

Huakina te tatau o te whare - *Opening up the doors to the house*

**When every other learning
experience has failed them**

Kiwi Can Do!

The successes of a wrap-around training programme
transitioning Māori youth into employment

By Researcher and Writer Cath Fraser



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
HOW THIS REPORT CAME TO BE WRITTEN	4
TERMINOLOGY	5
WHO DID WE TALK TO?	6
OPEN DAY, JANUARY 2018	6
THE KIWI CAN DO BACK STORY	8
THE KIWI CAN DO PROGRAMME	9
1. LIVING OUR VALUES	11
2. A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP	12
3. LIFE SKILLS - AS WELL AS WORK SKILLS	14
4. RELATIONSHIPS – FRIENDS, WHANAU, FAMILY	15
5. THE ‘DAD’S ARMY’ TUTOR MODEL	16
6. REMOVING BARRIERS	17
7. THE LODGE	18
8. MENTORING	19
9. CULTURAL IDENTITY	20
10. A FOCUS ON OUTCOMES	21
SUMMARY – EXPLAINING THE SUCCESS	23
REFERENCES	OBC

Kiwi Can Do is a programme developed with the assistance and ongoing support of the Industry Partnership team from the **Ministry of Social Development**.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Published by Ako Aotearoa National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence,
PO Box 756, Wellington 6140
ISBN 978-1-927202-35-7 (print)
ISBN 978-1-927202-37-1 (online)
November 2017



An Ako Aotearoa publication. This project output has been funded by Ako Aotearoa through the Regional Project Fund.



This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). Under this licence you are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work as well as to remix, tweak, and build upon this work noncommercially, as long as you credit the author/s and license your new creations under the identical term.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aotearoa New Zealand is enjoying a period of low unemployment and unprecedented growth in the construction industry, and yet youth, and especially Māori aged 16-24, are still overly represented in statistics of people not in education, employment or training (Buzzeo et al., 2016; MBIE, 2018; TEC, 2014). For this reason, this group is a priority area for Government, who are highly supportive of programmes which can show success in moving young people from unemployment to the workplace – and help them to stay there. Kiwi Can Do has been offering vocational training and work experience opportunities over the past four years, demonstrating strong employment outcomes for graduates of around 67%. The purpose of this report is to tell the organisation’s story, and identify the strategies which are contributing to this success.

The report has been co-funded by Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand’s National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. The report asks: What are the strategies which are making this outside-the-classroom learning experience so enjoyable, memorable and valuable for participants? How sustainable is this delivery model? A key interest of both Ako Aotearoa and the Ministries of Education (MOE) and Social Development (MSD) is determining replicable approaches which can assist the wider vocational training sector to improve outcomes for learners.

The research design has drawn on kaupapa Māori research principles (Sciascia, 2017; Smith, 2012) of collaboration and co-construction, in which all voices are equal, and interwoven to create a narrative, in an attempt to pay tribute to the values which underpin the Kiwi Can Do culture. Data has been sourced from 34 qualitative, in-depth interviews with trainees, staff and external stakeholders, as well as from an Open Day in January 2018, and Kiwi Can Do’s website and Facebook pages. This information has been collated and analysed thematically, under ten strategies, or principles, which together offer a wrap-around delivery model which supports the trainees from enrolment, into employment, and for the first few months beyond. The ten strategies discussed are:

1. Living our values
2. A public-private partnership
3. Life skills – as well as work skills
4. Relationships – friends, whanau, family
5. The ‘Dad’s Army’ tutor model
6. Removing barriers
7. The lodge
8. Mentoring
9. Cultural identity
10. A focus on outcomes

The story told here is of an organisation determined that the successes achieved to date are sustainable. Kiwi Can Do is already making plans to scale up in the future, with more trainees, more programmes, new industry partners and more venues.

“What we have is successful outcomes, and people who want to come - our kaupapa works!”

Above all, this programme is about heart, belief, and attitude. It’s here, in spades!



HOW THIS REPORT CAME TO BE WRITTEN

The role of Ako Aotearoa

Ako Aotearoa is New Zealand's National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. Established in 2006, the Centre is the Ministry of Education's central vehicle for improving the quality of teaching and learning in all branches of the post-school education sector. Ako Aotearoa administers a number of funding streams from its Regional Hub and National offices in partnership with organisations who are demonstrating successful outcomes for learners. Funding grants allow such stories to be told, and effective practice to be shared, in the interests of producing the best possible educational outcomes for all learners and the nation. A key starting point is that different learners need different solutions. Good practice and excellence in education comes in many forms, and the innovative, 'wrap-around' training developed by Kiwi Can Do is a strong example.

The Hei Toko initiative

Ako Aotearoa has its own Māori Caucus and has developed its own Kaupapa Māori framework, Te Tauākī Ako (Ako Aotearoa, 2011), a summary of 14 kaupapa or 'inherited values, principles and associated practice'. Te Tauākī Ako forms the foundation of the Centre's work with Māori, and contributed to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funded project Hei Toko i te Tukunga: Enabling Māori Learner Success (Hei Toko). Funding allocated under the Hei Toko brand, such as supported this report, aims to provide context-specific summaries/exemplars of Kaupapa Māori good education practice. The ultimate objective is to improve Māori participation and achievement in tertiary education, and to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and qualifications that enable them to be life-ready and work-ready (Ako Aotearoa, 2015). As an average, around 80% of trainees on each Kiwi Can Do programme are Māori, so that this project fits well with Hei Toko's manifesto.



Why the Kiwi Can Do story needs to be told

The Kiwi Can Do programme provides training targeted at, but not restricted to, Māori youth (aged 18-24) who have left school with few, or no qualifications, and are unemployed. Extensive academic, political, economic and social commentary notes the disadvantages faced by this demographic group, and the number of metrics in which Māori youth fall behind the general population (see for example, Chauvel & Read, 2012).

In response, half of the six priorities for the Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019 (TEC, 2014) are:

- Delivering skills for industry
- Getting at-risk young people into a career
- Boosting achievement of Māori and Pasifika

These are exactly the areas in which Kiwi Can Do is excelling.

The purpose of this report

Kiwi Can do is already showing impressive, and improving, rates of success for graduates attaining employment. In addition, feedback from the trainees, tutors, employers, as well as other stakeholder groups (iwi, community, whanau, programme leaders, managers and support staff, government) has been resoundingly positive. The aim of this project is to collate and analyse these responses, and to capture the various elements that are contributing to success. What are the strategies which are making this outside-the-classroom programme so enjoyable, memorable and valuable for participants? What changes are occurring for trainees, and are they sustainable? And, have those involved any ideas about how the programme can be improved, scaled up, and replicated elsewhere in the future?

A kaupapa Māori research framework

In keeping with the intent and vision of Hei Toko, and in recognition of the values that underpin Māori approaches to community, knowledge and learning, it was important to the Kiwi Can Do project team to conduct this inquiry in a culturally respectful manner.

Co-investigation and co-construction of narrative offers an ethical and reflexive approach to research in which participants are active and equal partners, and which combines enquiry, analysis and action (Greenwood & Te Aika, 2009). The ‘transformative praxis’ objective identified by Graham Hingangaroa Smith (2012), one of the founders of this perspective, means that change and benefit to Māori is always at the forefront of the research design.

This report is presented thematically, with the voices of multiple perspectives woven into each discussion, and no stakeholder viewpoint elevated above any other. By doing so, we reference the understanding that there can be no single description of what success looks like for Māori learners (Chauvel & Read, 2012). The themes selected to describe the wrap-around approach offered by Kiwi Can Do are an attempt to reflect the “practising and privileging of culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogies” (Sciascia, 2017, p. 3). It is, however, acknowledged that the organisation’s kaupapa has largely grown organically, and may be more apparent to external observers than to those living the experience. Indeed, when specifically asked about how elements of the learning environment related to their cultural identity, many trainees found it a surprising question, as they had taken much of the setting at face value, with little knowledge of other tertiary settings to compare this to.

Terminology

This report uses the interchangeable terms ‘trainee’ or ‘cadet’ to refer to our learners. These are the terms used by tutors and the wider staff at Kiwi Can Do, in preference to the usual ‘student’ label applied in most tertiary education organisations. Their use is a first signal to trainees that this learning experience will be a very different one from school. They have the chance to start something new, become someone else, and change their stars.



WHO DID WE TALK TO?

The ethos of the Kiwi Can Do training experience is practical, hands-on, and outside-the-classroom learning. Many of the trainees have low levels of literacy and/or learning difficulties; many of the tutors have little formal tertiary training themselves. The research design was always conceived as a face-to-face data collection exercise, with semi-structured interviews guided by a series of open-ended questions. Three sets of these prompting questions were developed for trainees, tutors and employers.

Following our Māori-centric research philosophy, trainees who were interested in providing feedback could exercise rangatiratanga about where, when and how they wanted to be interviewed. All but two of the current programme chose to be part of a focus group, rather than interviewed individually; three group sessions were held, with between five and nine trainees at each. All other stakeholder interviews, including programme graduates, were individual; some conducted on-site, and others by phone, at a time set by the participant. Interviews took place in November-December 2017.

All participants were offered the opportunity to review a draft of this report prior to submission, and a few have done so, although no corrections to quotations or examples have been requested. The advantage of this embedded and personal approach to investigating others' experience has been the rich narratives and anecdotes which have been offered.

Table one: Interview participants	
Trainees	20
Graduates	4
Tutors	3
Employers	2
Kiwi Can Do support staff	4
MSD Case Manager	1
Total	34



Open Day, January 2018

A second source of information was the 'Open Day' held at Kiwi Can Do's Auckland base, Otimai Lodge, January 26, 2018. The event was attended by two Cabinet Ministers (the Hon. Carmel Sepuloni, and the Hon. Willie Jackson) with several senior staff from the Ministry of Social Development, and numerous students, tutors, support staff, employers, industry representatives, agency and iwi leaders. Notes from speeches and the televised account, as well as from informal conversations which followed during a mix-and-mingle session have been woven into this account.

Additional information has been sourced from the Kiwi Can Do website, and Facebook pages.

Invitation...

Kiwi Can Do Open Day

You are invited to a Kiwi Can Do Open Day at Otimai Lodge, 1 Kauri Loop Road, Oratia from 11am till 2pm on Friday, January 26.

The Minister of Social Development, the Hon Carmel Sepuloni will outline the massive benefits being delivered by the Kiwi Can Do programme...its impact on poverty, the delivery of work ready labour for the construction industry, the creation of affordable housing and the life-changing impacts for New Zealand parents and their children.

Graduates of the course will share their stories and acknowledge the employers, trade associations and suppliers who have helped develop and evolve the Kiwi Can Do programme over the last few years.

A light lunch will be served.
An RSVP by January 24 is essential.



Please contact:
Selenia@kiwi-can-do.co.nz call or text 027 3206265



Open Day, January 2018



THE KIWI CAN DO BACK STORY

“There has never been a better time in New Zealand’s history to pull on a fluro, a hard hat and steel cap boots, learn a skill and become a Tradie”

In 2013, New Zealand’s construction industry was identifying a huge shortfall in labour for the burgeoning growth occurring in Auckland and Christchurch’s property development sector. Iain Morrison, founder of Kiwi Can Do, saw a unique opportunity to transition young unemployed Kiwi kids into full time work, rather than import overseas workers. He saw the unprecedented availability of trades jobs as a potential ‘circuit breaker’ to get youth off the dole and motivate them to work, and in so doing, impact on the inter-generational cycle of unemployment, potentially improving the quality of life for families - for generations to come.

Iain drew on his networks within industry associations, such as the Master Painters, Association of Wall and Ceiling Industries and the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation, to design a training programme to create fit young people ready to join a work crew and the work environment. Early programmes were run at the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Tongariro, in Hamilton, in Kaikohe, Kaitaia, Whangarei, Tauranga, Matamata and Katikati.

“I asked myself – would I give this person a job? Do they want a job? Almost always, the answer was ‘yes’. We’ve got all these fantastic people sitting out there in the regions. Why would we import workers? And employers agree – they want to employ New Zealanders”

While outcomes were promising, and trainees were getting jobs, it became clear that this regionally based model was difficult to sustain. Partly, there weren’t enough jobs locally to ensure the level of successful work placement Iain was looking for, and partly, the logistics of providing consistent, post-programme mentorship and support for graduates in the workplace were exhausting. Locations were isolated and Iain’s small team were spread too thin.

The breakthrough came in 2017, when Kiwi Can Do leased the vacant Otimai Lodge in Oratia, West Auckland, a home-away-from-home for trainees and the growing team of support staff. In 2017, five three-week programmes were run here, using a centralised residential training model that drew candidates from Northland, Auckland, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty. Jamie Kissock, Key Account Manager, Industry Partnerships, from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) calls this ‘the sweet spot’: not too small or too large, but with the right number of trainees in the right place.

“The centralised residential model works really well – the ability to bring in people to train and then return them to the regions. Better on resources, better outcomes”

Kiwi Can Do continue to develop their programme, and a recent change at the end of 2017 is a rolling intake of trainees on a weekly basis, rather than stand-alone programmes. This will allow both a regular supply of labour to the market, and the ability to cater for more trainees, while preserving the unique character of the training environment. Timely indeed, since the MSD announced at the Open Day in January 2018, that they were doubling the number of places funded. Iain and Paddy also talk of how well the current site would lend itself to Hospitality and Market Gardening courses in addition to the construction-based trades already being taught. They have already identified a possible residential site in Wellington, where there is also a labour shortage. The story continues...



THE KIWI CAN DO PROGRAMME

In the four years since Kiwi Can Do was conceived and implemented, the philosophy has remained constant:

“Many people find it hard to grab the bottom rung of the employment ladder and get started. That’s where Kiwi Can Do makes a difference. We get New Zealanders work ready and work fit. We build confidence and we match our trainees up with employers”

The programme is fees-free, funded through the Ministry of Social Development, to assist their youth clients who are on benefits and not in education or employment, into the workforce. Trainees attend for three weeks and learn basic skills in a variety of trades, determined by the work site, tutor availability and identified demand. To date, these have included painting, plastering, framing, suspended ceilings and gib fixing, with a number of additions planned for the future. Both staff and students emphasise that the actual tasks undertaken are secondary to the generic workplace skills being passed on, and graduates of the programme are currently employed in a variety of industries, such as welding and roofing.

It’s not school, and it’s not prison

“The focus is on the core deliverable. A move away from a list of qualifications to one-on-one mentoring”

Apart from a first day or so in the classroom covering health and safety, drug testing, CVs and general paperwork, trainees spend all their time on site, either in leased factories or restoring Lodge buildings. Individually, and after hours, help is available to upskill with literacy, but in general, this is a practical, hands-on delivery and trainees learn by doing, at the side of an experienced tutor. Small cohorts of 20-25, often split into groups of two or three, allow for extensive personal guidance and feedback.

“A thousand years ago, we didn’t have to go to a classroom to learn how to make a loaf of bread or build a house – we learned from some old fella”

Trainees gain a Site Safe Construction Certificate and assistance to upgrade their driving licences, and are made aware of the apprenticeship pathway into higher trade qualifications as a longer-term goal, but the immediate objective is an entry-level job.

“We make sure they can swing a hammer, hold a plastering trowel or a paintbrush and use a saw, nail gun or measuring tape”

With employment as the goal, Kiwi Can Do pay close attention to the recruitment process. Candidates commit to the programme and its values, rules and expectations, and they have to want to work. For most, coming from outside Auckland and living at the Lodge, there are additional requirements, including a curfew. Over nearly five years in operation, the vast majority of trainees have relished the experience and opportunity; the few exceptions who found it was not for them, or who did not exhibit an appropriate attitude were asked to leave so as not to disrupt the progress being made by others. Separation from negative role models and breaking with bad influences and patterns of behaviour from the past is critical for many trainees, particularly those with criminal records or gang associations, who are looking for a new start.

“We don’t want the young ones written off. They just need a chance. We know if there’s hope at the end of the rainbow, they can turn around. If there’s a job, a plan, a vision – they can turn around”



The wrap-around approach

“A simple package, the simplest solution, underpinned by quite a sophisticated framework”

The programme is about a core deliverable: transitioning youth to employment. What makes this particular organisation stand out for the funder MSD, as attested to by Cabinet Ministers and Case Managers, is the unique range of add-on strategies which Kiwi Can Do have built over the years. These add-ons are both internally and externally generated, and rely on a strong and sustained relationship between the provider and a range of stakeholders. Each of these proven, successful strategies, listed below, will be discussed separately in the following section of this report:

1. Living our values
2. A public-private partnership
3. Life skills – as well as work skills
4. Relationships – friends, whanau, family
5. The ‘Dad’s Army’ tutor model
6. Removing barriers
7. The lodge
8. Mentoring
9. Cultural identity
10. A focus on outcomes

However, the very representation of these interwoven elements as separate strands for the sake of reporting, is acknowledged as being somewhat artificial. As noted earlier, much of the kaupapa which guides the way Kiwi Can Do operates, and the experiences the trainees have within the programme, has grown organically. Five years of trial and error, and different delivery models and locations have led to the practices and strategies recounted here; doubtless the programme will look different, too, five years from now. Kiwi Can Do staff do have roles and focal areas, but all contribute across the programme to the shared organisational culture and ethos. The following 10 themes, or strategies, are therefore the work of all stakeholders, internal and external, in a constantly evolving synergy, with the whole being even greater than the parts – effective as these are!



1. LIVING OUR VALUES

“A values-based social enterprise, demonstrated every day by staff and trainees”

Dame Fran Wilde, Chair of the Kiwi Can Do Ltd, has a long history of public service and leadership, at national, regional and community level, and knows a successful operating formula when she sees one. When she addressed the audience at the Open Day in January 2018, she talked about how the success of the Kiwi Can Do programme is directly linked to the organisation’s values:

- **Respect.** This is the primary hallmark of all relationships – between tutors, trainees and partners. As one tutor put it:

“With the atmosphere here, most trainees want to stay. There are rules, but it’s not an institution or a boot camp. We show respect and expect it back”

Students relish the opportunity to be taken seriously, with a fresh start untarnished by past failures or negative stereotyping and assumptions:

“Everyone started at the same level. No one’s higher than another”
“You’re accepted for who you are. There’s no judgement”

- **Optimism.** The Kiwi Can Do community is close-knit. Many trainees are following the paths of other family members; some of the staff at the Lodge are graduates from the programme themselves. There are lots of stories of success, and the regular interaction with employers, and tutors who have been visiting graduates now in the workplace, with the assurance of help finding work following the training period, has created a positive vibe of hope and optimism, reinforced by the programme leadership:

“We say to trainees - We’re good at solving problems. Tell us what’s troubling you. I bet we can fix it”

- **Belief.** The organisation is founded on the principle that people want to be successful, to achieve, and to contribute to their whanau, their community and future of Aotearoa. Trainees’ comments reinforce this view: in every focus group and most individual interviews, trainees talked about how much they enjoyed the learning. Once away from a classroom and someone up the front talking about things they didn’t understand and couldn’t relate to, the practical, worksite training completely changed their attitude to education. For many, it was a first taste of success:

“I moved from being a nobody to being noticed”

- **No sh*t.** As Fran Wilde puts it: “We don’t take it, and we don’t give it. There are no games, we’re here for a goal”. Kiwi Can Do are overt and transparent about the programme’s purpose: to help young people get a job, and stay in a job.

“They keep their promises. They promised to get us a job, we’d have good food, and make new friends. I definitely got all of that”



2. A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The role of Government

Both the present Labour Government, and their National predecessor have championed programmes that support sustainable employment pathways. For the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) (n.d.) which funds the programme, priorities include reducing long-term welfare dependency and boosting skills and employment for young people. Priorities for the Ministry of Education include delivering skills for industry, getting at-risk young people into a career, and boosting achievement of Māori and Pasifika (TEC, 2014). And for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2018), the provinces are seen as a key driver of New Zealand's economy, and therefore, programmes which take Māori and youth into the city for training that will enable them to return to their communities, work-ready and able to contribute to their full potential, are vital. Kiwi Can Do provides a grass-roots, no frills approach which is delivering successfully in all these areas.

The programme is fees-free for the trainees – but this is only the start of the support provided by MSD. MSD provides a number of products and services to assist the trainees, including a relocation grant for those moving to Auckland for work, and assistance with work related costs through 'Transition to Work' which is enough to get them kitted out with protective clothing, tools and equipment, such as painting gear and spray masks. Trainees can also test their eligibility for an accommodation supplement. As one employer notes:

“They have so much pride having all the kit. Normally an unskilled worker has to wait a year for spray gear, it's expensive, a big burden for a business, but with the grant, these guys get it straight away, so they can do their spray training immediately – it gives them a jump ahead”

“...they're actually productive. Have all the basic skills. So even if they leave, if the employer-employee relationship isn't good, they have that experience and skill set they can take to the open market, and they're easily snapped up”

Government support has been crucial to the success of the programme, and over the years the relationship has strengthened, with MSD staff visiting several times a year, and working closely with Kiwi Can Do leaders to problem-solve and strategize for the future. As their Key Account Manager says,

“Kiwi Can Do works closely with the client and industry – we resource them to make sure it can happen. When there are obstacles we come up with a bit of a plan together – we learn as we go. MSD's role as the government agency is to minimise risks. Letting them get on with it. Helping trouble shoot. Finding the simplest solution”

Industry and employers

“I like to employ fresh people, with a good attitude, who want to learn and work. If I advertise on Trade Me or take people off the street, I have to work out the bugs... With Kiwi Can Do, they have already done the hard work, figured out an individual's strengths and weaknesses. They've set workplace expectations – turning up, being on time. A Lot of kids their age just don't get this”



Even in a building boom, with a labour shortage, taking on a new employee with sketchy schooling, no trade qualifications, no work history, and possibly a personal history of gang associations or anti-social activity is a huge risk and significant investment. Employers interviewed for this report talked about previous frustrations with employee drug problems, and an institutionalised and benefit-dependent mindset. For long-term unemployed, entering a physical industry raised medical concerns about fitness, and patterns of absenteeism.

Kiwi Can Do's leadership team and tutors are from trade backgrounds; they understand the industry environment, they know workplaces, and they have extensive networks. In providing a bridging step between the unemployed and the employer, they are bringing decades of experience to short-circuit barriers and smooth entry into the working world. They are also highly pragmatic about focussing on the right candidates who can and will rise to the opportunity being offered. One tutor noted that in a particular recruitment session, 20 were interviewed, and only three trainees were accepted. It is this attention to the selection process, in addition to the programme itself, the post-programme follow-up, and the integration with MSD resourcing, which has built employer confidence and led to repeat placements.

“With Kiwi Can Do they’ve got a really good vetting process. They have already weeded out the bad turkeys. Some do have gang backgrounds and personal issues, but they have managed to identify those on a pathway to make progress. Kiwi Can Do have a lot of support around the trainees – they help, encourage and inspire them. Visiting after placement is great back up, too”

Additional evidence of the close partnership with industry is found in the number of organisations providing endorsements, sponsorship, tools and equipment, and even T-shirts. Acknowledged on the website, the following have all contributed to the successful story presented in this report: Master Painters NZ; Association of Wall and Ceiling Industries NZ; BCITO; Resene; Winstone Wallboards; Rondo; Placemakers; HILTI; Trowel Trades; NZ Ceiling and Drywall Supplies.

Kiwi Can Do are continually exploring new opportunities, and a current partnership in development is with Easy Build House Packs (www.easybuild.co.nz) to assemble cost-effective and affordable new homes on-site, from pre-built components. Kiwi Can Do are envisioning a future new trade, with teams of assemblers working under site supervisors, to specialise in low-cost, prefabricated houses.

Community organisations, Iwi and agencies

As Kiwi Can Do grow, the numbers of successful graduate placements increase, and their story becomes more widely known, other organisations and agencies working with similar programmes or clients are taking notice. Two organisations at the Open Day interested in discussing how the Kiwi Can Do training programme might complement the services they are providing were Te Paea Marae and Family First. Te Paea Marae is the south Auckland marae that provided emergency housing for the homeless in the 2017 winter, and has a mission to help families break the cycle of poverty and debt burden which they cannot pay off without reliable employment (www.maoritelevision.com/te-paea-memorial-marae). Family First is a registered charity which advocates for strong families and safe communities in the face of societal breakdown (www.familyfirst.org.nz). Such potential partners are representative of this stakeholder group, including other local Iwi and Pasifika trusts, and Māori wardens, who seek partnerships and connections through trusting relationships to enhance each party's effectiveness, and may in turn be a source of recruits, tutors and worksites.



3. LIFE SKILLS – AS WELL AS WORK SKILLS

“We’re more building confidence than training people”

In addition to upgrading driving licences, and learning a little about workplace regulations and legislation, such as Health and Safety, there is a strong emphasis on self-management and interpersonal skills. When trainees were asked about what they were learning, representative comments included:

“Communication. Skills. Confidence”

“Persistence. Getting the job done”

“Teamwork builds a company”

“Look sharp, talk sharp, be sharp”

Tutors, too, saw their jobs far more holistically than just passing on technical tips. Using the trade context, tutors actively assist trainees to make sense of their environment, and also, their place in that. One shared a metaphor he often uses, showing trainees that in a factory there might be a map on the wall and a pile of sticks on the floor. He tells them that life is like that: *“If you have a plan, you can make sense of how to achieve your goal”*.

Self-reliance and responsibility are built through tool handling, maintenance and tidying up, and keeping a register of tools and equipment signed in and out. There is the discipline of arriving on time, and sticking to timed smoko breaks. Leadership is encouraged to develop organically: *“With 16-18 in a group, a natural leader will arise, and the group sorts out its own structure. I use these boys to teach others, so I can work as a supervisor, just moving around and being there checking in every half hour or so, and I tell them how this is the workplace model”*.

Teaching workplace etiquette, courtesy and communication is built into the programme, with an insistence on having a good attitude, being respectful and friendly. Tutors set a culture of the group shaking hands every morning, welcoming each other, and asking about the work allocated that day. They emphasise the need to be able to look a boss in the eye, to be interested and responsive, to speak clearly, as *“Most young boys don’t have that”*.

While the work is going on, tutors take the opportunity to talk about job interviews, even role modelling the scary employer, the chatty employer. The message to the trainees is that what they are learning are only entry-level skills: *“Any painter knows within minutes what you know about the trade. They want to know about the person they are hiring – how will they work? Will they fit in?”*

As one tutor acknowledged, “The hardest question in any interview is *‘Tell me about yourself’*”. For many young people, learning about selling themselves when they may have been told all their lives they were a failure, is one of the most transformative elements in the programme.

“I’m not normally like this – I sit quiet. Being here I have to be more interactive, more talkative”

“I always associated with gangs. I got to know the staff here. They see the big change in me. Since I’ve been here I talk more about my life; it feels like we’re all family”

“I used to stick to myself a lot. Now I’m talking more. I’m breaking out of my cage. I feel really good, like I’m achieving something”



4. RELATIONSHIPS – FRIENDS, WHANAU, FAMILY

“Arrive as a group of strangers, leave with friends for life”

Every trainee interviewed for this report mentioned the social connections they had made during the programme as being central to their experience. The shared living and training environment builds camaraderie, and trainees support one another dealing with the challenges of being away from home, many for the first time, and a culture of personal responsibility and accountability.

Where this culture might take far longer to build in a traditional classroom, Kiwi Can Do staff believe that a residential programme can accomplish this group cohesion and belonging far more rapidly, essential in such a condensed training programme. Trainees appear to agree:

“The first day was hard. Not knowing what people are like, who you can trust. But it was all of them”

A new home, a new family

Several trainees mentioned *“Getting away from mum and dad”* as one of the benefits of their learning experience: *“Too much of my family, need more of this place”*. Staff who get to know the students also recognised that for many, the Lodge environment, and the Kiwi Can Do staff and trainees were a safer place than they had come from: *“Finding another family – if there are issues, they are addressed as a team”*

“It comes out in the last couple of days, ‘I don’t want to go home’, there can be fears and anxiety about going back, after they have made a break from alcohol, drugs, negative peer pressure”

For others, living and then staying on to work in a big city meant being apart from their own family and community background. Some of the graduate trainees talked about how the Kiwi Can Do team had become their whanau-in-the-city; they liked having Iain call into their workplace to visit and check that all was going well, and they liked knowing people they could call for help if needed. Examples given included transport, accommodation, and entitlement to MSD funding grants.

Friends refer friends

Recent intakes have seen the impact of ‘repeat business’ and ‘word of mouth’ referrals, with trainees coming following the successful experiences of brothers, cousins and friends from their local community. Iain Morrison often shares a story from an early intake of trainees from Katikati Bay of Plenty where local Māori wardens arranged a whanau visit: “One visitor didn’t even recognise her grandson, he had changed so much – he was walking proudly, dressed tidily and clean, shaking hands and introducing visitors and staff, and generally, a changed person!” A great report, notes Iain, to take home to her community.



5. THE 'DAD'S ARMY' TUTOR MODEL

“It’s like learning with your favourite uncle, or grandfather. They’ve retired, raised families. They might have had difficulties, in their lives, in their work, but they’ve handled it”

The tutors at Kiwi Can Do are a further point of departure from traditional trade training programmes. All are retired tradespeople, aged 65 plus; they have spent their working life on the worksite, many have run their own businesses, and they know the job, the people, and the industry. They are employed for their experience and skill sets, and their readiness to provide patient guidance and support. As Iain Morrison says,

“We call them ‘Dad’s Army’, because older men are role models. It’s a nurturing role. It’s an age-old model, like a dad showing his son”.

The tutors accept the Dad’s Army moniker, but also talked about how they approached the role, drawing not just on personal experience, but their professional experience of managing staff, and being a boss:

“I’ve never actually been on a course to learn how to do this [teaching] myself. I put this together from a painting sense; I explain how things work in a company from a financial sense. It’s just like a man owning a company wants a job done in a particular way, he teaches his staff that way. That’s how I teach these kids”

The tutors all mentioned being able to understand where the trainees come from as a large part of being able to connect and forge relationships within the programme. They talked about understanding the challenges as well as the motivations, using the same language, and breaking down the steps to achieve a goal. One tutor’s example of what he calls ‘life lessons’ shows the Dad’s Army style of guidance in action:

“Success is...going home where you’re loved, if you can feed yourself, there’s something in the fridge, and maybe in the wallet at the end of the week. Want a Legacy car? That’s just a bit more on top of the original success. If you want more money, you need to learn something else, so you can add to your hourly rate. You can keep rising.”



6. REMOVING BARRIERS

Since inception in 2013, Kiwi Can Do has always recognised that the youth group it is trying to help into the workforce face considerable barriers. These can be both internal (such as a negative schooling experience with poor attendance and outcomes, low levels of literacy and numeracy, and low self-esteem), and external (such as issues with accommodation and transport). Some recruits have health and fitness issues, some have drug, alcohol and tobacco dependencies, some have gang associations and criminal connections and/or convictions. The overwhelming majority come from low socio-economic backgrounds where there are simply no financial resources to help them move to centres where there are work or training opportunities. For many, their immediate circle of family and friends may have few positive role models of career pathways and material success. Numerous studies (e.g. Buzzeo et al., 2016) recognise that for training providers, increasing access to programmes for the most disadvantaged young people is both logistically challenging and resource-intensive, and one of the hardest sectors in education to operate in.

As described earlier, the first Kiwi Can Do programmes tried to bring the training to the community, with some early successes, but concerns about longer term sustainability, and consistency. The more recent tactic has been to establish a strong base close to the largest centre of employment opportunities, at Otimai Lodge in Oratia, West Auckland. Funding from MSD has allowed the programme to become a residential one, so that immediately, issues of accommodation and meals are taken care of. Kiwi Can Do vans collect trainees from their homes and bring them to Auckland for the Monday to Friday programme, then return them for the weekend. The same vans take them to and from the training site each day, when working away from the Lodge; if the trainee is from Auckland and not resident at the Lodge, they are also collected en route. Short-term transport barriers are therefore removed from the picture.

During the programme, trainees are further supported to address gaps in their skill set. Those with literacy and numeracy requirements can work individually with tutors and support staff after hours, and informed about the other sources of help in community agencies and programmes available. All gain a Site Safe Construction Certificate, required for most trade work sites: for many this is their first qualification, and evidence of their completion of the Kiwi Can Do training. And during the programme, all trainees can upgrade their driving licences – from learner, to restricted, to a full licence, overcoming yet another barrier to achieving a job.

Another aspect of the wrap-around approach is the practical support which continues for trainees once they graduate. MSD grants set the new employees up with protective gear and equipment, and assist with the cost of relocating to wherever their job is. The Kiwi Can Do staff make sure the trainees know how to access these and other necessary support services, depending on each individual's circumstances. Ongoing visits and mentoring during the first three months of employment support the new graduates' confidence and provide a two-way conduit for communicating concerns between employer and employee, if this should be necessary.

“Thanks guys for all you did for us. You have changed our lives and I’m forever grateful to meet you’s all” - Facebook page



7. THE LODGE

A heritage property

Otimai Lodge is a unique place, with an historical significance as a haven and a place of community to generations of Aucklanders. In 1944 a Trust set up by Girl Guides founder Lucinda Wilson transferred the property to The Girl Guides Association New Zealand Branch. Over the years it was used for camps and training, and more recently hired out for events, but in September 2016, the Association said it was no longer earning enough to cover costs, and the Lodge and grounds were advertised for sale. Due to the nature of the endowment, High Court and Attorney-General approval were required. Opposition to the sale from the Guiding community was immediate and vocal, with appeals to local and national government: “It’s our turangawaewae, so why would we give up while there was any chance?” (www.stuff.co.nz/business/84776864/Otimai-lodge-sale-on-hold-after-opposition-from-Girl-Guide-supporters).

A home for Kiwi Can Do

In 2017, Kiwi Can Do signed a long-term lease with the Guides Association, and took over occupancy with an agreement to completely renovate the Lodge and adjacent cottage, used for staff accommodation. The Lodge with its large, communal meeting and dining rooms, catering kitchen and accommodation wings – both bunkrooms and bedrooms – has been an ideal training site for the programme, and one year on is looking spruced up and cared for.

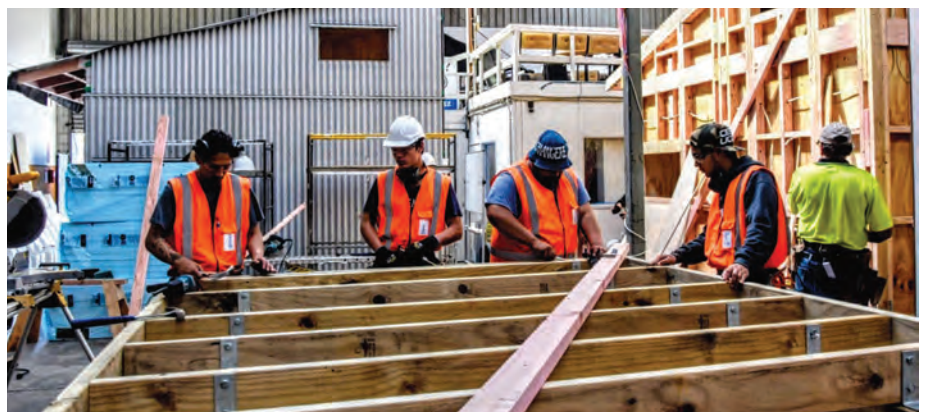
Trainees respond to the special atmosphere

All trainees interviewed for this report loved their time here. From Monday to Friday, there are rules to live by: respect for others and their property; maintenance of their own areas and light duties; no alcohol or drugs on the premises; a night time curfew. The few who find these difficult, leave, but most trainees say they want to stay longer, once their three weeks is up. Some talked about realising they needed the break from staying up gaming all night, or relying on substance use to lubricate social activities. Many talked about new friends; learning how to live in, and navigate a big city; and being able to get up, and get ready for work in the morning, day after day. But the biggest thing trainees talked about, was the food!

“We ate a lot of salads. Something different every day. It was MUCH healthier than I ate before”

“The food stood out, they definitely fed me well”

Chef Domenica Houlihan’s philosophy is good, homecooked meals, with healthier versions of takeaway favourites, like coated chicken and movie night dinner-bags. She talks to trainees about what they are buying to keep in their fridge, about their sugar intake and the low nutritional value of fizzy drinks. And her secret to get the dishes done? A prize for the best clean-up team. ***“We did it in 20 minutes – what did last night’s team do?”***



8. MENTORING

“Genuine caring is the difference”

Mentoring is a critical element in Kiwi Can Do's wrap-around provision, supporting the development of personal and vocational skills, as well as growing confidence, purpose, and self-belief. Every member of the staff contributes: this is not an assigned task which occurs in isolation, but is ubiquitous, occurring naturally at any hour of the day, in any setting, across a wide range of topics.

Around the Lodge

Mentoring occurs throughout the day, with one staff member noting that she often bonds with individual trainees over a cigarette outside: *“They ask me questions about life, what happens now?”*

For another staff member, it's in the kitchen: *“They love coming in and helping. I'm a bit like a Mum, I'm quite strict. We have lots of chats, helping them form their own opinions, and make good choices. It's a different way of learning, but it is all learning”*

Then there are staff members who were trainees themselves, and are now tutors and caretakers. They can share their stories, talk through early resistance: *“I know you're not used to being told what to do. You're all 'I don't need to listen to you.' But these are good people. They can help you”*

Sometimes it's just about listening, and celebrating achievement: *“I see a lot of happy faces, 9 out of 10 at least. When they come in, I ask, 'How was work?' They don't just go 'It was shit'. They say 'It was awesome'. That's how I know we're getting through”.*

On the training site

As described earlier, the Dad's Army tutors have proved a great fit with the programme, with practical demonstrations, individual feedback and support, and a lot of patience. Conversations range from budgeting, to interview skills, to workplace expectations – all while getting first-hand experience of a trade. For many of the trainees, this type of side-by-side mentoring was the highlight of the programme: *“I loved the older guys [tutors] – they helped me in a lot of things. Got me this job. Understanding. Really good people. As long as you play to their rules, they helped as much as they can. Got me to the place I am today”.*

In the job

“If the wheels fall off, we can help tidy things up”

Kiwi Can Do stays in touch with the trainees and the employing contractor for 91 days. They help solve any issues and get the employer and staff member relationship off to the best possible start. For the employer, it's a free recruitment and HR service. And for the graduate trainee, it can be a lifeline, and the difference between giving up – or sustainable success: *“Iain came and visited. He helped out with accommodation. Got me a 3K grant for relocating. If not for them, I'd still be doing the same thing – seasonal work, kiwifruit, stuff with no future.*

In Auckland, that's where I got the job, but I have a lot of negative people around me, I don't want to relapse. I told Paddy, I can't be in Auckland, and he worked around that. The company I'm with now, he talked to them, they made the rearrangements, and I went to Wellington. I don't have my own place yet, but I'm working on getting there. It's good”



9. CULTURAL IDENTITY

Marae-style living

While over 80% of trainees are Māori, many come from homes in which Māori traditions do not play a strong part, and have had little experience of marae living, or kawa and tikanga. For these trainees, answering questions about how the programme supported their cultural identity was sometimes unclear; nonetheless, their contributions often referred to values which reflect Māori kaupapa (e.g. **“No judgement”, “respect”, “family”, “there’s a lot of love”, “no one’s racist here”**). **For other trainees, there was no question:**

“The whole concept is based around marae-style”

A lot of examples trainees gave were around food, including: helping in the kitchen, having ‘boil-ups’ on the menu; karakia before meals, eating together in a large whare kai. Further examples were around communal living; rules about what comes into the Lodge and what is left behind; and formal welcoming of visitors with a powhiri – korero, karakia, waiata.

Filling in the gaps

This mix of both unconscious and conscious awareness and adoption of Māori kaupapa was echoed by the staff. Some described the practical nature of learning by doing, and working alongside an elder-mentor. Others talked about approachability:

“We’ve got Māori and non-Māori staff. There’s no target. Everyone can talk to anyone on staff”

For one staff member, the casual use of te reo Māori throughout the three-week programme gives those who don’t understand a chance to ask, learn, and start to use for themselves. And then, “Some of them teach me, and we share.”

“It doesn’t matter where we come from, we acknowledge our Māori, but it’s not formal. Like we say ‘Bro’. In graduation, if they want to speak in Māori, they can. Some groups do a haka. Whatever they want and need, we are there to support”

Again, many of those interviewed mentioned values like respect, tolerance and acceptance, noting that the primary goal is readying trainees for the workplace. As one employer told us:

“Our workplace is multicultural – Samoan, Tongan, Māori, Pākehā, Czech, Sri Lankan, Ethiopian, Rarotongan, Philippines. People have to get on. They need the ability to work with people from a range of backgrounds. If they know their own culture, it’s a good start.”



10. A FOCUS ON OUTCOMES

Programme results

Kiwi Can Do is a successful programme, recognised at Ministerial level as achieving strong and consistent outcomes in transitioning youth from unemployment to work, via vocational training. The programme itself has been, and continues to constantly evolve, so that providing an historical record of results means a somewhat artificial collation of dissimilar data. Broadly speaking, over nearly five years of operations, Kiwi Can Do's record of programme completion by trainees is over 90%; with placement in employment and/or further training currently tracking at 65%. Table Two shows the most recent outcome results available, covering six months of course offerings:

Table Two: Course Outcomes August-December 2017; Jan-Feb 2018						
	Commenced	Trainees	Trainees placed in employment	In further training	Total	%
Course 31	7/08/2017	22 (x10 residential)	9	6	15	68%
Course 32	4/09/2017	21 (x16 residential)	9	7	16	72%
Course 33	2/10/2017	26 (x14 residential)	7	6	13	61%
Course 34	13/11/2017	22 (x 13 residential)	5	6	11	50%
Course 35/36	27/11/2017	23 (x20 residential)	5	7	12	52%
2018 Course 1	15/01/2018	5	3	1	4	80%
2018 Course 2	21/01/2018	18	3	7	10	55%

The current programme configuration described in this report is represented by the completed courses run in the latter half of 2017. The 'rolling intake' approach to delivery commenced in 2018. The trainees represented in the outcome statistics shown in Table Two were drawn from across Auckland, Northland, Bay of Plenty and Waikato regions. An observation can be made that, except for a successful small intake in mid-January, placement in employment or further training tended to be higher through August-October, with a small reduction around the summer holiday break period. However, as these results are collated soon after the completion of the course, there may still be some improvement with graduates re-contacting Kiwi Can Do, finding work or returning to study in the new year.

Personal gains

Every trainee interviewed offered ideas about how they had benefitted from the programme. They liked learning new skills and getting a glimpse of different trades. One trainee said he liked knowing he was working hard when he was sweating. Another said he was a bit scared of the power tools on the first day, but enjoyed using them now. Everyone spoken to liked learning in a practical way, away from a whiteboard and a 'teacher', without pressure to complete written work. There were numerous comments about what they had achieved, about being surprised that everyone made it easy for them to succeed, and about feeling good that they were good at something. Above all, trainees liked the strong focus on purpose and outcomes:

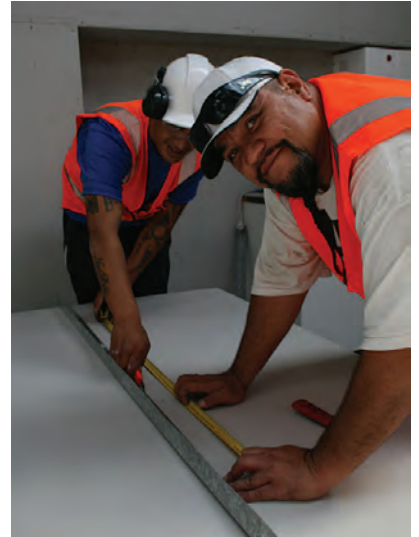
"It's the whole package. I can see the benefit of everything we're doing. I learn something every day from the other trainees too"



Trainees also recognised their own personal growth and increased self-esteem. They liked *“knowing what to say and how to behave with a boss.”* For the tutors and other staff, personal development was one of the most noticeable gains the trainees made:

“It’s morale-boosting. We see people who have found themselves and something they enjoy. Now they have a pathway to something greater. It boosts them as a character”

Iain and Paddy like to share inspirational stories from graduates with new courses, and one which resonates with new trainees is that of Morgan “Rusty” McDonald, a trainee from Hamilton who was placed in a local painting company. Rusty quickly proved himself as a reliable and hard-working employee, and was offered an apprenticeship. Now he’s looking at buying a house, *“and you certainly can’t do that if you’re sitting on the dole.”* (<http://kiwi-can-do.co.nz/news/apprentice-sets-sights-on-buying-own-home>).



SUMMARY – EXPLAINING THE SUCCESS

“Our programmes are short, sharp and effective. Our contract with Work and Income means we are a free training, recruitment and placement service where everybody benefits”

The list of success stories, like Rusty McDonald’s, continues to grow. Much of this success must be due to the flexibility the organisation has shown over its five years of operation. The original vision, to create fit young people ready to join a work crew and the work environment, is still firmly in place. What has changed is how this vision has been enacted: the location, the wrap-around systems and strategies, and the inclusion of an ever-widening circle of stakeholders and supporters.

Key to everything that Kiwi Can Do stands for, and does, is aroha and whānaungatanga: genuine caring, and meaningful relationships. The trainees are at the centre of it all, and their relationships with one another, with their tutors and other staff are the foundation of their learning experience. Beyond this, the relationships with industry, employers and with MSD follow the same pattern of shared purpose, integrity and values-based social enterprise. This is a programme with heart, but also a relentlessly practical approach. The ten interwoven strategies described in this report are not only examples of these principles in action, they are also the framework which underpins everything that happens here.

Fine-tuning

There were some suggestions from present trainees and staff for fine-tuning. Many would like an option to stay longer. One staff member suggested inviting a local kaumatua to official welcomes and events, to make sure local traditions and tikanga were respected. One employer would like to see more mentoring around budgeting and managing pay packets. There were a few specific, one-off issues: ***“Changes to the programme? It’s perfect. But I would say, ‘Be more strict with some of the people.’ They can’t just think it’s all going to be easy, like on the programme, like they can’t think they’re going to start work at 9. You start work at 7”***

But for most, ***“It was pretty spot on”***

What lies ahead

As mentioned earlier, Kiwi Can Do already have ideas about future pathways: partnering with a manufacturer of prefabricated houses; running a residential programme in Wellington; adding in a hospitality / food-handling training strand, and possibly a market gardening option as well.

The immediate challenge, however, is scaling up to accommodate the increased places the MSD has announced it will fund in 2018, without ***“losing the magic”***. Doubling the intake to 40-45 places a month will be partly managed by a rolling intake, instead of 2017’s discrete courses. Naturally, these changes may introduce their own challenges, but Kiwi Can do staff are willing and prepared to take these on. The momentum is there, the economic climate is right, government support in place, and industry on board. The future for the organisation, and the trainees who attend the programme, looks bright.



REFERENCES

Ako Aotearoa. (2011).

Te Tauākī Ako: Our Ako Framework.

Retrieved from <https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/our-work-m%C4%81ori-educators-and-learners/resources/pages/te-tau%C4%81k%C4%AB-ako-our-ako-framework>

Ako Aotearoa. (2015).

Hei Toko i te Tukunga: Enabling Māori Learner Success. Kaupapa Māori learner-centred education practice.

Retrieved from <https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/hei-toko>

Buzzeo, J., Marvell, R., Everett, C., & Newton, B. (2016).

Tackling unemployment among disadvantaged young people: Report for the UK Institute of Employment Studies.

Retrieved from www.employment-studies.co.uk

Chauvel, F., & Read, J. (2012).

Doing better for Māori in tertiary settings.

Wellington: Tertiary Education Commission.

Greenwood, J., & Te Aika, L. (2009).

Hei tauria: Teaching and learning success for Māori in tertiary settings.

Wellington: Ako Aotearoa.

Ministry of business Innovation and Employment. (2018).

Regional economic development.

Retrieved from www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/sectors-industries/regions-cities/regional-economic-development

Ministry of Social Development. (n.d.).

Priorities for the social sector.

Retrieved from www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-services-for-outcomes/priorities-for-the-social-sector.html

Sciascia, A. (2017).

Māori learner success in tertiary education: Highlights from Ako Aotearoa projects.

Retrieved from <https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/ako-aotearoa/resources/files/ako-aotearoa-synthesis-projects-focused-supporting-maori-learners-report>

Smith, G. (2012). Kaupapa Māori: The dangers of domestication.

New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies 47(2), 10-20.

Tertiary Education Commission. (2014).

The Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019.

Retrieved from www.tec.govt.nz/focus/our-focus/tes