust caused, partners can respond more effectively as they journey together.

Each location has a unique whakapapa and set of relationships, influencing what is designed and delivered as part of Intensive Response.

Each location has designed and developed Intensive Response in a way that reflects their unique whakapapa and set of relationships. The locally-led, centrally-enabled approach of Intensive Response ensured bespoke design and delivery was possible. The benefits of this approach are that the design of Intensive Response reflects local community needs, and each location develops a solution that works for them. For example, Ōtautahi has focused on collaboratively delivering Intensive Response with local community NGO's, based on whānau voice. While in Tokoroa, Raukawa leads out Intensive Response in collaboration with the Oranga Tamariki Tokoroa site office.

Resource the aspirations of your partner

Oranga Tamariki has significant mandate and resources compared to most, if not all, partners. It can dedicate capacity and specific capabilities to engaging in and maintaining partnering relationships. As part of Intensive Response, considerable resources have been needed to maintain relationships, undertake collaborative design, and plan implementation. For the aspirations of both partners to be realised, resourcing the participation of both partners is needed.

A broad interpretation of the ‘resources’ each partner brings to the table is needed for a successful partnering relationship. Resource and capacity are not solely about financial resources. Resources and capacity in Intensive Response have included experience, knowledge, mātauranga, strategic perspectives, and aspirations. This broad interpretation of resources helps to recognise the mana of partners.

¹⁷ Oranga Tamariki Ministerial Advisory Board (2021). *Hipokingia Ki Te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te katoa*. Accessed from: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-09/SWRB082-OT-Report-FA-ENG-WEB.PDF>

A successful partnering relationship requires appropriate resourcing of dedicated capacity.

The partnering approach of Intensive Response has highlighted the capacity and capabilities it takes to partner well. All those involved in Intensive Response want to work better together to enable more effective support for tamariki and whānau. However, at times capacity and capability have been limiting factors. The importance of resourcing to build and strengthen capacity and capability for both the partnering relationship and the design and implementation of supports has been a key learning.

The need for dedicated capacity for partnering, for both partners, was identified very early on. Oranga Tamariki staff and external partners have emphasised throughout Intensive Response that those focused on building trust and relationships require dedicated capacity. Intensive Response partnering requires effective representation from iwi, mana whenua, and community partners to ensure equity in co-design and partnership processes.¹⁸ As a result, part of the financial and personnel resources used within Intensive Response has been to support iwi to create dedicated capacity. This allocation of resources has been an important contributor to developing partnering relationships so far. For example, Oranga Tamariki seconded people into roles within iwi and provided iwi with resources for business support to help build their organisations' capacity to engage more effectively in the partnership.

With the increased focus across government to partner, Oranga Tamariki is not the only government agency trying to partner with iwi. This increased government focus on partnering has implications for iwi capacity and resources. Iwi are likely to feel stretched to meet the needs of the many government agencies wanting to partner with them. Furthermore, it is common for several different units within the one government agency to be trying to partner with iwi and no coordination between them. Thus, the potential for 'ten cars up the iwi driveway' from one government agency. Creating a whole of government coordinated approach to engaging with and resourcing iwi to work in partnership with government would enable iwi to respond to these requests more effectively.

In Intensive Response, at a mana-ki-te-mana or governance level, senior national and regional Oranga Tamariki leadership focused on creating and maintaining partnering relationships with the leadership of iwi and community agencies. These senior leaders created and maintained a governance structure to help guide Intensive Response in some locations. At the local level, the creation of partnering relationships at a mahinga or operational level typically rested with Oranga Tamariki site managers or Partnering for Outcomes managers. The creation and maintenance of relationships is typically part of the Partnering for Outcomes role. However, other key people within the local office (e.g., site managers) regularly needed to backfill their roles to permit their involvement in Intensive Response. This backfilling gave them time to focus on the relationship with their Intensive Response partners while maintaining the delivery of core business. The need for backfilling became more apparent over time, as did the level of commitment needed to shift to a partnering

¹⁸ Atkinson, M., & Goodwin, D. (2021). Intensive response developmental evaluation: Year one reflections on collaborative design and partnerships in Christchurch East-Ōtautahi. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children.

approach. During the past year, there has been greater emphasis on backfilling roles. This is considered a key learning that will support future partnering work within Oranga Tamariki.

Intensive Response highlighted the extent to which local offices need support from national and regional Oranga Tamariki offices to enable local partnering, particularly when trying to innovate and maintain business as usual at a site office. Sometimes site managers, Partnering for Outcomes staff, and site staff would identify, create and implement solutions themselves. Still, at other times they needed support from the National Office Programme Team and regional leaders to think through and resource these solutions.

Flexible funding models that can respond to local aspirations are beneficial.

Whānau and community voice has played an important role in Intensive Response. Flexible funding arrangements created space for the lived experience of whānau and community to contribute to decision making. This is in line with the aspirations of iwi and community partners, who wanted the pace of development and decision-making to be dictated by whānau and community voice. To enable resourcing to meet this aspiration, Oranga Tamariki used a flexible commissioning model that centred decision-making around the aspirations of Māori, iwi, and community organisations. This was a new way of working for the Oranga Tamariki procurement team.

Don't make assumptions about what partners want

The fourth principle of partnering learned through Intensive Response is to avoid making assumptions about what partners want and the roles and responsibilities people will have. It is easy to assume based on past experiences, what people feel like they know and their worldviews. However, those participating in Intensive Response were clear that it's unwise for assumptions to drive engagement and action within a partnering approach.

The partnering journey of Intensive Response has highlighted the need for all partners to acknowledge their assumptions and be willing to explore and challenge assumptions constructively with others. Reflective practice has helped this happen.

Intensive Response has created opportunities for those with different worldviews to meet and work together more effectively. Yet, this also opened the door for misunderstandings because of assumptions based on different worldviews. People involved in Intensive Response identified that what they knew or assumed was not always relevant, and in some instances, assumptions created additional challenges. Examples of when assumptions can be problematic include who represents mana whenua, iwi, or other stakeholders, what roles people want to take, what capacity might be needed, who makes decisions within organisations, and the impact of the project on people and organisations.

Oranga Tamariki staff from local offices benefited from reflection processes to unpack and understand their assumptions about Intensive Response and what

partnering means to them. Within Oranga Tamariki, people have also found it helpful to unpack assumptions about the existing system and structures through reflective processes. It takes time and conscious effort to identify changes needed to support the partnering process for those who have worked a certain way for a long time. Examples of assumptions that have been reflected and unpacked as part of the Intensive Response partnering journey include:

- what Oranga Tamariki leaders and staff can or can't make decisions about, particularly when faced with new ideas
- structures and programmes
- what policies are amenable to flexibility in the ways they are applied
- how IT systems restrict progress, change and flexibility within the work.

Dynamic partnering processes unique to each location mean that clarification of roles and responsibilities through all stages of the work is vital for maintaining momentum and navigating the partnering journey.

The partnering journey for Intensive Response has not been straight, constant, and predictable. Rather, the nature of the innovation has meant that new working relationships alongside the ever-changing context have created dynamic partnering processes unique to each location. However, the journey of partnering in Intensive Response to date has identified some important areas where clarity helps maintain momentum and understanding of the process.

The partnering approach for Intensive Response has been at its most successful when partnering relationships at all layers of the system are evident, and there is a clear understanding and alignment of the partnering relationships at the local, regional, and national Oranga Tamariki levels. Partnering relationships can be supported by collaborative development of terms of reference, designs and implementation plans that clarify people's understanding of roles and responsibilities. However, because of the complexity of partnering, these plans need to be 'held lightly'; they need to be flexible and be changed and adapted as roles and responsibilities shift in the partnership process. It's important to build in processes for continual review and reflection about roles and responsibilities in a partnering approach. It's not enough to just do it at the start; plans need revisiting throughout as the context changes and the phase of the project progresses.

Establishing and agreeing on who is leading the partnership, who is making decisions, how each party is accountable to each other and how each partner is contributing is vital. This creates an environment where people can be more aware of the different layers of partnering that are occurring.

It is important early on and throughout a partnering journey to identify and agree about what partnering means and what partnership looks like to each partner.

For example, in Kirikiriroa, Oranga Tamariki staff from different layers of the organisation (the Regional Manager, Partnering for Outcomes Manager, and National Office Programme Team) came together with the community to listen and then discuss how regional, local, and national Oranga Tamariki staff would work together, as well as how they would work with the community.

A process like the one above helps reduce the chance of misunderstanding due to the assumptions people make. The structure and function of the partnership are likely to change over time because of changes in the wider environment, changes in the people involved and the project stage. Revisiting these aspects throughout the journey is important.

In Intensive Response, relationships exist at all layers of the organisations. It is important to stay alert as to how the different layers interact. This is particularly relevant for identifying who has the mandate for decision-making. It is easy to assume that there is agreement between layers within organisations, particularly large ones, but this is not always the case. Unpacking these assumptions regularly is critical for effective partnering.

Take the time it needs

Building a trusting and authentic partnering relationship takes time and space, and each relationship will grow at a different pace. Going at a pace determined by Māori, iwi, and communities is crucial for a successful partnering relationship.

The fifth principle of partnering that emerged is taking time to support the development of a partnering relationship. Partnering within Intensive Response has highlighted that you cannot short-cut or force a working partnership. Partnering relationships need to be grown and nurtured, creating conditions that allow them to flourish.

Many of the principles discussed already refer to what needs to be understood for a successful partnering relationship. Each partnering relationship needs time and space to enact these principles. Time is needed to whakawhanaunga and come to a shared understanding of each other's values and ways of working; to unpack and address aspects of context and history so partners can move forward together. Time is also needed to work through what these values mean in practice, recognising this is not a one-off but an ongoing process.

Without time and space to understand each other's perspectives and aspirations, partnering relationships can fracture and go backwards when tensions and challenges arise. Intensive Response has shown us that authentic relationships are built by working together over time. Such long-term relationships are more resilient and able to navigate the tensions and challenges of innovation and systems change, as with Intensive Response.

Solid working relationships, held together by people's commitment to the kaupapa, have been developed as part of Intensive Response over the past two years, sometimes through significant difficulties. However, the partnering approach has

taken longer than expected, and more support was needed than expected. One lesson learned through Intensive Response is that those locations with strong existing relationships can stand up services more effectively. Expectations may need to be different for locations with a newly formed partnering relationship.

This is one of the reasons why going at the pace dictated by iwi and community partners has been critical in Intensive Response. Where each partner starts from, and the local context, will typically influence how effectively the partnering process occurs. The pace of collaboration is not constant. Sometimes things will stall or take a long time, and at other times, the process will race ahead once something shifts or changes. In terms of resources and mindset, all partners need to be ready and able to partner. For example, partners may have a shared vision but not yet have the resources to work on Intensive Response. However, there may be other pieces of work that the partners can develop and maintain a relationship around. In the case of Muaūpoko Tribal Authority in Horowhenua, Oranga Tamariki local and national staff have maintained a relationship with Muaūpoko, provided relevant support and resources when asked, and have left the door open to work together on Intensive Response when all the partners are ready.

Partnering is a relationship process rather than a destination. Long-term commitment and sustainable organisational structures are required to maintain these relationships over time

Given the time and space required for authentic partnering relationships to flourish, a long-term commitment to partnering processes ensures the greatest chance of improving outcomes for tamariki and whānau.

Organisational strategy and buy-in from senior leadership and decision-makers are essential for long-term organisational commitment to partnering.

Intensive Response has highlighted that partnering is an ongoing relationship process that can create transformative change for tamariki and whānau.¹⁹ Oranga Tamariki has indicated a commitment to partnering approaches as a response to reviews of the organisation to meet their obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

For this commitment to be realised, engagement in partnering at all levels of the organisation must be enabled and encouraged. An operational strategy for partnering is needed to provide organisational focus and direction. Buy-in from senior leadership and decision-makers is essential for creating an environment that enables partnering and the strategy to become operational.

There is now a greater understanding of what it takes to partner within a government context because of the experience gained from initiatives such as Intensive

¹⁹ Intensive Response outcomes for whānau and tamariki have only recently begun emerging, and there are promising signs of success.

Response. There are clear messages about the importance of valuing and resourcing the maintenance of partnering relationships at all levels of the organisation within this report.

Intensive Response has demonstrated how supportive and enabling senior leadership can create the conditions for the development of partnering relationships at governance and operational levels. Those involved in Intensive Response felt that the leadership and the National Office Team were integral to enabling the partnering journey. Everyone was learning as the initiative rolled out, so adaptations and changes were continually made. However, in the main, those involved locally indicate that things would not have progressed without the support of senior leaders and decision-makers at the national and regional levels.

Having partnering relationships at multiple layers within an organisation, from senior National Office decision-makers to local Oranga Tamariki site staff, can help minimise the impact of staff turnover.

As previously mentioned, having partnering relationships at multiple layers is beneficial for programmes such as Intensive Response. Local and national Oranga Tamariki staff have been crucial to developing partnering relationships for Intensive Response. Having senior leaders and decision-makers within Oranga Tamariki National Office holding mana-ki-te-mana relationships supported Intensive Response to adapt and tailor the programme to support partners' aspirations. The partnering relationships held by those in the local Oranga Tamariki site offices are vital to Intensive Response. Without these local relationships, there would have been no Intensive Response.

Staff turnover happens in all organisations, particularly government agencies, which can create challenges for the sustainability of relationships. Each time someone leaves the organisation or changes roles, a new relationship must be formed. Intensive Response has demonstrated that sometimes these changes can be positive for the programme. But more often, these personnel changes slow and reduce momentum as new relationships form.

With relational work such as Intensive Response, Oranga Tamariki must consider systemic ways to minimise the disruption that staff turnover and organisational changes make to partnerships. Having partnering relationships at all layers, as was done for Intensive Response, is one way to mitigate this risk. Another possibility that supports a smoother relationship transition in Intensive Response is to create partnering relationships between levels. For example, a senior National Office Oranga Tamariki employee has a relationship with a local partner. These strategies create multiple touchpoints for those involved in a programme and help ease disruption caused by staff turnover and organisational change.

Key finding: An authorising environment is needed for partnering and making change

The background is a solid blue color with a faint, repeating decorative pattern of stylized, swirling floral or scrollwork motifs in a lighter shade of blue.

The sustainability of partnering approaches requires long-term commitment and an authorising environment at national, regional, and local levels of Oranga Tamariki. An authorising environment in the public sector provides the authority needed to deliver on key functions. An authorising environment provides support through legislation and organisational structures, creates buy-in among key people, and helps empower programmes to achieve their objectives at critical moments throughout the process.²⁰

Having a long-term commitment to partnering is important if Oranga Tamariki are to be good stewards of the resources that exist to benefit tamariki and whānau. According to Scott and Merton,²¹ stewardship is a concept that is increasingly used in public service legislation in New Zealand. In New Zealand, stewardship is linked to kaitiakitanga and is used in government in two ways. First, to describe the responsibility chief executives of government agencies have to look after their organisations and resource use in relation to medium- and long-term sustainability, organisational capability and capacity management. Secondly, to describe how the chief executives of government agencies are responsible for looking after resources that belong to or benefit others.

With this usage in mind and given the context of Intensive Response and the significance of the partnering relationships, the stewardship of Oranga Tamariki, as a Crown Agency and Treaty partner can be interpreted as their ability to enact their obligations to partner for the benefit of tamariki and whānau Māori. More specifically, within Intensive Response, this is most tangibly reflected in the ways the organisation's leadership and staff create an authorising environment for partnering and making change.

Four key factors needed to create an authorising environment for partnering relationships that benefit tamariki and whānau are:

- trust in each other that de-risks many interactions and processes
- commissioning is inclusive and grounded in whānau and community perspectives
- policy development is values-based, locally-led and grounded in lived experience and whānau voice
- organisational structures that support learning and innovation and change across the system.

²⁰ Australian Public Service Commission (2021). *Understand your authorising environment*. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/taskforce-toolkit/governance/understand-your-authorising-environment>

²¹ Scott, R., & Merton, E., (2021, July 8). *Stewardship streams in New Zealand public administration* [Paper presentation] International Public Policy Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

Trust in each other that de-risks many interactions and processes

Trust between partners has emerged as a critical feature of the authorising environment for partnering in Intensive Response. Relational trust between people working in Intensive Response de-risked the innovation context. Seeing trusted relationships as a de-risking strategy between Crown agencies, Māori, iwi, and community organisations requires a significant mindset and practice shift. The shift is from seeing iwi or local communities as risks to be mitigated to trusting that their experience and expertise will result in better outcomes.

An example of this shift was a change to the commissioning process used by Oranga Tamariki during the implementation of Intensive Response. Things seen as risks early in the commissioning process were no longer considered risks that needed to be managed because there is more trust in the relationships with partners.

There remains significant mistrust of Oranga Tamariki by tamariki, whānau, iwi, and other community agencies. Yet, trust is a prerequisite for a partnering process to be successful. Improving the trust that iwi and communities have for Oranga Tamariki is important for partnering relationships' long-term sustainability. Trust builds over time and is grown through the actions people take. Some people involved in Intensive Response have worked together building high trust relationships over many years, whereas others are earlier in the journey of working together and building trust.

Evidence from Intensive Response locations identified that improving community trust in Oranga Tamariki required a commitment to relationships. In practice, this meant keeping your word, open communication, ongoing discussion, and working through significant differences and challenges respectfully, responding to needs identified by community partners and supporting partners even when there are disagreements.

Intensive Response has demonstrated that trust is not a transferable commodity. People hold trust, and when people leave or roles are changed, this influences the level of trust present in a relationship. People changing roles can be positive or negative; however, the authorising environment must be developed and maintained with trust at its core.

Commissioning is inclusive and grounded in whānau and community perspectives

Commissioning and procurement for Intensive Response used a very different approach to those traditionally used by Oranga Tamariki and other government agencies. A recent commissioning trend in New Zealand is to have more flexible contracting environments with more localised, whānau, and community-centred commissioning processes.²² These new ways of commissioning align with Te Arawhiti guidance for government partnerships with Māori. Further, recent examples of whānau and Māori centred commissioning, such as the Whānau Ora

²² Ministry of Social Development. (2020). Social Sector Commissioning Progress, Principles and Next Steps.

commissioning cycle, explicitly recognise the importance of relationships to successful commissioning.

More inclusive and flexible commissioning has helped create an authorising environment that enables partnering processes.

Intensive Response commissioning reflected a significant shift in mindset and practice, away from how Oranga Tamariki has historically approached commissioning, i.e., buying services the government decide they want. For Intensive Response, there was a shift to commissioning being about investing resources in a relationship to achieve a shared kaupapa. The commissioning process defined resources more broadly than just money. For example, Oranga Tamariki recognised the value of experience, expertise, and mātauranga of partners in the process. The Intensive Response commissioning approach started by considering the aspirations of partners and developing a shared kaupapa. Only then did it create a process (e.g., design, implementation, and evaluation) that was most likely to support the achievement of the shared outcomes.

The Intensive Response commissioning kept tamariki and whānau perspectives central to decision-making in the process. A key example is the direction provided by whānau voice research in Christchurch East. Local whānau perspectives provided a catalyst for decision-making, helping inform decisions about who to procure to deliver Intensive Response based on organisations that whānau believe are already effectively supporting tamariki and whānau wellbeing.

The flexibility of processes was critical to local tailoring of commissioning and procurement approaches.

At all levels of Oranga Tamariki, staff required an authorising environment that gave them the mandate to act, especially in an innovation and change process such as Intensive Response. One of the significant shifts in the authorising environment was shifting the Social Services procurement policy in Oranga Tamariki, to a values-based policy, rather than rules-based. This shift enabled Oranga Tamariki procurement staff (locally and nationally) to question commissioning processes, review their assumptions, and explore what was necessary to meet safe procurement practices in a partnering environment. Another significant shift was the move to a non-competitive process. Non-competitive processes drew on local knowledge to inform decisions, and feedback suggests those involved believe that the new approach has a greater chance of achieving better results.

Inclusive commissioning processes prioritise the relationship with partners, creating an opportunity for a values-based process that partners believe will give the best chance of achieving desired outcomes.

Policy development that is values-based, locally-led and grounded in voice and lived experiences of tamariki and whānau

Intensive Response showed that the policy approach can significantly impact the authorising environment created. The key learning is that values-based, bottom-up, locally-led policy development works best to create an authorising environment that enables locally-led change.

Less prescriptive, values-based policy development will likely create a more supportive authorising environment. It allows greater flexibility to adapt to local context and explore and test what it takes to support tamariki and whānau.

The initial policy development for Intensive Response happened with limited engagement with iwi, community, and partners to determine the focus and approach of the initiative. The policy reflected top-down thinking, and feedback suggests that it was considered prescriptive. The authorising environment for the Intensive Response Phase One locations was constrained by this prescription. Subsequently, implementation of Intensive Response adapted to achieve the intended policy impact, working with a range of Phase Two sites. The Phase Two sites were not required to be closely aligned with the original Intensive Response cabinet paper requirements and could more easily tailor implementation to meet local needs and aspirations.

Building and resourcing internal capacity at local levels to implement the policy intent is needed.

Two things stand out from the feedback about support and resourcing internally to Oranga Tamariki. First, the challenge of making the mindset and practice shifts during a change from a contracting to a partnering relationship. Secondly, the challenges of striking a balance between sustaining core business while enabling innovation and managing the differing skill sets and resources required for these activities.

Within some Oranga Tamariki local sites, there was limited understanding of partnering, project management, and leading projects and people recognised they needed support for all these aspects. People participating in Intensive Response also identified that they valued facilitated reflection processes as they tried to implement the Intensive Response policy intent and would have liked more of it.

Supporting local sites to implement policy change and be part of innovation requires specific skill sets, such as knowledge of local communities and the wider Oranga Tamariki context and understanding partnering, collaboration, and project management. Developing these skill sets and capabilities can be strengthened with a range of organisational support (such as reflective practice, communities of practice, supervision, and management conversations).

Keeping a connection to whānau voice throughout policy development and implementation is valuable. Building whānau and community capacity, so they are more able to contribute to policy is necessary to support iwi, Māori, and community aspirations.

The inclusion of collaborative design processes and the integration of whānau voice has anchored the implementation of Intensive Response. It has also supported an increased focus on Māori and whānau-centred practice. Collaborative design happened in various ways, tailored to local contexts and needs. For one location, a formal co-design process was used. In other locations, the partners collectively discussed and worked together on how Intensive Response would be designed and implemented for them. In whatever ways collaborative design was implemented, partners worked to ensure they kept the perspectives of tamariki and whānau at the centre. The shared nature of the design and the place of tamariki and whānau at the centre created an authorising environment for change.

Reference to whānau perspectives was a feature of implementation decision-making, as partners worked to make service design more responsive to tamariki and whānau needs. Oranga Tamariki is making an organisational shift to Māori-centred practice. The use of whānau voice in Intensive Response enabled this practice change. Those involved in Intensive Response suggested they had additional motivation to change their practice because they were able to reflect on the voices and perspectives of their local whānau.

Capacity building for whānau and community would help continue the valuable inclusion of whānau voice in programmes such as Intensive Response. Whānau and community capacity building provide an opportunity for Oranga Tamariki to move beyond the inclusion of community and whānau voice in policy development to Māori-led, hapū-led, whānau-led policy development.

Organisational structures and processes that support change, innovation and learning across the system

Creating an authorising environment that supports systems change requires additional capacity and capability to get beyond current dominant thinking and practice to new ways of working. Formal processes and structures for critical reflection can enable this change.

Through the National Office Programme Team, Intensive Response provided processes, tools, and resources to support the intended systems change. Project support, flexible funding, tools, processes, and templates were all offered to external partners and local site offices as options if they wanted them. Oranga Tamariki intentionally provided these supports to assist learning and the change process across the system.

The Māori perspectives on Intensive Response report²³ highlighted that shifting Oranga Tamariki work to more intensive whānau-centred ways requires additional support for staff, particularly as they transition from one style of working to the other. Similarly, creating systems change to enable partnering approaches takes significant time and effort, and the capacity to do this within existing job descriptions is limited.

Feedback from those involved in Intensive Response indicates that formal processes and structures for critical reflection are valued and vital for an authorising environment that supports change. The focus of critical reflection has varied from location to location. For some, reflection was valuable for thinking outside current Oranga Tamariki processes to identify how to operationalise new ways of working. For others, critical reflection supported reflection on whānau, Māori, and iwi experiences of historical trauma, inequity, and the impacts of colonisation so that they could partner more effectively.

An intentional Learn and Grow approach also supported learning across the Intensive Response programme. This approach reflected a desire to adapt and iterate the implementation of Intensive Response based on day-to-day experiences and learning about the partnering process. Two ways that this learning approach supported the Intensive Response authorising environment were:

- Honest and transparent feedback regularly shared between different layers of the partnership helped keep things moving and made sure people were on the same page.
- Sharing learning between different partners and locations, who were experiencing similar things, prompted action to support positive changes.

The Developmental Evaluation was part of the Learn and Grow approach and the learning and reflection cycles used in the DE were an important feature in some locations. For example, in Tokoroa, the site staff were led into learning and reflective practice. This reflective practice helped them navigate the challenges experienced by staff and sometimes led to them taking different approaches.

Longer timelines for funding give people the capacity to develop and learn.

Intensive Response has been a learning journey for Oranga Tamariki and their partners about how to partner effectively to benefit tamariki and whānau. A longer than normal (i.e., more than one year) funding timeline supported learning and innovation about partnering and Intensive Response delivery. Intensive Response highlighted the importance of building foundations and creating time and space for partnering relationships to develop so partners can achieve their aspirations.

However, even funding cycles of one- or two-years conflict with the long-term nature of a sustainable partnering relationship. Longer funding cycles are now being used in

²³ D. Goodwin et al. (2022), *Māori perspectives of Intensive Response: Developmental evaluation*. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children.

Intensive Response when locations begin delivering services to tamariki and whānau.

Partners in some locations are signing long-term Mana Ōrite agreements that provide a high-level organisational commitment to a long-term partnership between Oranga Tamariki and external partners. While Intensive Response is only one programme that is covered by these agreements, it signals a long-term commitment to partnering, that will hopefully be followed by ongoing funding and the necessary resources and support.

Conclusion



Intensive Response set out to better support tamariki to be safe at home with their whānau. Oranga Tamariki hoped to achieve this by working together as partners with Māori and Pacific organisations and the wider community sector. Oranga Tamariki, recognising that this was a new way of working for their organisation wanted to iterate and adapt the programme as learning emerged. The learning from Intensive Response about partnering has been rich and comprehensive. Two years of learning, trial and error, and adaptation have provided a set of principles for partnering and a better understanding of the conditions that create an authorising environment for change.

Building the foundations of partnering relationships, acknowledging the context and whakapapa of relationships, resourcing partners' aspirations, not making assumptions, taking the necessary time, and ensuring a long-term commitment to partnering are the key principles emerging for effective partnering.

Creating change, through partnering, on the ground and at a systems-level requires an authorising environment. Trust was identified, from the feedback and experiences of those involved in Intensive Response, as a critical mechanism of change. Trust de-risks commissioning and policy development and influences the nature of the authorising environment.

This learning shared in this report is particularly relevant as Oranga Tamariki responds to the recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Board. At this time, it is unclear what the future of Intensive Response will be, but the overall approach of locally-led and centrally-enabled partnering as a mechanism for better outcomes for whānau and tamariki is likely to be used by Oranga Tamariki in the future.

Appendices



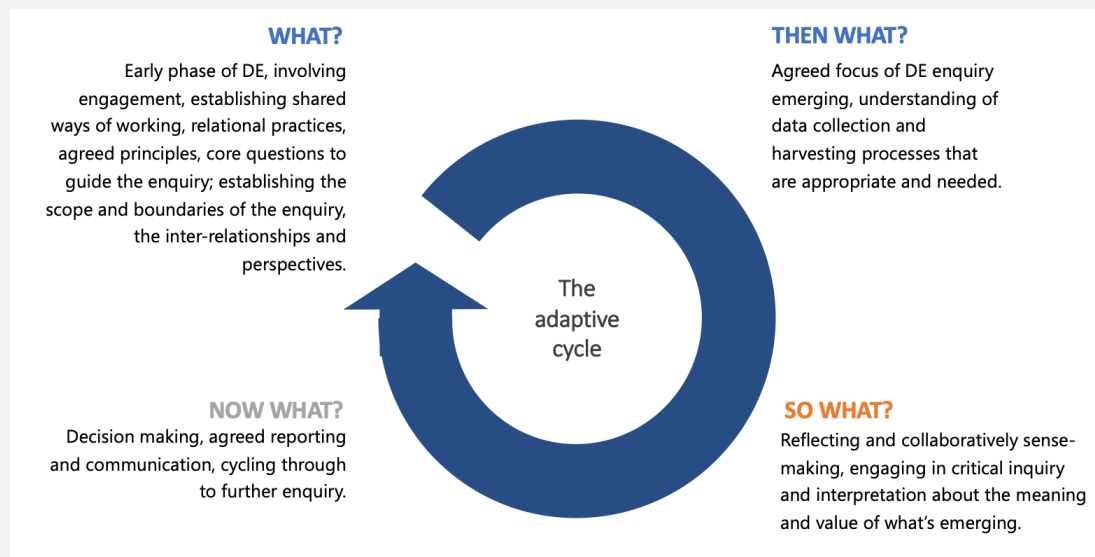
Appendix A: Methodology

Developmental evaluation usually unfolds in phases and follows an adaptive cycle

A core practice of developmental evaluation is the adaptive learning cycle. How quickly and how many cycles are moved through, depends on the context. The cycle can also be applied at different levels, for example, at a local community level and at an initiative-wide level.

The DE process can also be thought of as a large adaptive cycle. Figure 2 below illustrates this:

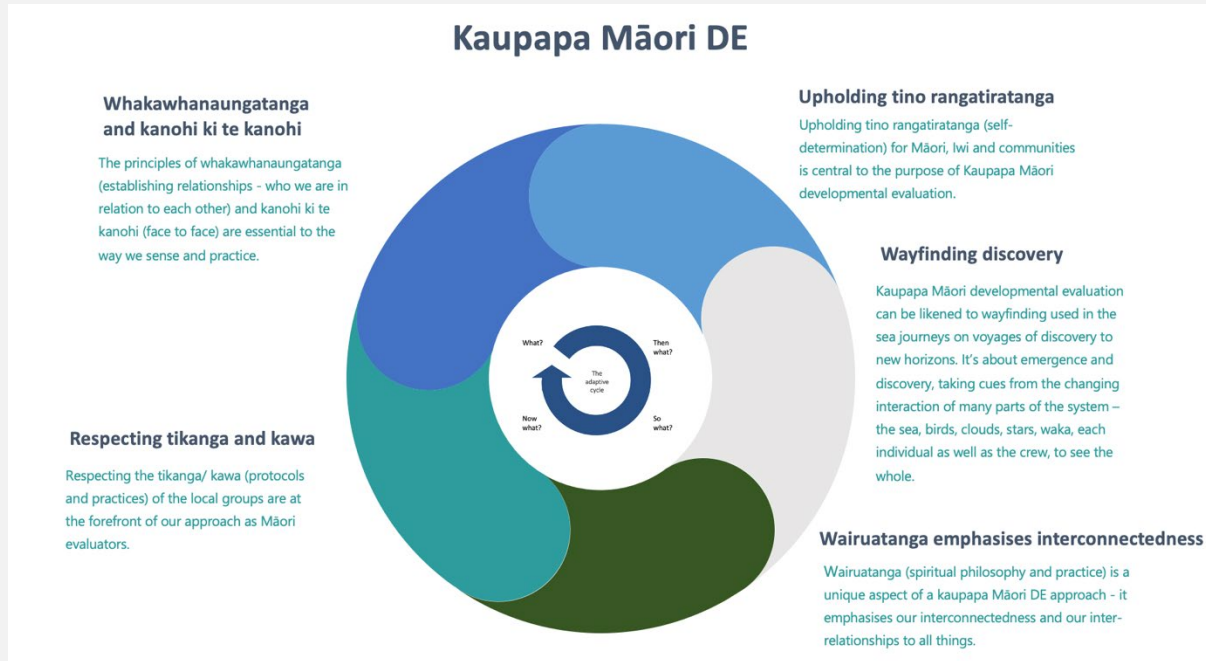
Figure 2: High level developmental evaluation adaptive cycle



Kaupapa Māori Developmental Evaluation

A kaupapa Māori developmental evaluation approach is principles-based. It adheres to the principles and processes developed within kaupapa Māori as well as taking an iterative, reflective, and sensing stance to evaluation, as outlined in Figure 3. It is led by Māori evaluators.

Figure 3: Kaupapa Māori developmental evaluation

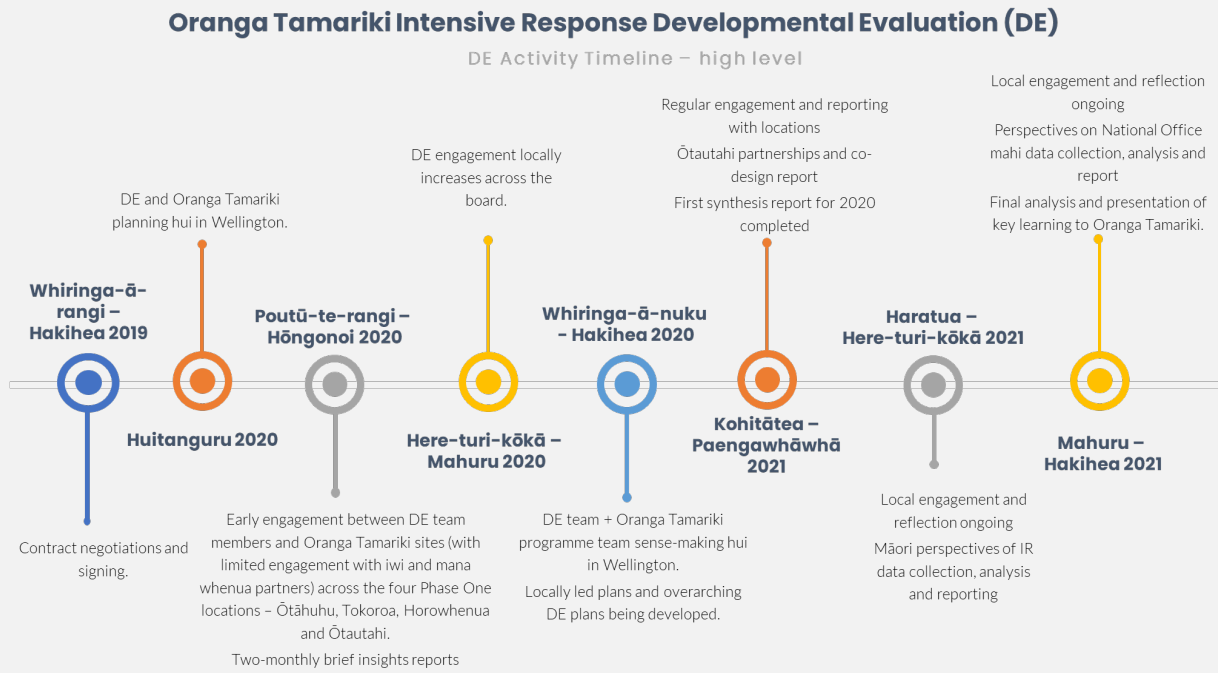


Timeline and nature of DE activity

Timeline

Since February 2020, the evaluation team has been in close and regular contact with key people at four of the Phase One intensive response locations and the National Office Programme Team. Figure 4 below provides a high-level summary of the evaluative work this year.

Figure 4: Summary of developmental evaluation mahi 2019-2021



Nature of activities of the developmental evaluators

There are several activities that a developmental evaluator can undertake. Figure 5 outlines what was possible for each phase of Intensive Response.

Figure 5: The activities of a developmental evaluator at each phase of the Intensive Response development

Fundamental Developmental Evaluation questions:				
What's being developed? (WHIAT?)				
What sense can we make of emerging issues, evidence, data about this development? (WHIAT'S EMERGING?)				
What is the value / importance /significance of what we are doing / achieving? What does it mean to us now and in the future? (SO WHIAT?)				
What does this mean for how we should now act? What are our options? And into the future? (NOW WHIAT)				
Examples of developmental evaluation activities to support learning within Intensive Response:				
Engagement Phase	Design Phase	Procurement Phase	Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase
<p>Supporting learning in engagement through: Whanaungatanga – establishing connections and building relationships. Ensuring a clear understanding of the context and kaupapa of the initiative.</p> <p>Exploration of what partnerships might mean to different groups</p> <p>Exploration of readiness for evaluation and innovation</p>	<p>Supporting learning in collaborative design through: Reflection on the process, including who is and isn't involved</p> <p>Surfacing and making sense of what is being learned and what to do next</p> <p>Systems and stakeholder mapping</p> <p>Tracking the journey and key decisions and any implications of these decisions</p> <p>Developing a Theory of Change</p> <p>Testing assumptions</p> <p>Document review</p>	<p>Supporting learning in procurement through: Reflection on process, surfacing and testing assumptions</p> <p>Tracking the journey and key decisions and any implications of these decisions</p> <p>Supporting development of an evaluation framework and data collection</p> <p>Developing a Theory of Change</p> <p>Document review</p>	<p>Supporting learning in implementation through: Exploration of what is being learned and what it means for future implementation</p> <p>Exploring changes in strategy i.e., what is being adapted, what is being dropped etc.</p> <p>Supporting development of an evaluation framework and data collection</p> <p>Tracking the journey and key decisions and any implications of these decisions</p> <p>Reflecting on and refining the Theory of Change</p> <p>Exploration of and reflection on the experiences of different stakeholders e.g., iwi, Oranga Tamariki, community partners, whānau</p>	<p>Supporting learning in monitoring through: Exploration of and reflection on the experiences of different stakeholders e.g., iwi, Oranga Tamariki, community partners, whānau</p> <p>Facilitate making sense of evaluation and monitoring data and what it means for the future</p> <p>Tracking the journey and key decisions and any implications of these decisions</p> <p>Reflecting on and refining the Theory of Change</p>
Roles a developmental evaluator might take:				
Facilitator	Constructive questioner/ Critical friend		Supporting evaluative thinking	
Evaluation designer	Analysis		Developing relationships	

The practice of whanaungatanga was the key focus in the early stages of the DE. A small team was formed for each of the four locations. The DE team then began the relational work to become connected and trusted by people at the locations²⁴. Through whanaungatanga and, in some cases, the use of an evaluation readiness assessment tool, the DE team began exploring the existing relationships and inter-relationships at the locations, with the partner and local Oranga Tamariki site staff, as well as began surfacing perspectives and assumptions about IR, DE, and ways of working together. In the early stages in most locations, the DE team also had conversations about DE and its relevance and use to IR.

As the DE team members became more familiar with IR and developed closer relationships with those at the locations, in addition to attending regular meetings they were able to step into more facilitative and reflective roles actively supporting the development of IR. This included, but was not limited to:

- regular and one-off reflective practice with key project team members and partners
- development of evaluation plans that reflect what locations want to learn
- supporting whānau insights work through drawing on previous connections and experience
- supporting collaborative design processes by assisting with development and facilitating some aspects, including facilitating debriefs
- exploring and documenting learning about working in partnership and the process of collaborative design
- reflecting on procurement processes against an agreed framework
- facilitating reflection on early implementation.
- writing brief insights with discussion questions or recommendations for the IR team to reflect on and discuss

²⁴ Cargo, M., Potaka-Osborne, G., Cvitanovic, L., Warner, L., Clarke, S., Judd, J., Chakraborty, A., & Boulton, A. (2019) *Strategies to support culturally safe health and wellbeing evaluations in Indigenous settings in Australia and New Zealand: a concept mapping study*, International Journal for Equity in Health, 18:194.