

Integrating and adopting a more choice food assistance model is the latest shift in food distribution. Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective have had conversations with some of those operating these innovative models across Aotearoa to understand: what is their unique practice model; what values drive these practices; and what do they hope the future will bring for their organisation and the people they seek to uplift?

Te Hiku Pātaka

Te Kahu Oranga Whānau, referred to as 'The Collab', brings together Māori and Iwi led social services and whānau development organisations - Tuihata Mahi Ora Trust, Te Rarawa Anga Mua, Te Whare Ruruhau o Meri and Waitomo Papakāinga. Collectively these organisations and within their own capacities, provide tautoko, aroha and awahi to whānau throughout Te Hiku o Te Ika (The Far North) through to Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland).

Te Hiku Pātaka

What lead you to choosing the more choice model?

The Te Hiku Pātaka is one of many services of Te Kahu Oranga Whānau which provide whānau with tautoko, aroha and awahi.

The reasons for choosing their Pātaka model was simple. Whānau identified feeling judged by a traditional transactional foodbank model.

This new model, in collaboration with other services, provides the foundations to be more relational, and

provide kai in a way which could uplift people and open doors to create positive changes in their lives.

What is the core value of the Pātaka? And how does that help to shape your practice?

Te Hiku Pātaka uses te ao Māori to inform their practice. Their core value is Manaakitanga as they aim to awahi and toutoko all who enter the Pātaka, in which ever way they may need. They strive to create a mana- safe environment to help people feel comfortable while they access the kai. This is crafted by playing waiata in the background and having signage in te reo, as well as respecting whanau and their needs, supporting them in which ever way suits them. For instance during the shop some may like you to walking with them while they shop and have a chat, whilst others may need some space to roam. The Pātaka has Te reo Signage and play waiata to

“Many people feel whakamā at the start and some might not be able to look you in the eye when they arrive, but by the end they can look you in the eye.” Having manaakitanga at the heart of the Pātaka creates a comfortable space where whanau and kaimahi can connect.

What lead you to a model which includes a koha? What does this mean to your shoppers?

“It’s embedded in our culture to give.” A koha is a symbol of being in relationship with each other, and respect each other. It does not imply a lesser value that something is worth, in fact it is the opposite and is more about the expression of our relationship than the monetary value of an item.

“We always look to our kaumātua and kuia for guidance. If we went back to the old ways, people don’t feel whakamā if they give a koha. Being able to give and have a reciprocal relationship is uplifting and makes it a better experience for all.

The koha doesn’t have to be money either. Some people choose to bring other things that they have to give – like snapper they’ve caught.”

The feedback, of which is mostly written in te reo, reflects how meaningful this service is to the community. “I am very appreciative for the opportunities for my grandad and very grateful for what you do.”

What’s one learning you would like others to know who are looking to adopt a similar model of practice?

“Working with others makes you one mighty force! You don’t have to pave the way by yourself. Working with others helps you to make bigger changes because you can share the load and work to each others strengths.”

What is one thing that you like, wish and wonder about the Pātaka?

“My hopes and dreams is that we would have done such a wonderful job, that we could change the way we support whānau and include more education and give people the ability to remember that they are self resourceful and can grow their own kai and share it with their whānau.”

The Model

There are a number of ways to access Te Hiku Pātaka, it is accessible through engagement with one of the four collab organisations, or by having a korero with the kaimahi, either in person or on the phone to find a time for to shop.

Once you arrive you will be greeted and there is a quick assessment form, to help understand more about who you are, what your situation is and who you are shopping for.

Kaimahi will also let you know of the other services available within the collab. You then have time to do your shop, this is often where people korero with the kaimahi; a chance to offload if you need.

On the second visit you will be encouraged to have more conversations with kaimahi and may be referred onto other services within the collab that give the tools and resources needed to make meaningful changes to your life.

The Pātaka uses a point system to guide the amount of kai each person can take. Kai is provided by Foodstuffs and local donations. They also provide other items in the pātaka such as period undies – a sustainable period product and seedlings- demonstrating that with the right skills, you can grow your own.

Awahi provided by the collab

Te Whare Ruruhau o Meri Trust provides professional services, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, non-violence programmes, traditional Māori parenting, safety programmes, sexual crisis interventions with victims in the communities of Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) and in recent years that has extended to Kaitaia – Te Hiku o te Ika.

Te Rarawa Anga Mua Charitable Trust (TRAM) was established through the Te Rarawa treaty settlement legislation. TRAM is a social development trust to support the inter-generational development of Te Rarawa whānau, hapū and iwi. TRAM is focused on advancing social, environmental, cultural and economic well-being.

Tuhiata Mahi Ora works with rangatahi and their whānau in the Far North whose lives have been impacted in a way that is having an effect on their ability to reach their full potential. Our staff team have an in-depth knowledge of the needs of our rangatahi, whānau and the community.

Waitomo Papakāinga is a whānau focused social services agency that has been operating in Kaitāia for 30 years. Waitomo Papakāinga use a Te Ao Māori approach to design, develop and deliver services to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of whānau and their hāpori.