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The Hubs Pilot Insights Report

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**Titiro whakamuri,
kōkiri whakamua.**

Look back and
reflect, so that you can
move forward.

Whakataukī (Māori proverb)

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Executive Summary

The 'Regional Hubs' pilot (the Pilot) was a 10-month programme, delivered between November 2018 and September 2019.

The Pilot sits within the capability building workstream of the Social Enterprise Sector Development Programme (the Programme) which has the overall goal of helping to create the conditions for a thriving social enterprise sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Pilot tested activities to make capability building services more visible, more accessible, more relevant and more effective for social enterprises, wherever they are in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Pilot sought to connect and equip a network of social enterprise champions (Hub partners) across eight communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim of the Pilot was to understand how such a network could become a mechanism for building the capability in social enterprises. With greater clarity on the most urgent needs and barriers that social enterprises across Aotearoa New Zealand experience, could a network of Hubs partners, focussed on peer learning and locally-delivered capability support, be instrumental in helping social enterprises thrive?

Pilot activity revolved around connecting Hub partners to each other and equipping them with the skills and tools to deliver capability building to social enterprises. The Pilot took a 'train the trainer' approach where the Ākina Foundation (Ākina) worked closely with Hub partners. A range of activities both online and kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) were designed to increase the Hub partners capability and confidence to deliver direct support to social enterprises within their region.

The Pilot focussed on:

- Increasing visibility and accessibility of support for social entrepreneurs across Aotearoa New Zealand;
- Offering relevant and meaningful business support tools and programmes; and
- Building the networks needed for a stronger, more connected ecosystem.

Hub partners experienced a range of outcomes including: increased connection within the social enterprise sector; increased confidence to support social enterprise; and increased levels of stakeholder engagement. The insights in this report show that the most valuable parts of the Pilot were: the introduction of seed funding so that the Hubs could explore their long term financial sustainability; connecting with and learning from others; online and offline training opportunities; and direct support tailored to their region and organisation from Ākina.

The Pilot demonstrates that connecting and training locally-embedded social enterprise champions offers some of the answers needed to help support entrepreneurs make a positive impact. However, financial sustainability remains a significant barrier to Hub partners delivering support to social enterprises in a consistent and ongoing way. Moving forward, our learning and insights will inform the wider capability building strategy of the Programme and inform the All-of-Government strategy to support the social enterprise sector.

Introduction

Building capability by facilitating a peer network

The Programme, through the work lead by Ākina, is on a mission to uncover the most effective ways to make **capability building**¹ services more visible, more accessible, more relevant and more effective for **social enterprises**², across Aotearoa New Zealand.

The assumption behind the Pilot is that a network approach is an effective way to deliver capability support to social enterprises nationwide. The Pilot tested whether locally-led and locally-delivered support systems are an effective way to help social enterprises increase their impact on social and environmental issues. The Pilot was designed as a way to deliver capability building by facilitating a peer network of local social enterprise champions (Hub partners). These Hub partners were able to make connections and access training to better support social enterprises in their communities. In the words of one of our Hub partners, “the intention was to network, so we’re not duplicating”.

This report is the story of how a diverse group of individuals and organisations came together to learn and explore how communities could be strengthened through networking. We expand on three key areas of learning:

- The outcomes that were experienced by Hub partners;
- How this influenced their local work to grow social enterprise in their communities; and
- What Ākina learned about the model itself.

Ultimately, we’re seeking answers to two key questions: What have we learnt about the potential of this approach to deliver capability support? And what have we learnt about the most effective ways this can be done in Aotearoa New Zealand at this stage in the development of our social enterprise ecosystem?

A note on evaluation

The pilot took a ‘Developmental Evaluation’ approach in conjunction with the principles of ‘Social Return on Investment’. Further definition of these terms can be found in the glossary (page 30). We collected data through; surveys, monthly activity logs, interviews and evaluation workshops.

A note on terminology

Where terms may be unfamiliar, we have provided a definition in place where possible. Bolded terms are also defined in the glossary appendix on page 30.

¹**Capability building:** *the process by which individuals and organisations obtain, improve, and retain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment and other resources needed to do their jobs competently or to a greater/improved capacity.*

²**Social enterprise:** *a purpose-driven organisation which trades to deliver positive social, cultural or environmental impact. Social enterprises can be profit making businesses, but they reinvest the majority of their profit, or expenditure, into their purpose.*

1. Context

“Passionate people who have some knowledge of social enterprise are a nationwide resource that’s not being utilised.”

“There are lots of awesome ideas but there is a gap in knowledge, mentoring, legal advice and seed funding locally.”

- feedback from sector consultation

1.1 Why a Regional Hubs Pilot?

Insights from sector engagement and validation

In the first year of the Programme, Ākina conducted in-depth sector consultation to get insight into the needs of social enterprises and the barriers they face on their journey from start-up to scale. These insights informed the recommendation to test a network approach to building capability in social enterprises.

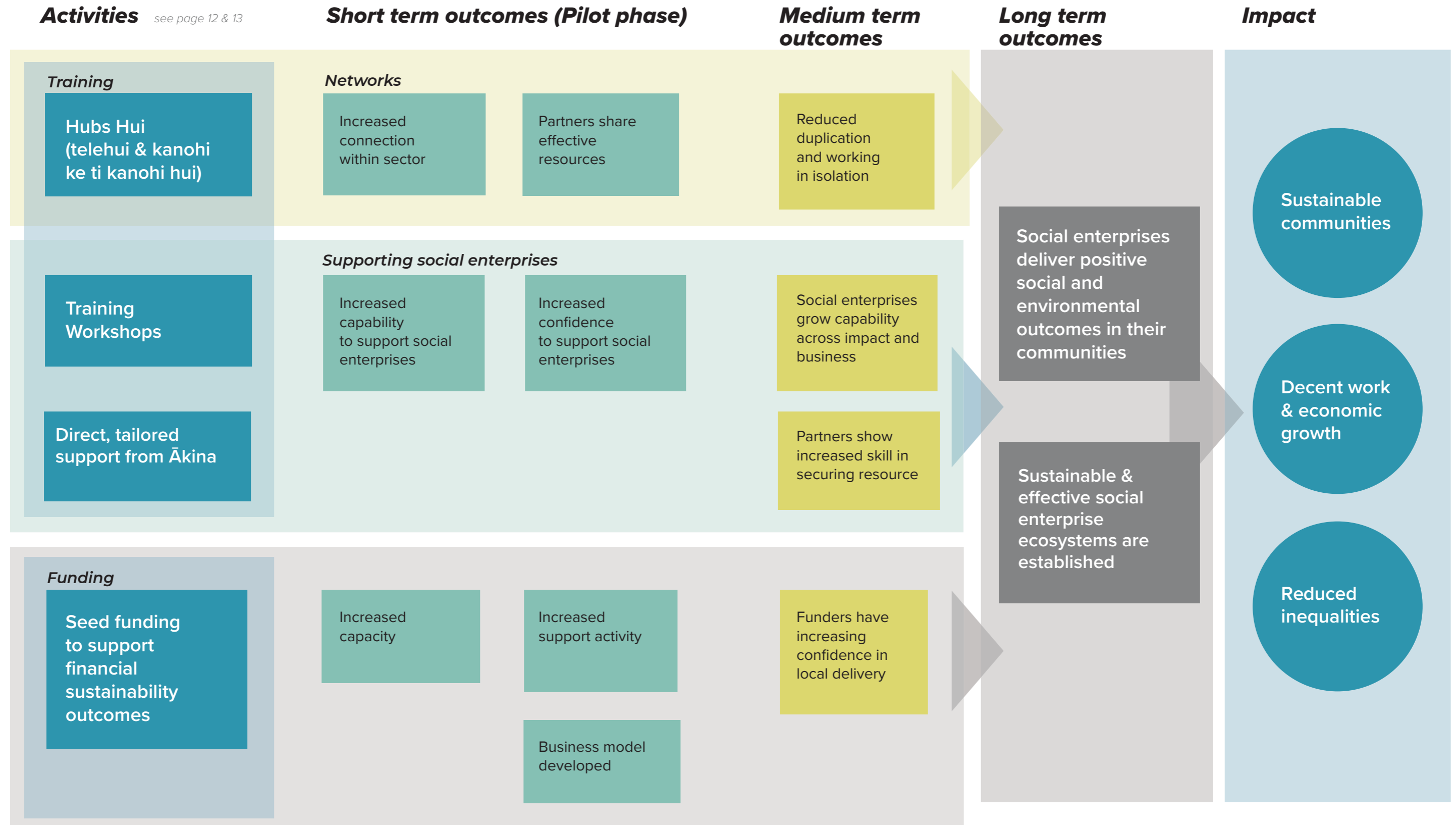
The primary mechanism for sector engagement in the first year of the Programme was a series of community based events called ‘Kitchen Table Talks’. These events took place across the country. They were a chance for practitioners, supporters and those interested in social enterprise to gather and discuss important matters relating to social enterprise.

In conjunction with the Kitchen Table Talks, Ākina carried out validation interviews to hear deeper reflections on the challenges faced by individuals and organisations supporting social enterprises in their communities. The insights from the talks and interviews had clear themes that can be summarised into three areas of opportunity:

- Increasing visibility and accessibility of support for social entrepreneurs across the country;
- Offering relevant and meaningful support tools and programmes across business and impact; and
- Building the networks that are needed for a stronger, more connected ecosystem.

1.2 Our impact framework

In the first month of the Pilot, we collaborated with Hub partners to create the **impact framework**³ below. While we had a vision for the medium term and long term outcomes of a Regional Hubs initiative, the aim of the Pilot was to deliver short term outcomes during the Pilot delivery phase.



³Impact framework: a visual representation of the logic of how an activity will lead to social or environmental change. The framework identifies the intended causal links between activities, and outcomes over a length of time.

2. The Pilot

“The Pilot was an awesome opportunity to get some traction for social enterprise in our region.”

- Social Impact Nelson Tasman

2.1 Who was involved?

The Pilot was designed for individuals and organisations who were keen to collaborate to lead the growth of social enterprise in their community. The eight individuals and organisations who expressed interest in taking part in the Pilot (Hub partners) identified the potential for social enterprise to play a significant role towards thriving and resilient communities. They shared Ākina’s vision to grow a productive, sustainable and inclusive economy by harnessing the power of positive social and environmental impact.

However, Hub partners were at very different stages in their development with varied understanding and experience of social enterprise. Some were well established organisations already offering a variety of support activities for social entrepreneurs. Others were passionate individuals who could see the potential of social enterprise and were keen to see social enterprise activity grow in their region.

Broadly, the organisations stage fell into the following categories; an ‘Idea Stage’ Hub, an ‘Early Stage’ Hub, and an ‘Operating’ Hub.

2.2 Overview of activity

The Pilot offered access to: a network of other social enterprise Hubs, training workshops (in-person and online), monthly peer-to-peer calls, seed funding, direct support from Ākina staff, and tools and resources.

The next spread offers an overview of the key activities and milestones throughout the 10-month Pilot. Note the distinction between activities that were offered to the whole group of Hubs partners, and other support activities that were tailored to specific Hubs and their unique needs, and delivered in a direct, one-on-one fashion.

99

Combined hours of participation in training workshops.

70%

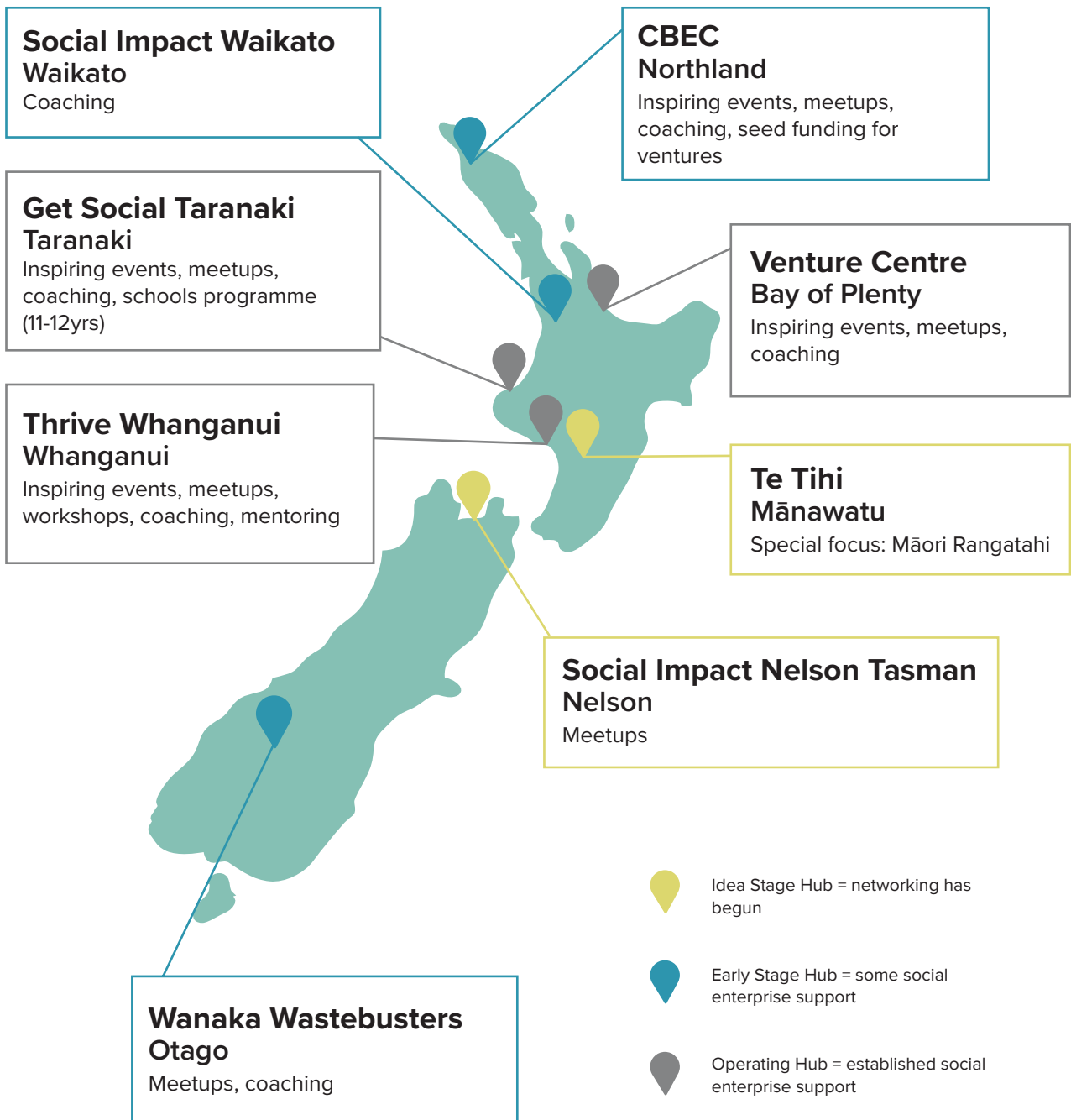
Of Hubs partners attended every training and workshop.

“Just being part of the Hubs programme spurred me on to do more”

- Wanaka Wastebusters

PROFILE MAP

with support available to date



PILOT TIMELINE

Start here
2018

June - Sept
Pilot Design

September
Expression of Interest

November

- 'How to use the Social Lean Canvas' (SLC), our impact-led business model template & 'Coaching social enterprises'
- Access to Social Lean Canvas template

Kanohi ki te kanohi hui
A gathering for all in Taranaki

August

- Guest speaker; Kath Dewar, Goodsense, Storytelling Q&A

Direct support

Whanganui
Supported to design and articulate their Hub's pathways framework

Nelson
Supported with presentation to key local stakeholders and presentation at a public meetup

Palmerston North
Supported with invitations to and attendance at a co-design community event

Kanohi ki te kanohi hui
A gathering for all in Bay of Plenty

July
Readjustment/Pivot of Pilot Design

- 'Indigenous co-design' & 'Coaching social enterprises through storytelling'
- Goodsense Storytelling resources
- Reconnecting, asks, offers
- Working groups established to explore topics of governance and online technology
- Seed funding offered

Direct support

Taranaki
Ākina Invest supported Get Social Taranaki meetup

September
Pilot Wrap-Up, Evaluation

Direct support

Whanganui
Supported to progress their impact framework

Kanohi ki te kanohi hui
A gathering for all in Whanganui

End

Key

- Telehui:** Online video call for all Hubs participants
- Training workshop:** In person or online in depth training on a subject
- Kanohi ki te kanohi hui:** In person gathering in a common location for a day or two to work together and connect
- Tool:** Template, guide or resource provided for Hubs to use

Monthly one-to-one check ins were also offered to participants

2019

January

- Reconnecting, asks, offers

February

- Guest speaker: Sarah Crawley, iSE (Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs), UK

March

- 'Collective Impact'⁴ 'Introduction to Impact'
- Impact Model templates

Kanohi ki te kanohi hui
A gathering for all in Mānawatu

April

- Guest speaker: Matthew Luxon, CENT, Insights from latest sector consultation activities

May

- Guest speaker: Helene Malandain, Hubs Pilot funding opportunities

June
Midway Evaluation

- 'Impact modelling' & 'Impact measurement'
- Impact webinars x 2
Ecosystem mapping webinar
- Pilot midway evaluation and opportunities to pivot
- Guest speaker: Clementine Baker, Impact modelling and measurement Q&A

Direct support

Northland
Supported to develop an impact framework, identifying key stakeholder. CBEC and Ākina Co-facilitated venture support

Bay of Plenty
Supported with impact framework workshops

⁴Impact: is the positive social, cultural or environmental changes, or outcomes, that happen as a consequence of an activity.

2.3 Outcomes for Hub partners

To assess the Pilot and identify insights that will inform the most effective capability building strategy moving forward, we carried out a series of evaluation workshops during our final kanohi ki te kanohi hui. We also carried out individual interviews with each Hub partner. Here's what we learnt.

2.3.1 What changed?

Increased connection within sector

“The opportunities to meet, engage and learn from Ākina staff and the members of the other hubs has been invaluable.”

- **Social Impact Nelson Tasman**

“I loved meeting people from all over New Zealand interested in supporting and growing the sector and feeling that we were a part of a nationwide movement.”

- **Wanaka Wastebusters**

“I definitely valued the reflective time gained through these face-to-face gatherings, and strengthening and creating new relationships with other hubs.”

- **Thrive Whanganui**

“Having the hub collective has been fantastic as you didn't feel like you were working in isolation and could ask for feedback if you were uncertain about a situation relating to a venture.”

- **CBEC Northland**

*Reported by
7 out of 8 hubs*

“The Pilot solidified our team locally and sprung us in to action”

- **Get Social Taranaki**

**Reported by
5 out of 8 hubs**

Increased levels of confidence to support social enterprise

“Being a part of the Hubs Pilot has allowed us to widen our support offering. Through the training we received we were able to launch our clinics and confidently deliver a service that has had huge value to entrepreneurs and businesses that we have engaged with.”

- Get Social Taranaki

“There were a few training exercises that stuck for me - the workshop role plays with Rowan; the impact framework webinars with Clemmie; the direct support from Rowan on our framework and; Kath’s communications workshop train the trainer session.”

- Thrive Whanganui

“After nine months, I do think we are more equipped with improved networks and new tools to help social enterprises.”

- CBEC Northland

**Reported by
5 out of 8 hubs**

Increased levels of stakeholder engagement

“The stakeholder engagement was really good, and the project has been supported by many so far. It has also highlighted that stakeholders actually believe in this and are trying to achieve this within their own individual organisations (outcomes for youth), so collaborating on this provides a different way in which they may engage.”

- Te Tihi Mānawatu

“Our stakeholders have expressed support for the work that Social Impact Nelson Tasman is planning to undertake.”

- Social Impact Nelson Tasman

2.3.2 Outcomes at a glance

7

Hub partners offering support for social enterprises, including 2 not previously offering this.

2

Hub partners now offering additional support services.

95

Stakeholders engaged or stakeholder relationships accelerated because of the Pilot.

50%

Reported increased credibility because of local and national partnership.

3*

Reported increased capability to meaningfully support social enterprise.

*3 out of 8 Hub partners explicitly reported an increase in capability due to the Pilot. Accordingly, the Pilot did not fully realise its purpose in building capability in Hub partners to support social enterprises. There are a number of contributing factors including: differing expectations of the Pilot offering and what needs would be met as a result, capacity challenges which restricted participation in the training, and the differing stages of the Hub partners (i.e. some were very early in their journey to provide capability support to social enterprise). In order for this model to fully succeed, these challenges would need to be addressed directly.

2.3.3 Seed funding for sustainability

Each Hub was granted \$12,000 in seed funding in order to trial the conditions needed to make the Hub financially sustainable in the long-term. Each Hub partner designed outcomes they would deliver with this seed funding, based on what was relevant to them and their region.

Hub	Key Activity	Key Outcome
CBEC	Engagement with key funders. Exploration of a social enterprise model to fund capability support.	Increasing partnerships and pathways for social enterprises in Northland.
Te Tihi Mānawatu	In depth co-design with rangatahi (young people) for a Māori social enterprise tech hub. Stakeholder engagement to identify financial resources for this tech hub.	Increased partnerships to meet the needs of rangatahi exploring social enterprise.
Get Social Taranaki	Exploration of two potential revenue streams to fund social enterprise capability building activity. Strong partnerships forming with Economic Development Agency and regional funder.	Validated income streams and key partnerships progressed.
Thrive Whanganui	Provincial Growth Fund application complete with 15 letters of support.	Partnerships initiated that will help build a connected and resilient wider Whanganui region.
Venture Centre Bay of Plenty & Waikato Hub Partner	Impact framework and activity model for Waikato and Venture Centre Bay of Plenty. Identification of social enterprise suppliers and future buyers.	Increased clarity about the needs of social enterprise social procurement suppliers.
Social Impact Nelson Tasman	Social Impact Nelson Tasman Coordinator recruited and contracted. Funding applications in with two local funders.	Local support and networking established.
Wanaka Wastebusters	Formed a partnership with Startup Queenstown Lakes to deliver a series of events and workshops targeted to social enterprises from September 2019 to April 2020. Now exploring funding avenues.	An informed strategy to support local social entrepreneurs is in progress.

All outcomes were observed and reported through evaluation workshops, surveys, interviews.

3. Hubs Partner Stories

The Pilot had a clear intent to serve the growing number of social enterprise champions around Aotearoa New Zealand. Hub partners do incredible work, for the most part voluntarily, to increase the levels of awareness, collaboration and support for entrepreneurs across sectors. Without them this support wouldn't exist. They are embedded in their local communities and they bring skills and networks that are crucial to building capability for social enterprises.

These stories from our Hub partners highlight the incredible work that they are doing in their communities.

Wanaka Wastebusters

Why do you do this work?

“I know personally how motivating and satisfying it is to have work that is driven by purpose and passion. I love the way that, in social enterprise, we combine business and purpose to create work that provides such great outcomes for the environment and our communities.”

Tell us a story that stands out to you

“Just yesterday I was a guest speaker at an Entrepreneur Coffee Jam session at a local cafe. I was joined by Barry Grehan from Urban Village (a start up Social Enterprise in Queenstown). The conversation covered a range of topics from impact to structure to revenue and profit. After the session one of the attendees, who is part owner in a confectionery distribution company, came over and said he has been thinking of a social enterprise model for his next business and today really helped him understand what it could mean.”



Get Social Taranaki



Why do you do this work?

“We do this so that people have the right tools and support before leaping into the world of social entrepreneurship.”

Tell us a story that stands out to you

“Job-hop is an app that connects short-term, unskilled work with anyone looking for an income. With a focus on the unemployed, this app allows people to get paid on the day and after tax, making it easy for users to build their soft skills and find a way back to work. Job-hop attended one of our first Clinics and were at the concept stage. Through the engagement we were able to share with them the software development cycle, with a focus on prototyping and validation. We were also able to connect them with local funding partners and stakeholders. One key introduction led to a strong partnership with the Ministry of Social Development who are now looking to integrate with the app and to promote the platform to its clients. We are now helping them develop their Theory of Change so that potential investors can understand the impact they are aiming to make.”



Social Impact Nelson Tasman

Why do you do this work?

“We want to facilitate change in the Nelson Tasman region.”

Tell us a story that stands out to you

“The highlight activity for Social Impact Nelson Tasman has been the stakeholder and community event that we held on 10th September 2019. This involved a catered lunch with our local stakeholders, and an evening event that was open to our whole community. The event was well supported and our stakeholders have expressed support for the work that SINT is planning to undertake. Both events were supported by Ākina staff. Involvement in the Ākina Pilot has given impetus to our desire to support an impact driven culture in the region and has built valuable relationships with many of the other hubs.”



Venture Centre - Bay of Plenty

Why do you do this work?

“Our aim is to strengthen cooperation and collaboration through equality of opportunity, digital capability, and entrepreneurship — in short, answer the communities demand to “help our good people do good, together”. We connect people on enterprising journeys with each other and the mindset, skillset, toolsets, networks and resources they need to succeed. We do this by nurturing strengths-based “communities of opportunity”.

Tell us a story that stands out to you

“Everything needed to create positive impact with whānau and whenua for generations to come already exists among the people who live here, in the Bay of Plenty. That’s the understanding that brought people together and seeded the Venture Centre. Venture Centre creates a shared space, in physical space through Basestation and other innovation hubs but also in the sense of community. The magic is in bringing people together through a shared sense of purpose and a shared set of norms.

It is this experience of strengthening collaboration through equality of opportunity, digital capability and entrepreneurship that Venture Centre has brought to the Programme. [We want to] Build on the momentum sparked by the Hubs Pilot to take collective action and provide services to other hubs to speed up their setup, establish operations and help them to grow their community’s participation, forming a stronger network across Aotearoa New Zealand.”



Thrive Whanganui

Why do you do this work?

“We see flax roots social enterprise growth in Whanganui as a model for the country. The momentum is building - we do not want our region to be left behind.”

Tell us a story that stands out to you

“We held a social lean canvas workshop for a trio of friends starting an arts and creative hub in Raetihi - a small injection of help at the right time (concept) appears to have been really useful as they’re now successfully operating.”

CBEC Northland

Why do you do this work?

“It’s about our people: “He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata”. To empower, inspire and encourage and to create opportunities.”

Tell us a story that stands out to you

“The venture story that stands out for me would be the Rakena whānau who own a seven acre block of land. Trevor and Elaine moved back home and started a vegetable garden. The garden was productive but Trevor and Elaine were unsettled by the thought that while they had plentiful food, local and more distant members of their whānau were struggling, so they set about changing that situation.

As the produce was harvested and shared, whānau members began to participate, firstly by offering koha for the gifts of kai they were given, and then by offering help. The help has now become an established part of the system, so much so the Rakena Whānau can plan their gardening activity on the basis of knowing help will be there for them when they need it. The garden systems have become healthy and productive, so the community knows they can rely on receiving food for the work they provide.

This is part of the resilience this enterprise is building within the community and regular workers know which rows, of which crops are ‘theirs’ as payment for their work. This system is building a sense of ownership and accountability, plus collaboration and pride in one’s work.

CBEC walked alongside the Rakena family, enabling them to develop their plan, share their vision and impact story. Accessing seed funding was critical to the family expanding food production by purchasing a growing tunnel. Key to our success was visiting the family at their farm, working with them around the kitchen table.”



Te Tihi Mānawatu

Why do you do this work?

“Specific to this project it is to ensure our whānau are given opportunities to access pathways in a quickly expanding tech sector enabling wealth creation via social enterprise. All the mahi we do as an organisation relates to a Whānau Ora philosophy, helping whānau achieve their moemoea, and lead flourishing lives.”

Tell us a story that stands out to you

“Our key focus in the current project was rangatahi Māori. Compounded with poor engagement with Māori by council supported business start-up services (less than 20 Māori engaged in 2018) there is clearly an equity issue for Māori residing within Manawatū when talking about meaningful pathways to engage in Te Ao Pakihi. With a clear need to provide support to whānau to create products this project has targeted tech specific products as our core focus.

A key highlight of the project was when we held the rangatahi co-design, that was made possible by the Regional Hubs’ seed funding. After going through what their aspirations were for the space and what that might look like, the excitement levels really rose, with multiple rangatahi saying they wish that a programme was like this when they were at/leaving school, and those still to leave school were excited at the thought of being able to be helped through creating their ideas and turn them into businesses. It really made us feel as though we were on the right path and providing a programme or hub that was wanted but currently not provided.”



Hubs in action



4. Findings

4.1 The value for Hubs partners

The following four aspects of the Pilot were identified as having created the most value for the Hub partners:

1. Seed funding for sustainability
2. New connections, peer-to-peer learning and opportunities for collaboration
3. Training opportunities (online and offline)
4. Tailored support delivered on request

1. Seed funding for sustainability

“Funding made it easier to push up the priority list”

- Wanaka Wastebusters

“The access to seed funding towards the end of the Pilot period has been a game changer for SINT. It has allowed us to contract an amazing coordinator and create a small budget for events.”

- Social Impact Nelson Tasman

This ‘seed funding for sustainability’ was \$12,000, provided to each Hub partner in installments between July and September 2019, contingent on the Hub partner reaching various outcome milestones. The intention of the seed funding was to trial the conditions needed to make the Hub financially sustainable in the long-term. Each Hub partner designed outcomes they would deliver for the funding, with each taking a unique approach. We found that this enabled an increase in capacity and focus for many Hubs. Evidence for this can be found in the outcomes section, and through our ‘seed funding check in calls’. The reality for many of the Hub partners is that their work is often not funded or resourced or, where there is funding, it is a short-term grant.

Depending on their stage of development, the Hub partners utilised the funding in different ways to enable longer-term financial sustainability. For idea stage and early stage Hubs, the seed funding enabled the capacity they needed to get started with ecosystem building activities, or with the delivery of direct support activities. For instance, Social Impact Nelson Tasman utilised the funding to recruit a coordinator, the first member of their team to act in a paid capacity, and who has embarked on a mapping and needs assessment exercise to identify opportunities and inform their activity plan. More established Hubs have used the seed funding to unlock more funding or to test new offering and new revenue streams. Seed funding has allowed for funding applications to be progressed and partnerships to be explored. Time will tell if these progressions lead to resources secured at a local level.

This initiative validates an insight that many Hubs expressed early-on; that funding is a crucial ingredient for successfully creating pathways for social entrepreneurs to access support - when offered at the right time, and when planning precedes funding. Some Hubs expressed the view that this funding would have been more valuable if introduced earlier on in the Pilot.

2. New connections, peer-to-peer learning and opportunities for collaboration

“There were great opportunities to see what was happening on the ground in other regions”

- feedback from end of Pilot evaluation workshop

The value of connecting across regions was readily expressed; especially for those who were able to attend in-person hui. These hui enabled Hub partners to start new relationships, and strengthen existing ones. The in-person hui meant online telehui were easier because relationships had already formed in-person. These connections led to the sharing of knowledge, resources and ideas, at a peer-to-peer level.

A good example of this is how Hub partners in Waikato and Bay of Plenty, newly connected through the Hubs Pilot, have begun to collaborate between regions. Through that collaboration, the two Hubs are focused on how social procurement could play a key role in creating impact across their regions. Other examples include the sharing of budgets, job descriptions, funding applications and other resources to streamline administration.

3. Training opportunities (online and offline)

“Recorded webinars are a great resource to go back to or share with others”

- feedback from end of Pilot evaluation workshop

High-quality training created value for Hub partners, even those at different stages in their development. Hub partners expressed their need for high-quality training and participating in both face to face and online opportunities. There was an observed link between participation in training and increased confidence to support local social entrepreneurs.

4. Tailored support delivered on request

Ākina was able to support Hubs partners in a more tailored capacity in the last three months of the Pilot. The process of Hubs identifying needs and opportunities for Ākina to support, with clear asks and clear objectives, created significant value for Hub partners.

Examples of this are:

- Social Impact Nelson Tasman (SINT) asked Ākina to support with a stakeholder engagement event in September 2019. This event was organised by SINT and supported by Ākina’s Director of Places & Networks.
- Thrive Whanganui gained support in the development of their Theory of Change, and support to develop their pathways framework.
- Te Tihi in Palmerston North ran a stakeholder engagement event which they asked Ākina to support with.

More examples are featured in the Pilot overview on pages 12 & 13.

4.2 Findings on the model

Finding one: Differing expectations created inefficiencies

The intent of the Pilot to be responsive to the needs of participating Hubs, coupled with differing expectations, meant the Pilot suffered from a ‘felt tension’ throughout. There were two distinct expectations of the Pilot that emerged. Some Hubs partners were primarily interested in building their own capability in order to support social entrepreneurs in their community, and were welcoming Ākina to facilitate and coordinate that. Other Hub partners had a strong desire and vision to establish a collective with Ākina as a ‘node in the network’. Working on capability building activity within this tension was difficult. As a result, significant resource was spent trying to manage these differing trajectories. Going forward we know that clear framing around capability building is key.

Whilst we began the Pilot with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Hub partners and Ākina, this MoU could have been complemented by a shared vision and agreed protocols. We learnt that such a framework is necessary for capability builders who want to participate in a formalised peer learning network. Those partners need to be willing, have great clarity and understanding of the vision and protocols and of each party's role and responsibility from the beginning, to minimise conflict and increase efficiencies.

Finding two: Capacity is a key enabler

We learnt that capacity is a key enabler for engagement throughout the Pilot, as well as delivering on-the-ground impact. By capacity we mean the relevant skills, resources, and time available to the Hub partner. We see this finding echoed in how Hub partners reported positive outcomes through receiving the seed funding. Where capacity did exist, either financially, through the presence of team, or through supportive organisations, Hub partners were able to engage more easily in the opportunities that the Pilot offered. Where capacity did exist we also saw there was more likely to be on-the-ground delivery occurring. In cases where there was little or no capacity, participation fluctuated and active delivery was slowed. We learnt that dedicated resource is required to maximise and focus the efforts of the participants.

Finding three: Momentum is building

Interestingly, now that we are officially beyond the Pilot phase we are seeing evidence of building momentum in the regions where Hub partners are embedded. Instances where relationships, seed funding, resources and skills gained (or strengthened) through the Pilot are emerging. For example:

- Young Entrepreneurship in Te Tai Tokerau is strengthening partnership and collaboration across the initiatives that support young people to develop enterprise. Working with Princess Trust, CBEC and Ākina are bringing together local organisations to support a prototyping workshop with a view to resourcing young people exploring business ideas in the longer term.
- Wanaka Wastebusters has newly formed a partnership with Startup Queenstown Lakes (SQL) to deliver a series of events and workshops aimed at serving local social entrepreneurs. These events will run from September 2019 to April 2020, and include a Social Lean Canvas workshop, Introduction to Impact workshops in Wanaka and Queenstown, Business with Purpose talks during the ONE Summit, and a 9-week Co-starters programme with a social enterprise stream.
- Get Social Taranaki have begun the process of co-designing an Impact Incubator, which will run in partnership with the Economic Development Agency, Venture Taranaki. Both parties acknowledge the growing trend in the region of businesses moving towards impact and as a result are collaborating to bring this initiative in 2020.

Whilst we can't attribute the above outcomes to participation in the Pilot alone, we can confidently say that the Pilot played a contributing role, to varying degrees.

Conclusion

The Regional Hubs Pilot aimed to test a model that focussed on some short-term outcomes. These outcomes were: increased connection within the sector, increased confidence to support social enterprise and increased levels of stakeholder engagement. For most participants these outcomes were met.

However, the Pilot did not fully realise one short-term outcome: building capability in Hub partners to support social enterprises more meaningfully. In order for this outcome to be achieved in future 'train the trainer' models, there should be a clear emphasis on:

- Creating stronger shared understanding and expectations of the initiative;
- Addressing capacity challenges to enable full participation in the initiative; and
- Accommodating the diverse needs of partners or participants who are likely to be at different stages.

Change takes time, and more energy and resources would need to be invested to create a well-rounded, highly effective network of social enterprise Hubs. The ripple effect of an effective network of social enterprise Hubs will be the impact on the people we're working to serve: the social enterprises themselves. Whilst some of the Pilot participants have been able to increase - or in some cases start - direct delivery of capability support, it is only the beginning of their journey.

We will apply our findings to the next iteration of the capability building strategy and future initiatives. With strong insights on the peer network model, the intention is to adapt, do more of what has worked and less of what hasn't. Our focus and energy will then shift onto assessing, measuring and reporting on how the capability of local social enterprises will change as a result of the way capability building services are offered and accessed, by consistently implementing a clear impact framework.

The stories that emerged from the Pilot highlight the growing support available for social entrepreneurs in our regions. The Hub partners, and others, continue to serve their communities despite the challenges. They have immersed themselves in this opportunity to connect with other regions, learn and grow from us and one another. Following the Pilot they are moving towards serving their communities of social entrepreneurs even more meaningfully.



Appendix

Glossary of Key Terms

Social enterprise	a purpose-driven organisation which trades to deliver positive social, cultural or environmental impact. Social enterprises can be profit making businesses, but they reinvest the majority of their profit, or expenditure, into their purpose.
Capability building	the process by which individuals and organisations obtain, improve, and retain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment and other resources needed to do their jobs competently or to a greater/improved capacity.
Hubs/Hubs partners	are individuals or organisations who participated in this Pilot. Note, the term Hub does not imply a physical space, instead Hub partners are locally embedded champions leading the growth of social enterprise in their communities.
Impact	is the positive social, cultural or environmental changes, or outcomes, that happen as a consequence of an activity.
Impact Framework	<p>a visual representation of the logic of how an activity will lead to social or environmental change. The framework identifies the intended causal links between activities, and outcomes over a length of time.</p> <p><i>This is also referred to as: theory of change, impact logic model, programme logic, programme theory, causal model, outcomes hierarchy, results chain, or intervention logic</i></p>
Developmental Evaluation	Developmental Evaluation lends itself to complex and emerging environments like the Pilot. The process of 'do, review and adapt' enables the opportunity to create real time feedback loops and for participation gathering insights together.
Social Return on Investment (SROI)	<p>a framework for measuring and accounting for a much broader concept of value. including social, environmental and economic value. We underpinned our evaluation with SROI principles. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involve stakeholders• Understand what changes• Value the things that matter• Only include what is material• Do not over-claim• Be transparent• Verify the result

Evaluation: Data Gathering

	Nov	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Data Collection										
Activity Log		1/month	1/month	1/month	1/month	1/month	1/month	1/month	1/month	
Seed funding check in calls								1/month	1/month	1/month
Evaluation surveys and interviews	Survey					Survey	Insight + Pivot Report			Final Interviews
Evaluation workshop										Evaluation Workshop

Types of data gathering

Activity Log = an online spreadsheet used to capture Hub activity month by month

Seed funding check in calls = during the seed funding period, Ākina, staff would call Hub partners once a month to understand their activity and what they had learned as a result.

Evaluation surveys and interviews

Evaluation workshop = these were interactive workshop-style sessions designed to capture outcomes, and insights.

All evaluation was encouraged, but optional for Hub partners.

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