FOUNDATION NORTH
Pūtea Hāpai Oranga
Funding to Enhance Lives

2026 Annual Impact Report

October 2026

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Cover photo courtesy of: The Basement Theatre Trust

Whakatauāki

Unuhia te rito o te harakeke,
If you should tear out the heart of the flax bush,

Kei hea ke te kōmako e kō,
Where will the bellbird be,

Whakatairangitia,
Will it fly inland,

Rere ki uta,
Fly out to sea,

Rere ki tai,
Or fly around aimlessly,

Ui mai koe ki ahau e aha
But if you should ask me

te mea nui o te ao,
what is the greatest thing on Earth,

Māku e kī atu,
I will tell you,

He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata,
It is people, it is people, it is people.

Tihei mauri ora

Mere Ngaroto,
Te Aupōuri

Haere mai

Welcome to our Annual Impact Report 2026

Focusing on the year from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, this report tells the story of our granting and other activities, through the lens of some key questions about how we understand impact and deliver it with our communities and other partners.

We'll look at the impact our support enables in our rohe of Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland and Te Tai Tokerau | Northland; through the work of organisations we support, and our own activities as a funder and a system player.

- *What kinds of support have been provided, to which communities, to do what?*
- *What outcomes and changes have been realised through that support?*
- *What has been achieved by working in partnering ways?*
- *What is Foundation North learning about how impact happens?*

Foundation North holds in trust for the Auckland and Northland communities an endowment, or putea, of around two billion dollars.

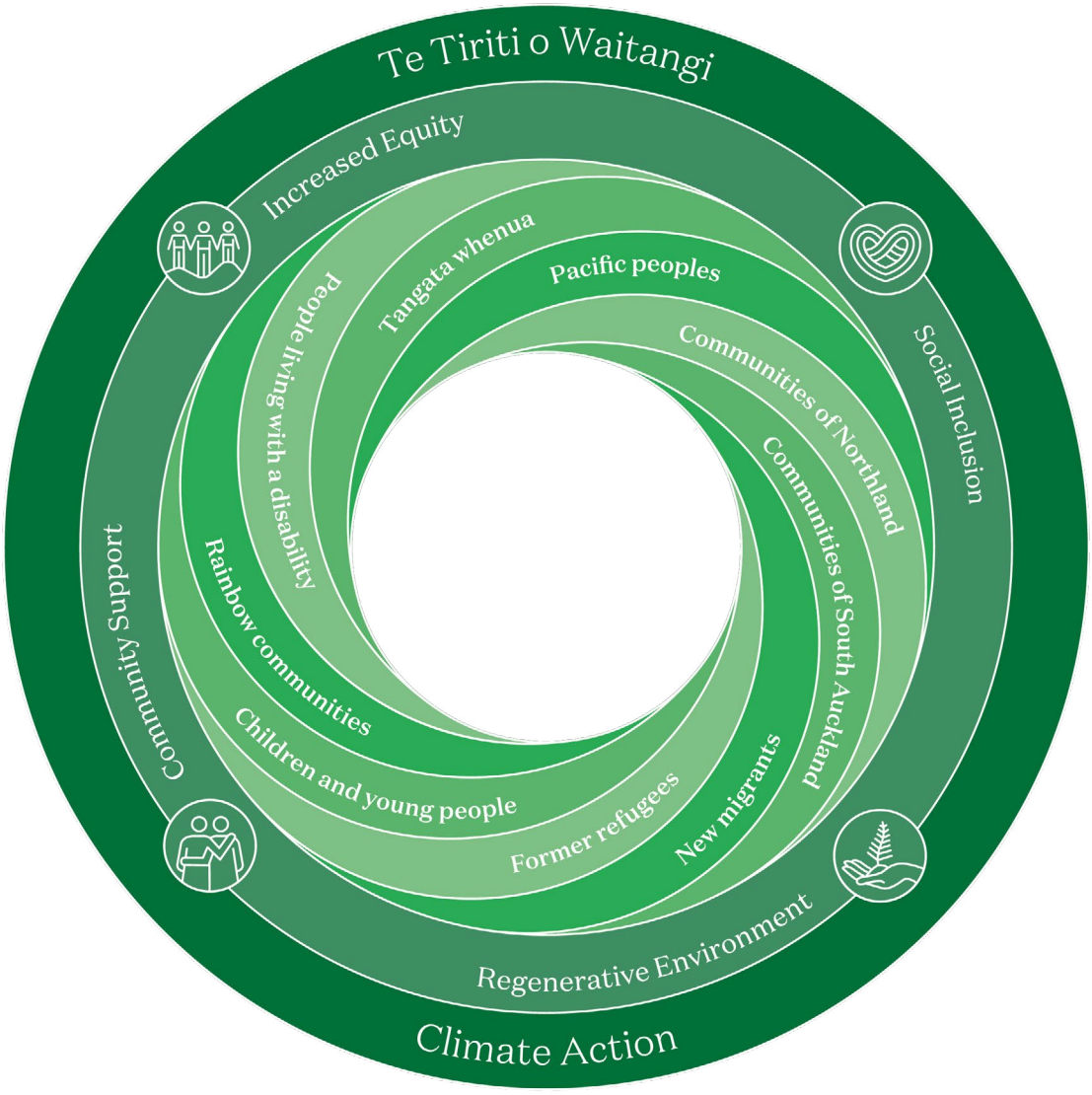
This comes from the sale of the community's shares in what was previously the Auckland Savings Bank. That endowment allows us to make millions of dollars in grants each year to not-for-profit groups in Auckland and Northland.

Moemoeā
Our Vision

Whatītike Oranga
Enhanced Lives

Tā Tātou Whāinga
Our Purpose

Pūtea kaitiakitanga, hāpai oranga.
To enhance lives through responsible guardianship of our investments and focussed funding, anchored by our commitment to Te Tiriti.



Foreword

Philip Crump
Board Chair

As Chair, it is a privilege to reflect on a year of meaningful impact across Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau. In my first year in the role, I acknowledge our outgoing trustees and warmly welcome those joining the Board. Strong governance and financial performance have provided a solid foundation for impact, enabling us to deliver $72 million in funding and other support to 864 community groups.

I am grateful to our trustees, staff, and community partners whose leadership, commitment, and knowledge make this possible. Their mahi helps grow our pūtea and direct support where it is needed most, creating lasting benefits for current and future generations.

Dylan Lawrence
Chief Executive

As I reflect on my first year as Chief Executive of Foundation North, I am struck by the strength of the foundations that underpin our organisation, the passion of our people, and the opportunities ahead. Our vision of Enhanced Lives is our guiding light, shaping how we fund, invest, build relationships, and work alongside communities. I want to acknowledge our trustees, staff, community organisations, and partners whose commitment, expertise, and generosity create the conditions for positive change. Together, we are strengthening the connection between purpose, performance, and impact, ensuring the resources entrusted to us deliver meaningful, lasting change for the people, places, and communities we serve.

Annual Report & Consolidated Financial Statements FY 2026

Context – The year that was

The 2025 – 2026 year required us to accelerate our efforts on deepening our relationships and directing resources well to enhance lives during this time of volatility.

Macro forces including the rise of artificial intelligence, climate change, global economic shifts and uncertainty affect our communities in complex ways. National influences include an ageing population, extreme weather events, and a cost-of-living crisis. See here for recent reports on the global to local context for our rohe.

Our communities are strong and naturally resilient, but hardship is rising. Our funding requests were at a three-year high in March 2026 and in the face of the increased demand and a constrained funding landscape, it is tangata whenua and the community sector who are affected most.

How Foundation North is responding

We know our communities value easy access, simple funding processes, and relational, trust-based, flexible funding that lasts for more than one year. We value feedback from our communities and we are working to make our processes easier for communities to use and to increase access to funding, especially for people and groups who are new to us or find us harder to navigate.

We are sharing more funding through intermediary relationships and participatory grantmaking. We are supporting community organisations to keep delivering their important work.

We are investing in the foundations of wellbeing: social connection, belonging, participation, restoration, and access to opportunities. We also support deeper, long-term change through leadership development, storytelling, social movements, innovation, capability building, and sector wellbeing.

Image: Participatory grantmaking in Te Tai Tokerau with Te Māhuri o te Taiao

Our funding pathways

Image: Action Education Incorporated

Community Funding

— Our Quick Response Grants and Community Grants are responsive to community needs and aspirations, and initiatives that contribute to our vision. Quick Response Grants are designed to meet the applicant's funding needs quickly and easily up to a value of $25,000. A decision is received within two months of a complete application being received by the Foundation.

— Community Grants help community organisations with larger funding needs and can be multi-year grants. A decision will generally be received within four months of a complete application.

Impact Funding

— Working collaboratively and creatively enables us to proactively and flexibly fund community-led innovative approaches that advance kaupapa aligned to our focus areas. This might include funding prototypes or trial approaches, investing in building capacity and capability, the seeding of new ideas, taking projects to scale and working on systems change.

Funding focus areas

There is no fixed budget for each focus area, granting is made to organisations that demonstrate alignment with our focus areas.

Focus Area	Community Funding	Impact Funding
Hāpai te ōritetanga *Increased Equity*	**$8,841,329** **81 grants** *2025 $8,173,230* *87 grants*	**$12,849,087** **40 grants** *2025 $15,527,740* *37 grants*
Whakauru mai *Social Inclusion*	**$7,657,238** **100 grants** *2025 $5,823,724* *87 grants*	**$5,856,683** **18 grants** *2025 $3,633,253* *22 grants*
Whakahou taiao *Regenerative Environment*	**$3,009,772** **40 grants** *2025 $4,261,799* *44 grants*	**$13,465,623** **27 grants** *2025 $8,779,654* *17 grants*
Hāpori āwhina *Community Support*	**$19,700,190** **532 grants** *2025 $21,745,734* *459 grants*	**$637,637** **26 grants** *2025 $235,863* *6 grants*
Total Funding Approved	**$39,208,529** **753 grants** *2025 $40,004,487* *677 grants*	**$32,809,030** **111 grants** *2025 $28,176,510* *82 grants*
Grand Total		**$72,017,559** **864 grants** *2025 $68,180,997* *759 grants*

Outcomes and changes enabled

Our focus areas guide the difference our funding makes across communities and track the positive changes that grants enable over time. Here we share these outcomes and changes using data and storytelling from grantees' impact reports received from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Using the information we gather from applications and progress and impact reports received from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 (n=783), many grantees are contributing towards multiple outcomes across more than one focus area. For the year, 94% of grantees stated that they exceeded (45%, n=323) or achieved (49%, n=347) their intended outcomes. Six percent (n=40) stated that they partially achieved their intended outcomes.

Community Support

We support participation in positive activities that improve community wellbeing.

Outcomes Supported	Count*
Increased skills and creativity	396
Access to and participation in community activities and spaces	362
Communities coming together and social connection	323
Community pride	220
Community resilience	72

** Count = Number of times this outcome was cited in grantee impact reports*

Community Support

Making space for new voices on Auckland's stage – The Basement Theatre Trust

Based in Tāmaki Makaurau, The Basement Theatre Trust creates space for emerging and independent artists, with a particular focus on artists from Vital Voice communities.

The theatre's Hire-For-Nothing programme supported 71 new performances, with 85% of performances led by artists from Vital Voice communities. Almost half were led by emerging artists, giving new voices the opportunity to take creative risks, build experience and connect with audiences.

The Basement's impact extends beyond what happens on stage, with over a dozen free community events bringing people together through workshops, gatherings, play readings and artist residencies. Its Makers Wiki programme alone delivered 20 workshops, creating opportunities for people to learn, experiment and connect through creativity.

For The Basement, creating meaningful impact means more than producing great shows. It means listening, making time and creating space for artists and communities to shape what happens next.

In centring emerging and underrepresented voices, The Basement Theatre is helping create a performing arts community that is more diverse, connected and reflective of the people and communities that make up Tāmaki Makaurau.

Examples of other initiatives supported in this focus area include Ngāti Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust Board and others to support immediate response and recovery efforts following severe flooding in Aotea and Tai Tokerau in January 2026; Recycle A Device, closing the digital divide one refurbished laptop at a time.

Increased Equity

We support approaches that achieve the aspirations of Māori and Pacific communities and address systemic and intergenerational inequalities in South Auckland and Northland. We also prioritise solutions that place children and young people at the centre.

Outcomes Supported	Count*
Thriving tamariki, rangatahi and whānau	136
Improved equity and wellbeing as Māori and as Pacific peoples	124
Communities leading their own solutions and changing systems	99
Māori and Pacific languages and cultures thriving	99
Tangata whenua as partners in decision making	16

** Count = Number of times this outcome was cited in grantee impact reports*

Increased Equity

Finding connection through creativity – The Generator

The *Art as a Healing Pathway* programme was a series of four free arts-based creative workshops created by Mark Lang (carver), Danielle Adams (resin artist), and Lloyd Matiu Whiri (graphic designer) to address rising antisocial behaviour in their local Dargaville community by providing vulnerable rangatahi and adults with the space to learn, create, and connect through art.

The Generator, funded by the Ministry of Social Development and delivered by Ka Puta Ka Ora – Emerge Aotearoa, supports Community Services Card holders experiencing financial hardship to develop money management and business skills, and work towards financial independence through self-employment. Mark, Danielle and Lloyd are graduates of the programme, and Mark now gives back as a Tuakana, mentoring and encouraging others on their self-employment journey.

Locally-led and culturally responsive, the programme offered short and long-term workshops in carving, resin art, and t-shirt design at the Tika Pono Toi art gallery. For some, the workshops were an opportunity to get out of the house and try something new, for others, the experience went deeper.

What started as learning to carve or create resin art became a pathway to reconnect with whakapapa, foster cultural pride, and develop new creative skills. All participants in the programme's carving workshops reported strengthened mental health and spiritual wellbeing, with 100% of participants in the resin art workshop too reporting improved wellbeing, confidence, and cultural pride. These figures and feedback from participants highlight the immense value and impact of the programme's varied offerings and showcase the importance of arts-based healing opportunities.

Foundation North provided a grant in support of The Generator's Art as a Healing Pathway project delivering culturally grounded art workshops to vulnerable adults and young people in Dargaville between February and July 2025.

Examples of other initiatives supported in this focus area include Outwest Youth Community Trust's youth services providing holistic support in Helensville.

Social Inclusion

We support approaches that reduce discrimination and racism and increase social inclusion. Former refugees, new migrants (fewer than five years in New Zealand), rainbow communities and people living with a disability are our priority.

Outcomes Supported	Count*
Greater sense of belonging, acceptance and inclusion	123
Meaningful participation in society by diverse communities	122
Equal access to opportunity	106
Self-determination and influencing decision making	34
Inclusive laws and policies	18

** Count = Number of times this outcome was cited in grantee impact reports*

Social Inclusion

Driving change and building confidence – Umma Trust

For former refugees, migrants, women and families from Muslim and other backgrounds, the main barrier to participation in a new society is language. 80% of new arrival refugee women speak minimal or no English, and learning the language can take 5+ years in full-time classes. The Women's Empowerment Programme delivers services in mother tongue languages enabling immediate access to participation.

Additionally, barriers such as transport and experiences of family violence contribute to increased social isolation that makes it more difficult to access employment, education, healthcare, and participate fully in the community. Umma Trust's Women Empowerment Programme takes a holistic approach to addressing these barriers, providing culturally responsive support that helps women and families build confidence, skills and independence.

A key part of the programme is Umma Trust's Driving Programme, which provides driver training and theory classes in mother-tongue languages including Somali, Tigrinya, Arabic, Dari, Pashto and Spanish. Participants can access interpreters and practical support as they progress from their learner licence through to a full licence, with VTNZ also operating four on-site testing stations.

Umma Trust's Driving School recorded a 96% pass rate for learner licences, with restricted and full licence pass rates over 60% - with the national rate being 50%.

Alongside driving support, the Afghan Women and Children Community

Development Programme offers weekly literacy, sewing, driving theory and family violence prevention workshops, while activities for children support mother-tongue language, cultural identity and community connection.

Together, these Tāmaki Makaurau-based programmes create pathways for women and families to build skills, confidence and greater independence.

Examples of other initiatives supported in this focus area include Taimahi Trust, the Whangārei-based organisation walking alongside young adults with intellectual and learning disabilities to grow life skills for a fulfilling future; Sense Rugby NZ Trust's occupational therapy-led rugby programmes in Onehunga and South Auckland.

Regenerative Environment

We support joined-up approaches to conserving, restoring and renewing the environment so that Te Taiao and people can flourish together. Initiatives proposed by tangata whenua are our priority.

Outcomes Supported	Count*
Ecosystems and communities being renewed and regenerated	66
Connection and access to Te Taiao	50
Tino Rangatiratanga– community led action for Te Taiao	48
Mātauranga Māori being recognised, valued and implemented	33

** Count = Number of times this outcome was cited in grantee impact reports*

Regenerative Environment

Growing the next generation of kaitiaki – Te Kohuroa Rewilding Initiative

At Te Kohuroa/Mathesons Bay, the Te Kohuroa Rewilding Initiative is showing what can happen when communities come together to restore and reconnect with their marine environment.

The community-led pilot exceeded its initial goals, trialling rewilding methods that allow natural processes to repair damaged ecosystems and building local capacity for active marine restoration. Through partnerships with iwi, community members, organisations and marine specialists, the initiative brought together a diverse kete of knowledge, skills and experience to support restoration efforts and strengthen kaitiakitanga.

The impact extended beyond the restoration work itself, with the initiative identifying an important opportunity to engage young people in marine conservation, providing hands-on experiences that are often difficult to access while students are still in education.

This hands-on learning highlighted the value of connecting young people directly with restoration projects and creating opportunities for them to contribute to solutions in their own communities.

The initiative's achievements have also received wider recognition, with its kelp restoration kaupapa selected as a finalist for the 2025 New Zealand Fisheries Kaitiaki Award.

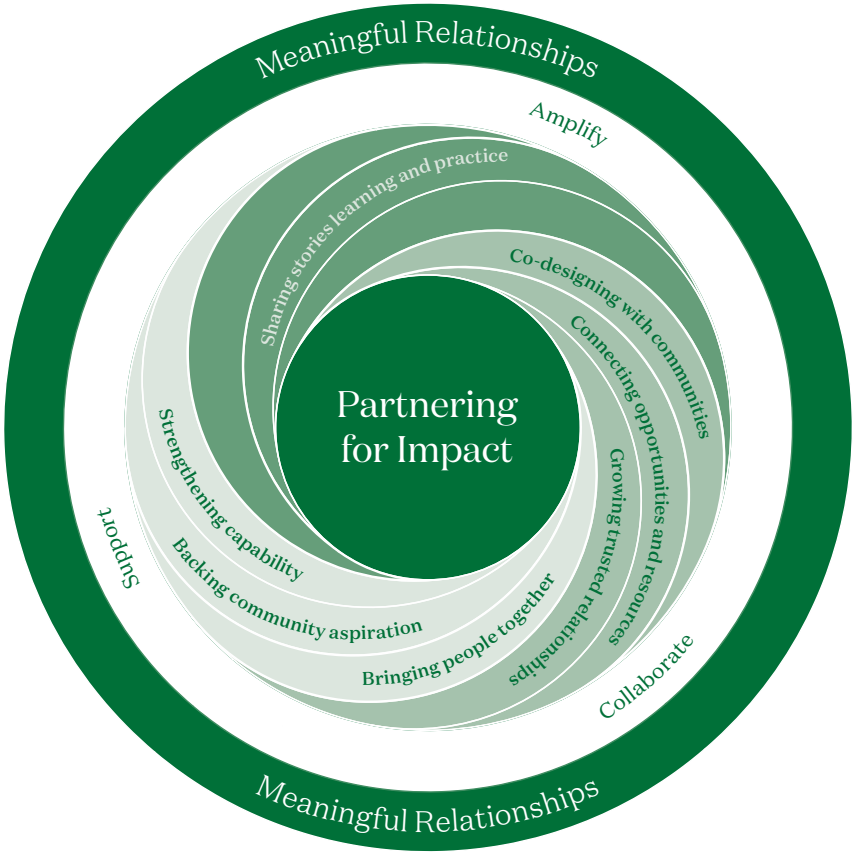
By combining mātauranga Māori, community knowledge and scientific expertise, Te Kohuroa Rewilding Initiative goes beyond supporting the recovery of a precious marine environment by helping grow the next generation of people committed to caring for it.

Examples of other initiatives supported in this focus area include Pou Rāhui, the Iwi-led partnership responding to the Caulerpa threat across Te Tai Tokerau, Tāmaki Makaurau and beyond; Kaipātiki Project's community-led mahi to conserve, restore and renew the environment across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Partnering for impact

Foundation North partners with communities—not just as a funder, but as a convenor, collaborator, and amplifier of community voice. This means connecting and bringing people together with shared interests, co-investing resources with other funders, building capability where it's needed, and sharing the stories that matter, so that community leadership is strengthened and change is sustained for the long-term.

Le Va and Foundation North partnership celebration event



Support

Bringing people together *to share knowledge, align effort and strengthen collective action. Through quarterly fonotaga (gatherings), we have brought Pacific community leaders together with a focus on strengthening relationships, building a network of connections, and identifying gaps and opportunities to work together.*

Strengthening capability *through targeted support that strengthens practice and organisational resilience. Facilitated by our Centre for Social Impact, sustained support for Māori and Tauiwi leaders has been provided through dedicated 18-month Pou Tuarā leadership journeys.*

Backing community aspirations *through flexible funding approaches that enable long-term change. We are partnering with business, local government, philanthropy, tangata whenua and community organisations in a new funding model to support the Tāmaki Taiao Alliance, a collective of Tāmaki-based nature projects that are contributing to landscape-scale conservation outcomes.*

Collaborate

Growing trusted relationships *with communities, partners and other funders, grounded in shared purpose and mutual respect. This year we celebrated devolved funding arrangements with Le Va supporting Pacific disabled communities, and The Cause Collective with rangatahi from their 'Do Good, Feel Good' youth-led social change programme.*

Connecting opportunities and resources *through relationships, co-funding partnerships, and sector collaboration. This year saw the fifth iteration of The Asian Artists' Fund, a unique co-funding initiative created by Foundation North and Creative New Zealand (CNZ) shaped by ongoing feedback from Asian arts practitioners.*

Co-designing with communities *and sharing decision-making so community knowledge, leadership and aspirations shape the work. We are proud to continue our journey with participatory grantmaking; learning from groups like Te Māhuri o te Taiao and Youth4Sure how funders can support and facilitate the co-design of funds – shifting power from funders to the communities and individuals with lived experience who will benefit from the funding.*

Amplify

Sharing stories, learning and practice *to lift community voice, influence change and help shift the conditions that limit opportunity. Examples include Rākau Tautoko, supporting the delivery of their Kai Sovereignty project; and Taimahi Trust, enabling young people in Tai Tokerau with intellectual and learning disabilities to transition from school to employment.*

Partnering for impact

Strengthening capability

Supporting communities to thrive means supporting organisations with more than funding. Foundation North provides capability-building support that helps organisations strengthen their practice, build confidence, and increase their impact.

Our support is offered in three main ways:

- **Free tools and resources:** Available through the Centre for Social Impact's knowledge hub, Te Pūaha o te Ako, including webinars, guides, toolkits, reports, and podcasts.
- **Targeted programmes:** Opportunities for funded organisations to build capability through cohort learning with peers including ANCAD LiiFT Pasifika and Te Tiriti training.
- **Tailored one-on-one support:** Bespoke technical support for organisations leading complex systems change work.

Spend by category for 2025/2026

Tailored one-on-one support *57%*

Free tools and resources *35%*

Targeted Programmes *8%*

Te Pūaha o te Ako

Te Pūaha o te Ako – Knowledge Hub, held and delivered through the Foundation North's social business, the Centre for Social Impact (CSI), is a free, self-directed learning and practice platform for community organisations and changemakers. It brings together webinars, insights, toolkits and practice guides to help organisations learn, grow and lead change across a wide range of topics.

This year 15 Te Pūaha Talks webinars were delivered, including a dedicated series on a Core Skills Toolkit for new and small community groups or not-for-profit organisations. These webinars were complemented by one-on-one coaching sessions, offering tailored support for specific organisational issues. Communities valued the combination of shared learning and personalised guidance.

Extracts below from CSI Snapshots from our Year In Review 2025/26.

Our reach

11% increase

42% of webinar registrations were Foundation North grantees – up from 38% 2024/25

1,083 registrations

from 430 organisations

533 attendees

Te Pūaha homepage

214% increase

from 2024/25

7,554 page views

4,795 active users

Our most visited resources

- Funding Guide 2,852 active users
- Core Skills Toolkit 1,660 active users
- Haumanu 1,707 active users

Alongside the Core Skills Toolkit, Te Pūaha offers a range of practical resources, including the Funding Guide and Capability Wheel. This year, it also launched the Climate Action Tools Hub, supporting not-for-profits to take practical steps in response to climate impacts. The toolkit includes resources on climate action, te ao Māori and climate, communications, governance and strategy, and finance. This builds on Foundation North's enduring commitment to climate action.

The development of Te Pūaha o te Ako resources is informed by the Centre's wider work with community and not-for-profit organisations in areas such as strategy, governance, leadership and evaluation.

The name Te Pūaha o te Ako is a metaphor for CSI's digital knowledge hub. Inspired by the estuary, it reflects connection, exchange, and the coming together of different currents of knowledge to nurture growth and opportunity.

Tailored one-on-one support for Pacific Kids' Learning

Pacific Kids' Learning is a social enterprise on a mission to create a safe digital space with culturally affirming 'edutainment' content for Pacific children and families worldwide. To access international funding and develop as a social enterprise, they needed to communicate their model and evidence their impact. The impact report co-developed with CSI shares the Pacific Kids' Learning's story, mission and vision for the future. It describes their unique village-centered approach, journey and activities, impact to date, key learning, and future directions. As Pacific Kids' Learning grows its reach and influence, this evidence of the positive change it is creating is strengthening its position as a Pacific-led digital trail blazer.

Pacific Kids' Learning's Impact Report video

Continuing to learn

To enable community-led impact, we know that we need to work differently, especially to support our Pasifika communities, grassroots groups and those who are new to funding. We are identifying clear spaces to fund long-term to address root causes of problems and create systems that work for all.

We are working to simplify and amplify our funding and apply our non-funding support to the spaces we want to support deeper, long-term change. We are exploring how to apply our investment portfolio in service of our vision. Enabling community-led solutions and self-determination remains the cornerstone of our approach.

As this report shows, we believe positive change occurs through relationships, partnership, learning and long-term commitment. It reminds us that understanding and strengthening impact is an ongoing journey.

Foundation North has a proud legacy of supporting communities across Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau. As the world around us changes, so too must we. We are focused on strengthening our foundations, simplifying how we work, and making the best use of our people, resources and technology so we are ready for the future. By staying true to our purpose while continuing to evolve, we can deepen the impact our communities deliver for generations to come.

“Understanding and strengthening impact is an ongoing journey.”

Ngā mihi

We wish to thank all of the organisations who have contributed to this report by sharing the warmth of their stories, images and videos with us.

If you'd like to learn more please visit foundationnorth.org.nz

FOUNDATION NORTH
Pūtea Hāpai Oranga
Funding to Enhance Lives