



Te Mahinga Kai o Tairāwhiti

Te Mahinga Kai o Tairāwhiti is the name of the cross-sector collaborative effort to grow an affordable, nourishing and sustainable local food movement in Te Tairāwhiti.

It's a grass roots movement for change, driven by local people, seeking to support and develop local solutions to the challenges we face in food and health. The project was initiated by Healthy Families East Cape in partnership with the Te Mahinga Kai o Tairāwhiti collective. Together, the Te Mahinga Kai o Tairāwhiti food movement is creating a strong, vibrant and resilient food community in Tairāwhiti.

Who was involved?

Insights and background food mapping interviews -

Horouta Whānau Ora Collective
 The Heart Foundation
 NZ Food Innovation
 Susie Lee - community volunteer
 The Salvation Army
 Gisborne District Council
 Hilton Collier - Ag First/Pakihiroa Farms/EIT Te Tairāwhiti
 Equippers Church
 Apiculture NZ
 Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiāraangi
 EIT ki Uawa
 Countdown Gisborne
 Ministry of Social Development
 First Fresh
 Trust Tairāwhiti
 Corsons
 Ministry of Primary Industries
 Tipu Collective
 Tāiki E!

Te Mahinga Kai o Tairāwhiti steering committee -

Rongowhakaata Iwi Trust, Hikurangi Enterprises, Supergrans Tairāwhiti, Gizzy Kai Rescue, Hauora Tairāwhiti DHB, Trust Tairāwhiti and Cobham School.

What did we do?

Framing

Socialised a systems approach to health prevention
Explored what a co-design approach might offer

Project set up

Creation of steering committee
Agreed initial problem definition and project scope
Conducted desktop review of policies, plans and strategies impacting the local food system
Collated/analysed data about current local food system
Key informant interviews to generate deeper understandings
Team synthesize data to develop insights, map the system, and help to craft new problem definition
Regular communications with steering committee and project team

Insights, opportunities and concepts

Walkthroughs with steering committee and members of the community to explore the food system and confirm next steps
Released Tairāwhiti insights report and food system background mapping report
Reported findings from food mapping phase to steering committee for endorsement to move to the next phase, kitchen table talks and co-design of ideas and prototyping
Created a community support database that was derived from the food mapping phase
Setup Fishbowl event for the community to talk about food security, sovereignty and innovation
Distributed a PDF of the maramataka resource to over 150 people

Key impacts (so far) from taking a systems approach

- Mobilizing a core group of cross-sector leaders and changemakers to bring diverse expertise and perspectives into the process from the beginning.
- Enabled us to hear directly from people across the local food system and understand the experience from diverse perspectives including policy, regulation, health, business, farming, agriculture, schools, community organisations and enterprise.
- We shared findings through walkthroughs which enabled people to take in complex information and provide real-time feedback and input.
- Health equity sits at the centre of our approach. Ensuring we hear the Māori community voice continues to shape and influence our work.
- Engagement process included seeing reserved whānau confidently sharing their ideas, thoughts and experiences about our local food system.

Key Learnings:

- Taking the time to prepare and plan.
- Trusting the process.
- Having multiple engagement and communications channels to bring our system partners with us on the journey.
- Co-design and social innovation practitioners were generous giving their time and feedback helping us refine our process and thinking and linked us to others and best practice.

Challenges we encountered:

- Taking a systems approach is energy intensive and requires multiple skill sets. Resourcing can be challenging if there are 1-2 people working on the project full-time with limited budget for external support.
- It can be difficult to build and maintain relationships with local government with its many departments.

Enablers for this work:

- Our partners were generous with their time, staffing, input and honest feedback.
- Having a dedicated project space provided the team somewhere to host meetings, prepare and display and store large amounts of material generated.