



# Creating equitable education outcomes for every Kiwi learner

IMPACT REPORT APRIL 2022

# SECTION 01 Introducing EPIIT



KUA TAWHITI KĒ TO  
HAERENGA MAI, KIA KORE  
E HAERE TONU.

HE NUI RAWA O MAHI  
KIA KORE E MAHI TONU

You have come too far not to go further,  
you have done too much not to do more.



# Foreword

## Contents

<b>Introducing EPIT</b>	<b>03</b>
Contents	06
Foreword	06
Establishing the Education Partnership and Innovation Trust	08
<b>Our Work</b>	<b>11</b>
Partnerships	14
Reach across New Zealand	15
Sectors	16
Project Focus	17
What EPIT has achieved	18
<b>Our Partner Stories</b>	<b>22</b>
Springboard Trust	24
Stonefields Collaborative	28
Core Education	30
<b>Our Insights</b>	<b>33</b>
Insights and learning about partnerships	34
References	38
Appendices	39

Kia ora tatou, ngā mihi nui, and welcome to our 2021 Impact Report.

The evolution of the Education Partnership and Innovation Trust (EPIT) from concept, early ideas and discussions between founding partners - Perpetual Guardian, Springboard Trust, The Southern Initiative and the Hugh Green Foundation in 2018, to the launch of EPIT during a global pandemic has been both rewarding and challenging. The role of partnerships to deliver sustainable, inclusive and resilient development is our 'north star' and crucial in our engagement processes.

Our core belief is that inequity in education in Aotearoa New Zealand needs to be addressed by aligned stakeholders engaging in collaborative relationships and unique, transformative partnerships. These partnerships, supported by a diverse range of perspectives and approaches, aim to maximise value creation and deliver impact, resulting in much needed system change.

Our 2021 Impact Report is a glimpse into examples of promising, early collaboration in action.

### Levelling the playing field for learners

EPIT provides a physical collaboration space, in Auckland, aimed at bringing people together in conversations and project collaborations. This resource and support leads to varying forms of 'partnering' and sharing. Our digital platform enables us to bring everyone's combined learnings and shared knowledge into a neutral environment, to explore issues and opportunities of importance, that often do not sit with any single organisation or agency. Our culturally grounded evaluation system allows us to measure impact and provide insightful reports to our project owners and partners.

Together, we can foster shared understanding about the complexity of equity.

### Projects

We currently have nine projects underway across Aotearoa New Zealand, with more in our pipeline awaiting resource. Our partners delivering these projects have developed them with a deep understanding of the needs of their communities. While our report reflects the past 12 months, we are now focused on moving into our next phase of learner-focused, collaborative, multi stakeholder partnerships.

### Thank you

We thank all our valued founders and partners; in particular the generosity of Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies, the Hugh Green Foundation, Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust and the Fletcher Trust for their vision, partnership and contribution of resources. As a fledgling organisation, our team, led by Deb Masters, has taken us from initial start-up mode to transition and expansion. We thank Deb, Nish Chakravarthy, Louise Taylor and Jane Treadwell-Hoye for their work. My thanks to the Board (Liz Gibbs and Dale Bailey) for their advice and expertise and to Perpetual Guardian for hosting the collective 'vision'.

Lastly, to the many people whose energy, expertise and belief that 'partnerships are the new normal' and likely to be an essential ingredient as we bake the 'system shift cake' – a huge thank you. We hope you find the results of our work and what's coming next as exciting as I do!

Ngā mihi nui

**Lorraine Mentz**

Board Chair | Education Partnership and Innovation Trust

# Establishing the Education Partnership and Innovation Trust

The Trust was the vision of our four founding partners to transform education for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau across Aotearoa New Zealand through impactful partnerships. This vision took its lead from Goal 17 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

## Systemic and complex social problems can be solved through partnerships

Our vision is to bring together people and organisations interested in transformative educational outcomes that will contribute to a more equitable, socially just world.

The pathway to achieving this is through the development of the Education Partnership and Innovation Trust (EPIIT), and working with partners to create opportunities for collaboration and innovation. This work is carried out by our operational team.

EPIIT is both a physical and digital space where transformative collaborations are formed, and non-traditional partnerships are developed.

Our transformative approach sees co-operative partnerships becoming meaningful collaborations that lead to co-production – where resources are combined to create innovation and impact.

In late 2020 the Trust secured funding of \$2M from Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies, through the support of Perpetual Guardian. This funding allowed us to build our foundations as a start-up and begin the work in earnest. Further resources have been provided by our strategic partners – six are confirmed and we are in discussion with a further six (as at April 2022). Funding to the Trust supports our operations and the nine delivery partners projects currently active.

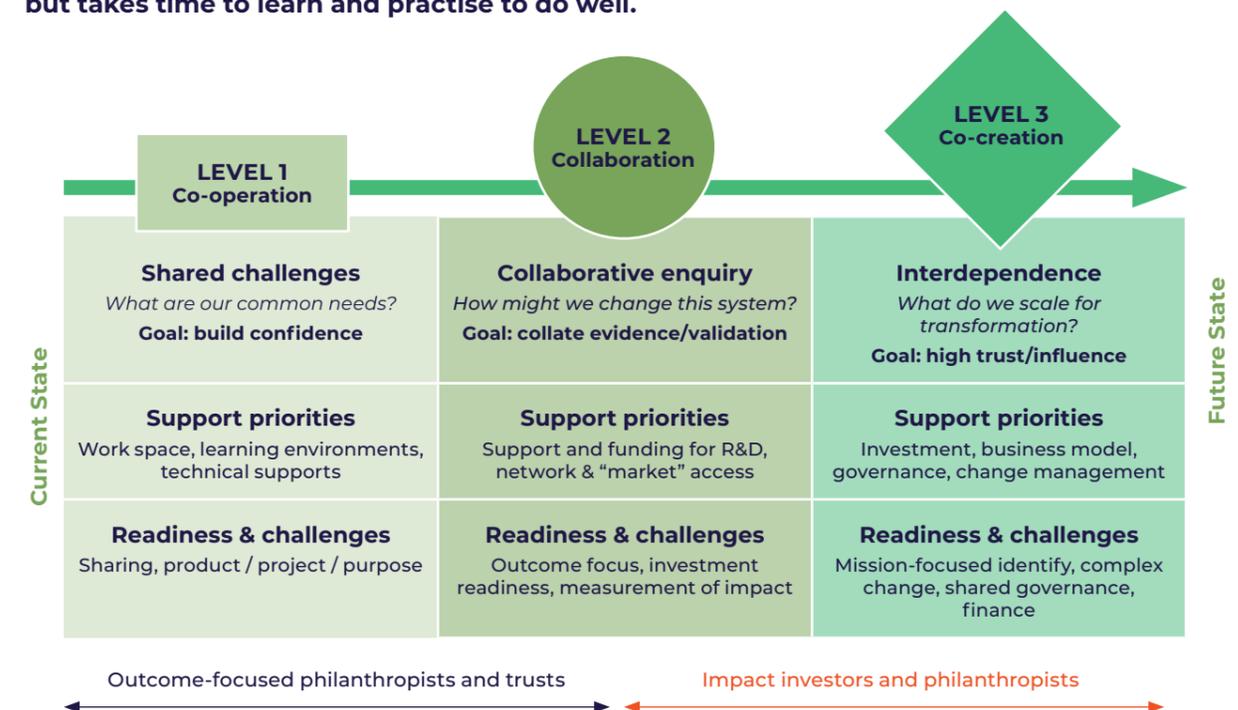
The operational team was established in July 2021 with the appointment of the Director. Since then, three further (part-time) roles have been appointed to support the development of operational, evaluation and digital processes and strategies.

The success of EPIIT has been built on the vision and the work of the founding partners as well as the many conversations, documents and frameworks that they created.

This annual report outlines the outcomes that we have achieved, as at April 2022. To illustrate our work, we have included early stories from our partners as well as the beginning of insights that we have identified across our work with all partners. These insights will inform ongoing discussion, innovation and co-production of initiatives.

## Our Theory of Transformation

Sustainable collaboration has an outsized impact on the ground, but takes time to learn and practise to do well.



<sup>1</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015



SECTION 02

# OUR WORK

6 confirmed strategic partners



4 founding partners



6 active delivery partners



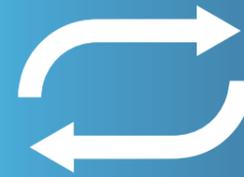
9 active projects



3 thought leadership events in scoping and planning



7 collaborations between partners



2 pipeline projects approved and awaiting funding



4 pipeline projects in scoping and development



# Partnerships

## Our Partners

### Founding partners

- Perpetual Guardian
- Hugh Green Foundation
- Springboard Trust
- The Southern Initiative

### Strategic partners with formal agreements

- Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies
- Hugh Green Foundation
- Perpetual Guardian
- Fletcher Trust
- I Have a Dream Foundation
- Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust

### Successful funding applications

- Graham and Watson Trusts (on behalf of Stonefields Collaborative Trust)

## Active Project Partners

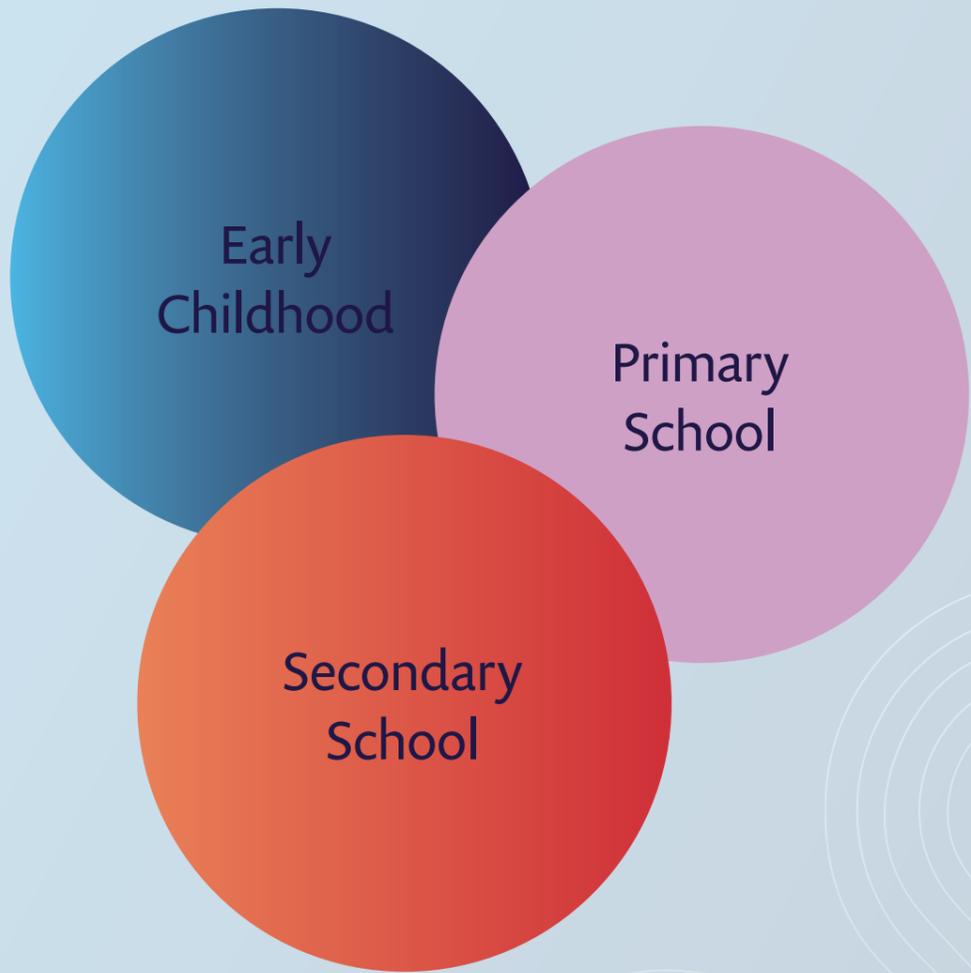
- Springboard Trust: South Island Expansion
- Springboard Trust: Strategic Leadership for Middle and Aspiring Leaders (Auckland)
- Stonefields Collaborative Trust: School Slider Tool (Auckland, Havelock North, Kawerau, Otago)
- CORE Education: Communication Wellbeing Tool (Canterbury and Auckland)
- CORE Education: Collaboration for uLearn - an international conference with a focus on equity in education (international)
- CURE Kids: Speech language therapy for Māori children (Gisborne Tai-rāwhiti)
- Education Hub: Leadership training course for ECE (nationwide online)
- Education Hub: Bright Spots (nationwide)
- Fletcher Trust / Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust, AUT collaboration: Research Project - Transitions into the workforce or further training (South Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland)

# Reach across Aotearoa New Zealand

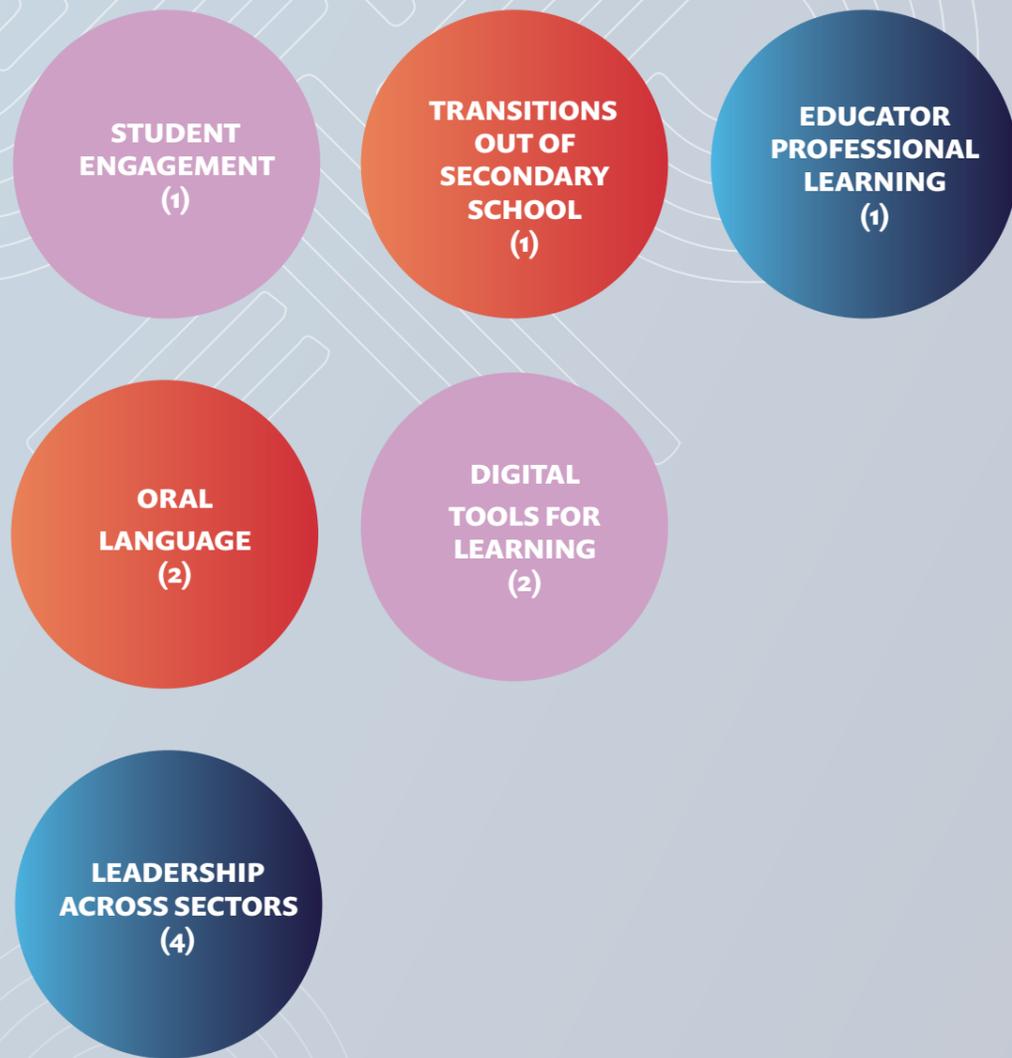
Auckland, Kawerau, Tai-rāwhiti, Havelock North, Porirua East, Marlborough, West Coast, Canterbury, Otago, Southland, International (uLearn).



# Sector focus



# Project focus



# What EPIT has achieved

## Delivering partnerships

We have two kinds of partnerships – strategic and delivery.

1. **Strategic partners** support our work with resourcing and professional expertise.
2. **Delivery partners** are organisations that are delivering services across the education sector.

Identifying strategic and delivery partners and scoping possible work is ongoing and captured in our active future project pipeline. Identifying partners is a collaboration between the EPIT and the interim board.

One of the most rewarding aspects of our activities has been the collaborations we have brokered between current and potential partners. Many partners and organisations have similar projects in place and by making connections across projects with similar outcomes, we can connect organisations that have the potential to

maximise transformative outcomes. With the online collaboration platform in place these connections can be made organically as partners see opportunities through the contributions from others.

Our theory of transformation is to move collaborations towards co-production where resources are combined across sites to create innovation and impact for equity. Radical thinking around equity and innovation for transformation has begun through partner contributions to our transformation and equity survey. Partners are involved in the planning of our activities and suggestions for how we can innovate together as this is the essence of our work.

As a Tiriti-honouring organisation our kaupapa Māori values are integral to our strategic plan and we are building them into the fabric of our work. We have proceeded with integrity to develop relationships to enable us to deeply understand the opportunities that true partnership brings. We have begun the co-design of a kaupapa Māori Strategy through conversations and collaboration that has shaped a framework that underpins our direction.

## Creating an innovative partnership space

EPIT is leading the way by being the first Australasian user of the internationally recognised digital collaboration platform known as Babel. The platform has been customised for EPIT and is a ring-fenced community space developed to include thought-leaders, delivery partners and a range of strategic partners invested in providing support to budding ideas. It gives partners a dynamic space in which to collaborate, share, connect and learn about the work driving socially equitable outcomes in education across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our website ([www.epit.org.nz](http://www.epit.org.nz)) is a window into the EPIT community and a link into our collaboration platform. It provides valuable information on the aspirations, values and work of EPIT and offers a place to find inspiration and connections to those interested in educational equity. It gives prospective partners an opportunity to learn more about our work and our people, provides a glimpse at the collaboration platform and enables engagement directly with the EPIT team.

## Developing collaboration and communication tools

**Underpinned by a digital strategy EPIT has processes and policies that support an integrated development plan. This includes an ethics process that ensures artefacts shared on our collaboration spaces are done so with informed consent.**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015

## Developing operational procedures and strategies

As a start-up EPIT has established policies and processes that support all operational, financial and governance policies and activities. This also include:

### 1. An evaluation strategy

A framework that guides our evaluation practices and makes these transparent to our community of partners

### 2. A kaupapa Māori strategy

A plan that outlines how EPIT will include underlying principles that are based on te ao Māori worldviews

In collaboration with the interim board, in late 2021 the EPIT team developed a strategic plan that identified our intended outcomes for the year which became the focus of our activities. While work has begun on all of them many are also included in our ongoing plan of work. A number of these activities are highlighted in the stories and examples across this report.

## Evaluating our impact

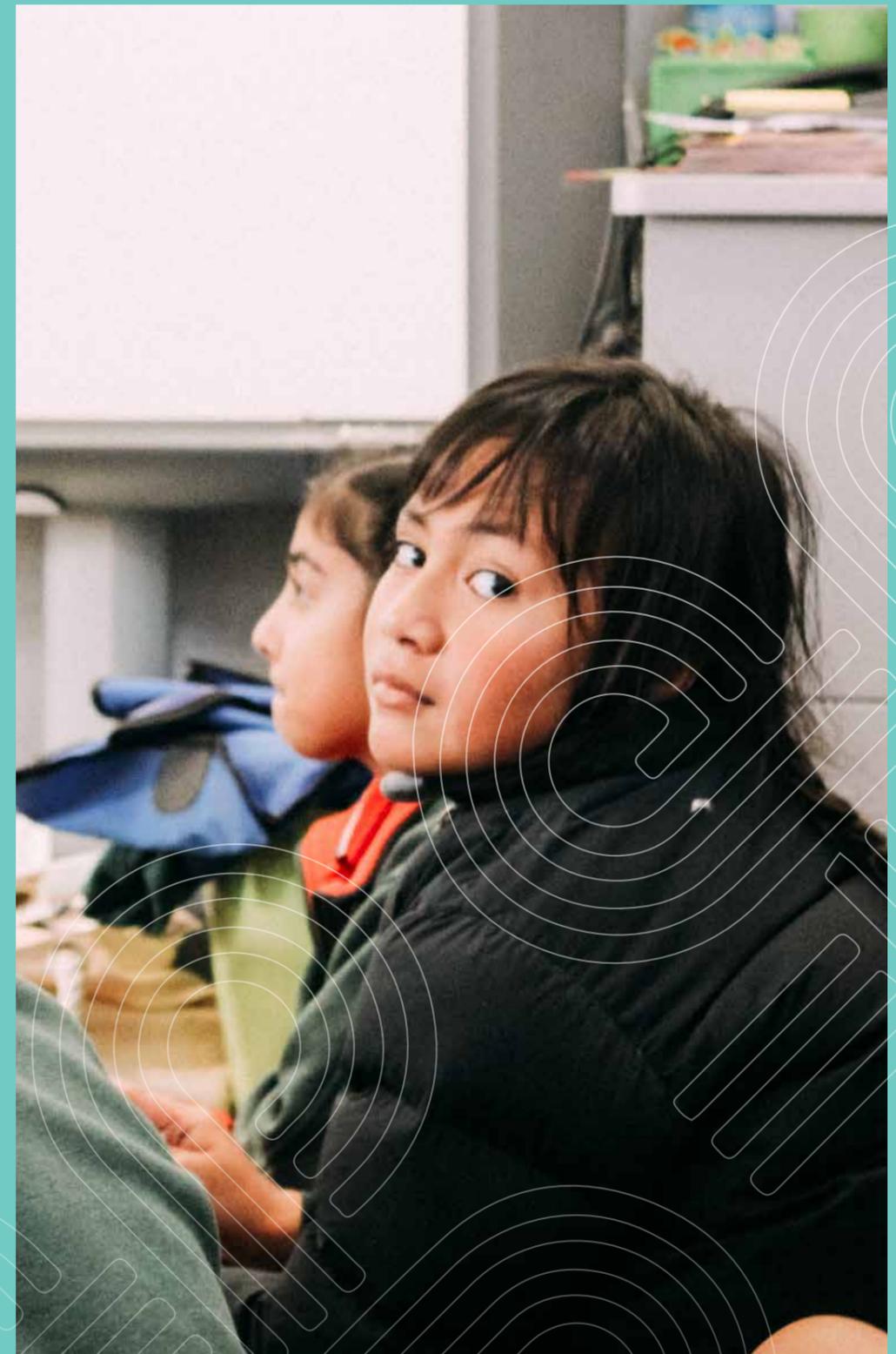
As part of developing our evaluation strategy we carried out an external review with 11 stakeholders, including our kaupapa Māori advisors. We wanted to create a flexible process that could be adapted to the different theories of change employed by delivery partners.

## Key principles guiding the evaluation framework

As part of developing our evaluation strategy we carried out an external review with 11 stakeholders, including our kaupapa Māori advisors. We wanted to create a flexible process that could be adapted to the different theories of change employed by delivery partners. Our evaluation framework is guided by the following principles:

1. **Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and be based on kaupapa Māori research and evaluation values, principles, and ways of working**
2. **Take a strengths-based approach where partnerships are based on respect and trust**
3. **Employ adaptive and flexible evaluation processes that accommodate complexity**
4. **Adhere to the principles of ethical research and practices**
5. **Facilitate dialogue and learning about equity and transformation in education**
6. **Enable the sharing of stories that show improved equity for learners so that these can influence approaches taken to more widespread transformation.**

Evaluation is designed to show how EPIT is meeting its purpose, by assessing how partnerships aimed at systems change have led to transformation and improved equity for learners and their communities. Learning and insights can then be used to move local initiatives towards more widespread educational equity.



SECTION 03

# Our Partner Stories



# Springboard Trust



## Springboard Trust

Springboard Trust was established over two decades ago. It has evolved into an organisation committed to supporting strategic leadership within the education sector. Since 2006 this has been achieved through their Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme, and the Strategic Leadership for Rural Teaching Principals programme. Over time, new programmes have been added to the suite of services provided by the Trust. One recent initiative is the Strategic Leadership for Middle and Aspiring Leaders programme which was piloted in Tairāwhiti in 2021.

EPIT is supporting two Springboard Trust initiatives:

1. Expanding the Strategic Leadership for Principals Programme into the South Island of Aotearoa
2. The next iteration of the Middle and Aspiring Leaders programme into Tāmaki Makaurau.

## Expanding the Strategic Leadership for Principals Programmes into the South Island

### Impact statement Challenging mindsets for equity

This programme offers training, coaching and support for principals as they develop stronger strategic leadership in contexts that uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and are working equity for learners. Programmes are supported by volunteers from outside of the education sector, who work 1-1 with principals through the entire programme. Many of the relationships formed through these programmes continue beyond the scope of the programme. The expansion into the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, includes cohorts of principals from the regions of Otago, Invercargill, Christchurch, the West Coast and Nelson.

“In our workshops we often heard ‘We’ll never be a high achieving school’. This has now changed, and thinking has moved to what is possible and what is needed to face the challenges.”

## Strategic Leadership for Middle and Aspiring Leaders Programme

### Impact statement Becoming Te Tiriti O Waitangi honouring

The aim of the Strategic Leadership for Middle and Aspiring Leaders programme is to build and strengthen the pipeline of leaders working in Aotearoa | New Zealand schools with a specific focus on equity. The programme is being offered to three schools in Tāmaki Makaurau, with two participants from each school attending. They are all middle school or secondary school leaders, or aspiring leaders. The course includes a set of modules (content, activities, and reflection tasks) as well as working 1-1 with volunteers from outside the educator sector (as with other SBT programmes).

This programme highlights the importance of intentionally including content and reflection on Te Tiriti O Waitangi, especially in terms of working for equity. Within a safe environment, participants are admitting they need to do more and better and reflecting on how to be a good Te Tiriti partner.

“For the first time I acknowledged I don’t incorporate it in. I haven’t put it into practice - there was freedom [in the workshop] to acknowledge it.”



# Stonefields Collaborative

## The Stonefields Collaborative

### Impact statement Students influencing change

In 2016, The Stonefields Collaborative was established to be a catalyst for educational improvement. It is a charitable trust and an accredited Professional Learning and Development (PLD) provider with the Ministry of Education. The trust believes that to improve learning outcomes across Aotearoa | New Zealand, it is important to grow capacity and learn from one another.



## The school sliders app project

EPIT is supporting The Stonefields Collaborative to develop the next iteration of an insight tool (school slider) that provides teachers with instantaneous feedback from students. It is used to inform decision making in design, teaching and student engagement. As a formative assessment tool, it can be easily administered at the end of a learning task or activity with two simple sliders that are dragged by students to indicate how challenged they were, and if they loved the learning design, task, activity or class. Students and teachers are both engaged in the trial and evaluation of the next iteration, providing feedback on its use and making suggestions for future iterations.

As well as the more immediate qualitative data the slide also collects broader quantitative data. This will show the statistical relationship between input and student achievement, which over time, will show what forms of learning design and teacher input are leading to higher levels of learner engagement. These insights could lead to improved learning design for Māori



learners, student support learners, and those our system has underserved.

One teacher used the data from the slider as a basis for discussion with learners. As a result of dialogue, the teacher and her learners designed a communication tool that alerts the teacher to what the learner needs to move forward.

This was a small but significant shift not only in the outcome, but also in the relationship between teacher and learner as they collaborated to create learning solutions. Students having a say in solutions that work for them has demonstrated research-based value.<sup>2</sup>

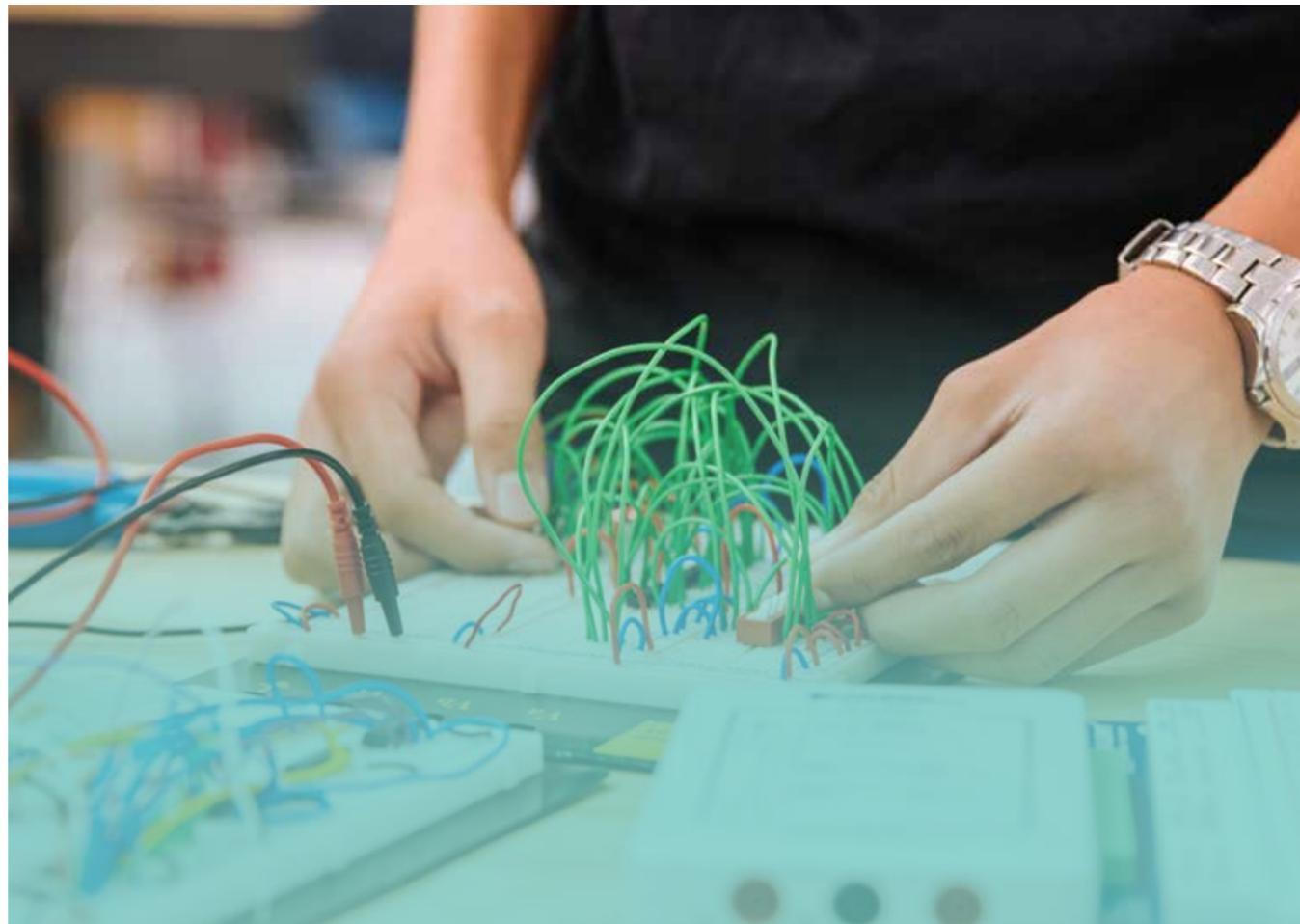
<sup>2</sup> For example: Bolstad, 2011; Ministry of Education, n.d.; Roberts, & Bolstad, 2010

# CORE Education



**Impact statement** Designing tools and resources that are child-focused, culturally affirming, universally designed and able to be scaled

CORE Education's vision is for an equitable and thriving Aotearoa through learning. Their work involves the early years, schooling and tertiary sectors, as well as government, iwi and hapū, corporates and other organisations. As a Te Tiriti O Waitangi honouring organisation CORE believes that equity is the heartbeat of transformative change for all ākonga. They are committed to working at the sharp end of educational inequities alongside mana whenua and communities, acting as allies and being accountable.



## The oral communication and wellbeing project

Funded by EPIT, this project supports the oral communication and wellbeing of young children aged 3-6 years who have oral communication support needs. It is the next iteration of a pilot study carried out in 2017-2018 in the Hornby community in Ōtautahi | Christchurch, and is now focused on refining and digitising the tools used in the pilot. The next phase is being carried out in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland.

The funding support from EPIT is for:

- designing and creating a range of digital tools and resources for teachers and whānau of 3-6-year-olds that interrupt traditional deficit and clinical ways of thinking about young children's oral communication needs.
- designing and delivering a learning programme in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland for early years teachers and whānau of 3-6-year-olds

The overall aim is to enable teachers and whānau to access the knowledge, tools and know-how usually reserved for communication specialists such as speech-language therapists. CORE calls this democratising the process and the hope is to flip the power balance from specialists towards those who are closest to the child. Designing tools and resources that are child-focused, culturally affirming and universally designed will shift thinking (and professional language) about oral communication needs from 'deficits' to 'capabilities'; from 'clinical' to 'community'; and, from 'referrals' to 'relationships'.

The project has the potential to inform the development of smart digital tools across a range of curriculum areas making both diagnostic and remedial resources more easily accessible and more widely used. Being able to address problems as they arise will help to decrease the number of children falling behind. Furthermore, whānau will be able to participate in supporting their children rather than relying solely on external support services.



SECTION 04

# OUR INSIGHTS

# Insights and learning

In March 2022 EPIT conducted a partner survey asking for their perspectives around partnership, transformation and equity. We are using these insights, along with our partner project stories, to strengthen the effectiveness of EPIT as a partner. Here are some of the emerging findings.



## Partner survey insights on partnerships

Survey findings showed that most partners viewed partnerships as more strategic relationships than collaborations, which require a higher level of ownership and accountability to each other. A partnership requires a long-term investment in a shared vision and a commitment to sharing resources and expertise, over time, to realise this vision. This includes a commitment to shared power in decision-making. EPIT is committed to supporting such partnerships.

## Impactful collaborations and partnerships

Our current delivery partners are achieving impact through the partnerships that are integral to their initiatives. Many of these partnerships have been formed and sustained over time and with the support of EPIT are beginning to be scaled.

All projects have been affected by COVID-19 which has slowed relationship building within school communities due to teacher shortages and staff fatigue. Initiatives have had to work around these challenges, while still establishing relationships that are respectful, trusting, and open. Responsive, trusting, relationships are proving foundational to working effectively with diverse communities and achieving more equitable outcomes.

Cross-professional relationships are proving impactful in terms of transformation with four of our current projects having collaborations and partnerships outside of education. Two are working with software developers and two are working with volunteers. The unfamiliarity with each other's work in this relationship, requires a deeper level of listening, in order to understand one another and create jointly shared outcomes. There is trust involved, open sharing and a willingness to be challenged and to rethink positions and knowledge.

## EPIT as a partner

Going forward EPIT will continue to explore how cross-profession partnerships can be supported and grown through our work. As the collaboration platform becomes more widely accessed and utilised it is hoped that the open sharing will enable the current work to be scaled. The aim is for long-term strategic partnerships that continue beyond short term collaborations, so that existing initiatives can be developed further in other education communities and contexts across Aotearoa | New Zealand.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015

# Insights and learning about transformation for equity



## Theories of change being employed in the work towards equity

One of the benefits of working with a range of partners and projects is the learning gained from the approaches to change being taken. Traditional linear approaches are being challenged by alternative theories of change, such as indigenous methodologies and developmental, or iterative processes such as design thinking or action research.

### Transformation through systems change

EPIIT is using the *Six Conditions of Systems Change*(1) to inform its evaluation (see appendices) which has been adapted to an education and Aotearoa | New Zealand specific context. Currently we have projects working across the systems change model with examples of impact beginning to emerge.

**Power dynamics** are being challenged in schools as young people are included in the design and evaluation of tools being created. Solutions created in collaboration with users, helps to provide a sense of ownership, which impacts on a project's sustainability.

Conversations resulting in **mindset shifts** have been prominent. One of the key factors contributing to this is the partnering of teachers with volunteers and digital experts outside of the education sector. Being exposed to diverse perspectives is broadening thinking about what might be possible.

Intentionally discussing Te Tiriti O Waitangi and equity is contributing to **more culturally responsive practices**. Evidence shows that prioritising conversations about *equity*(2) is a necessary step towards achieving equitable outcomes for learners, their whānau and communities.

### Concluding thoughts on our insights

We are very positive about the contribution that EPIIT will continue to make towards achieving increased equity for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau throughout Aotearoa | New Zealand.

To date findings show that the following factors have the potential to create more equitable outcomes:

- Collaborations and long-term partnerships across professions, schools, sectors and with end users
- Student involvement in designing, reviewing and providing ongoing feedback
- Having an intentional focus on Te Tiriti O Waitangi and equity
- Deliberate efforts to challenge mindsets and practices that create inequities and power relationships.

1 Kania, Kramer, & Senge, 2018  
 2 Bishop, et. al, 2014, MacNaughton, 2003, Ministry of Education, n.d., 2020

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# Appendices

## SIX CONDITIONS OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

Adapted from Kania, Kramer, and Senge (2018)

<b>Policy</b>	Guiding documentation, school-wide and nationally, including regulations, curriculum, policies, procedures and priorities and how these reflect inclusion of minority groups.  Includes te ao Māori values and Te Tiriti O Waitangi obligations.	<b>Structural change</b> <b>Explicit</b>
<b>Practice</b>	Actions carried out in the process of educating, including assessment, school grouping, learner and whānau engagement and reporting methods and how these provide for multiplicity.  Includes the legitimisation and integration of te ao Māori practices.	
<b>Resource flows</b>	How resources, including money are allocated. What knowledge is valued and disseminated and what stories count as worthwhile to know, including minority group perspectives.  Includes how resources reflect diverse te ao Māori worldviews.	
<b>Relationships and connections</b>	The connections within and between people, schools and other educational stakeholders. How these operate, whose viewpoints are included and how diversity is celebrated.  Includes relationships with mana whenua and tangata whenua.	<b>Relational change</b> <b>Semi-explicit</b>
<b>Power dynamics</b>	The distribution of decision-making power. Who is at the table, who is heard, who influences and who makes decisions, and how these reflect minority viewpoints.  Includes the position mana whenua and tangata whenua have in decision-making.	
<b>Mindsets</b>	Habits of thought, deeply held beliefs and assumptions, and taken-for-granted ways of working. The influence of mindsets on how we think, what we do, and what we talk about. The challenging of bias and discrimination.  Includes how diverse te ao Māori worldviews are embedded across organisations.	<b>Transformational change</b> <b>Implicit</b>





**epit**

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