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Young Women's Leadership Opportunity Provides Huge Value

Theme:
Leadership



Co-authored by Ellie Eastwood, Sport Northland

The value that Whanake o te Kōpara has added to my life is immeasurable, and I am so thankful for this experience. I strongly encourage any wāhine reading this who can apply to do so!

Whanake o te Kōpara is a leadership development programme for young women aged 18 to 24, established and enabled by Women in Sport Aotearoa (WISPA). The programme was developed to combat an identified lack of leadership opportunities for young wāhine in the active recreation, sport, and wellbeing sectors.

The 2024 cohort included four Te Tai Tokerau representatives – Jovan Tawhiao, Tarquala Whittaker, Eva-Sky Gundry and myself, Ellie Eastwood. After attending only one out of the three weekend wānanga, we had already developed strong connections within the group of eighteen wāhine from all around the motu, creating a foundation for two more awesome weekends with the group.

The programme uses co-design to ensure that each participant's voice is heard and uplifted, with opportunities to teach others according to one's own strengths. There were plenty of memorable moments and standout lessons, and below I have highlighted just a few from each wānanga.


At the first wānanga, one of our first activities was Tetra Mapping – a tool which helps teams to understand human diversity in personalities, behaviours, and communication styles. It's a productive exercise to do within a team; helping with whanaungatanga whilst teaching ways to work better alongside different personalities, providing us with the opportunity to begin to understand one another from the outset; drivers, strengths, repellers, and areas they may find challenging. Another notable lesson was the values workshop – we were given the opportunity to consider which values are important to us, determine our boundaries, and discuss the importance of reflecting them in our daily decisions. This was something I hadn't done in years; we often talk about our values, but don't take the time to dig deeper or consider how they shift throughout different life stages.


During the second wānanga, we had the privilege of hearing from Merran Brockie-David (WISPA Programme Manager) – which was especially inspiring for me, given Merran worked at Sport Northland in her early twenties. It was amazing to hear about her journey, which started similarly to my own. We also heard from the wāhine in charge at Women in Sport Waitaha, which again, was incredibly inspiring – sparking many ideas for us. Junior Armstrong (Sport NZ Locally Led Lead), took us through his journey, reflected on all the benefits of sport and active recreation on community wellbeing, and we did a learning activity based around different types of community initiative frameworks.


When the time came for our third and final wānanga, the learning had become much more informal, in an easy and comfortable environment. It was incredible to hear Nicky van den Bos (WISPA CEO) speak about her journey in the sector; and similarly, hear about the experiences of Emma Evans (Sport NZ Women & Girls Lead). We also went white water rafting, which was arguably my favourite part of all three wānanga!

A workshop with Megan Gordon (Massey University) was also held on difficult conversations. It was great to get some practice, advice, and tools on such an important skill, knowing that difficult conversations are imminent, be it at work or in our personal lives. It also helped me to reflect on a few important things I value in leadership – honesty, patience, and understanding. Difficult conversations are uncomfortable, but they are so important for creating genuine relationships, for developing trust, and ensuring that people around you know that you value empathy whilst still upholding accountability.

One last important lesson I took from hearing about Merran, Nicky and Emma’s journeys is the importance of taking every opportunity that interests you. Scared to apply for that dream job? Even if you feel like you’re not the right candidate, or you don’t have the right qualifications, you are so much more capable than you think. What’s the worst that can happen? Every additional job application, course, interview, internship, conversation or connection creates another learning experience, adding to your kete.


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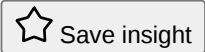
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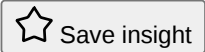


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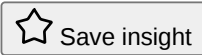
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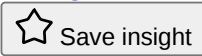
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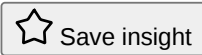
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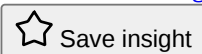


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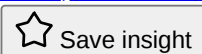
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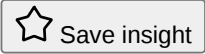
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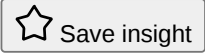
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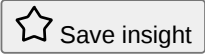
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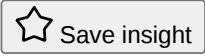
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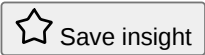
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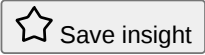


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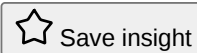
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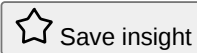
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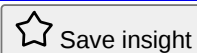
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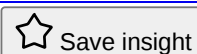
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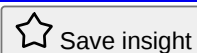
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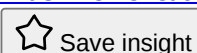
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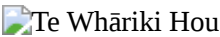
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