World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences
Vol:14, No:9, 2020

# Design and Māori Values: A Rebrand Project for the Social Enterprise Sector

M. Kiarna, S. Junjira, S. Casey, M. Nolwazi, M. S. Marcos, A. T. Tatiana, L. Cassandra

Open Science Index, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol:14, No:9, 2020 publications.waset.org/10011462/pdf

***Abstract*—**This paper details a rebrand design project developed for a non-profitable organization called Te Roopu Waiora (TRW), which is currently located in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. This social enterprise is dedicated to supporting the Māori community living with sensorial, physical and intellectual disabilities (*whānau hauā)*. As part of a year three bachelor design brief, the rebrand project enabled students to reflect on *Kaupapa Māori* principles and appropriately address the values of the organisation. As such, the methodology used a pragmatic paradigm approach and mixed methods design practices involving a *human-centred* design to problem solving. As result, the student project culminated in the development in a range of cohesive design artefacts, aiming to improve the rentability and perception of the brand with the audience and stakeholders.

***Keywords*—**Design in Aotearoa New Zealand, Kaupapa Māori, branding, design education, human-centered design.

## I. Introduction

TRW is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) located in Auckland, New Zealand. It is a unique Māori organisation that has implemented several social projects to improve equity for people with a range of impairments outside and within the Māori community, native people of New Zealand who arrived in the country around 1325. TRW's current focus is the project *Te Tohu Whakawaiora*, which provides health learning materials for healthcare providers working alongside people with disabilities. TRW follows the values of *Āta* (with care), *He Wā* (in rhythm), *Hihiri* (with energy) and *Hāora* (breathing life). TRW describe themselves as leaders in Māori health awareness. However, like many NGOs, their governmental funding is neither stable nor sustainable enough to allow them to upgrade their resources for whanau (community) support.

Making a transition to the social enterprise sector is an attractive prospect for this organization, as it would allow certain independence and opportunities that could impact the future of their *whānau* and community. The transition to a social enterprise would allow TRW to maintain their social status as a charitable non-profit organisation while becoming financially free through various business endeavours.

The design brief acknowledged the inequitable employment reality of people with disabilities in New Zealand and it asked designers for a communication strategy to reposition the brand under a social enterprise sector. Under these parameters, TRW could offer disability training services to businesses and companies, allowing them an income rather than dependence on public donations and governmental support. A brand repositioning could positively influence public perception of the brand, improving funding, employment opportunities, independence and support for the *whānau hauā* (Māori with a disability). However, the project required an appreciation of *Kaupapa Māori* and a knowledge of design for accessibility in response to the social and cultural position of the organization. *Kaupapa* is a Māori concept that considers a group of ideas, principles and philosophies that functions as aspirations for a community. The goal was to create a brand to reflect the identity and values of the organisation, and to encourage a sense of belonging and participation of *whānau hauā* in the wider society.

### *A. Whānau Hauā (Māori with Disability)*

*Whānau hauā* is an alternative indigenous approach to disability and introduces a Māori perspective to disability. *Whānau hauā* is used as an umbrella term to represent and refer to the people who are and relate to Māori living with disabilities. Metaphorically, whānau hauā means "the wind that propels whānau with members who have a disability" [1]. Here the Māori word 'whānau' refers to the extended family network they are living with or outside of the home. It is also used in English in New Zealand, particularly in official publications. In Māori society, whānau is also a political unity, below the levels of hapū (clans or descent groups) and iwi (tribe), and the word itself has other meanings: like a verb means *to be born* or to *give birth*.

Māori and indigenous people living with disabilities have experiences and challenges such as discrimination, which primarily stems from colonisation [2], [3]. King et al. [2] and Hollinsworth [4] argue that at the time of colonisation, 'disability' did not exist. For this project, statistics provided insights of Māori experience and their disadvantages in health, social, wellbeing and economic outcomes compared to non-Māori in New Zealand. In addition to this, the experience of identifying as Māori with a disability comes with further physical challenges and the weight of societal prejudice towards their self-worth. Researching prevalent statistics surrounding Māori disability employment outcomes indicate the prominent findings:

- In New Zealand, 26% of the Māori population was identified as disabled in 2013. Māori experienced a 33% higher prevalence of disability than other ethnic groups at 24% [5]. Physical impairment is the most common and prominent limitation for Māori with disabilities.
- For an estimated 404,000 people (43% of the disabled

K. M., J. S., C. S., and N. M. are year 3 students, M. M. S. is a senior lecturer, T. A. T. is a lecturer and C. L. is a teaching assistant from the Communication Design Department at AUT, New Zealand (e-mail: kiarna.michie@aut.ac.nz, gvc9716@aut.ac.nz, vsn0518@aut.ac.nz, sjk9105@aut.ac.nz, marcos.mortensen.steagall@aut.ac.nz, tatiana.tavares@aut.ac.nz, cassandra.loh@aut.ac.nz).

Open Science Index, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol:14, No:9, 2020 publications.waset.org/10011462/pdf

population), a physical limitation was either their only impairment or was more limiting than the other impairments with which they were living [5]. The prevalence of having unmet needs to see a healthcare professional were higher for Māori with a disability than non-Māori with a disability for all age groups except over 65 years [6].

- The prevalence of having unmet needs for special equipment was higher for Māori with a disability than non-Māori with a disability for all age groups except children under 14 years [6]. These data show that non-Māori are receiving more support for their disabilities, while Māori face inequalities when receiving health rights.

Approximately one third of Māori experience some form of disability, and the majority have problems acquiring the support they need. These statistics indicate the urgency to improve the ways that supportive organisations reach *whānau hauā*. Experiences such as these have called attention to the medical model used in healthcare when caring for people with disabilities.

Both Māori and non-Māori have exclusionary attitudes and practices embedded in their cultural traditions. For instance, some *whānau hauā* may experience access restrictions to marae if their guide or mobility dogs are prohibited [7].[1] Barriers to daily living do not originate from the disabled person but are those perpetuated by society.

Compared to other healthcare organisations working with disability, the fundamental idea that a disability does not define a person makes *whānau hauā* different from those who employ a framework that is informed predominantly by the Northern Hemisphere [1]. As TRW shift to a social enterprise position, they must continue to grow the capabilities of *whānau* and improve wellbeing. They will need to shift views on *whānau hauā* so that they are visible as contributing members of society and are capable of employment given the support, according to their needs, to feel included in workplaces. As an existing and operating organization, we departure from a point that reflects in how people perceive TRW's current brand and their new services in order to uncover opportunities for new brand perception.

### *B. Social Entrepreneurship and Brand Perception*

TRW's positioning as a social enterprise requires a method of entrepreneurship appropriate to the context of a Māori health-service organization. Instead of external funding, TRW would rely on support by securing contracts and 'trading' disability training services to businesses for profit. According to Besharov and Smith [9], a determinant of whether a non-profit can transition successfully to a social enterprise depends upon the hybrid of social and commercial elements. By blending the two elements, the organisation would become a socially innovative 'mix', attaining the intrinsic value of financial independence, whilst maintaining the much necessary social vision of addressing equitable access and employment within the *whānau hauā* community.

Peredo and McLean [10] argue that revenue in such organisations generates benefits for the community as opposed to being invested in the organisation itself. The employment model of the social enterprise provides job opportunities and training to its target populations or 'clients,' with social barriers. In this sense, creating employment opportunities empowers individuals and also creates a positive message for the *whānau hauā* community.

A rebranding strategy means investigating the most effective ways of reflecting TRW's new aspirations to stakeholders and audience. Aldrich and Fiol [11] state that the main reason organisations fail to acquire resources is due to mistrust. Accordingly, storytelling can be a powerful brand strategy to increase brand equity and confidence as people are invited into the organization's journey through their emotions. Stories can articulate the long-term effectiveness of a brand. Coulter et al. [12] explain that a brand story should be able to answer questions about who is involved behind the brand and present a clear distinction of a character that the audience can sensitively connect with. By these means, the story should focus on a singular message that reflects the organisation's values [13] and should take the audience on a 'hero's journey', generating a positive impression or perception of the brand. As consumers become emotionally invested, they are more likely to relate to it even if there is a lack of further knowledge surrounding the brand.

A compelling visual identity and brand story has considered a strategy that outlines the stakeholders' and audiences' journey in an interconnected way. The design message aimed to encourage investors to shift their perspectives towards *whānau hauā* as powerful protagonists pursuing their independence through employment. Henceforth, the story provides a 'heroic' [14] lens of the brand, that is more likely to positively engage companies into a united goal with the services that TRW have to offer. Moreover, companies assume the role of becoming partners of the organization through a collective and authentic mission, with the intention to help *whānau hauā* toward their independence and rentability, acknowledging the particularities of the Kaupapa Māori.

[1] However, some criticism has been offered to this simplistic view of the term. Dr Jani Wilson [8], a knowledgeable Māori scholar expressed the following:

> I'm not entirely in agreeance with this passage when relating it to *Te Ao Māori* (Māori universe) because I know that *tikanga* and *kawa* (Māori protocols and diplomacies) have the capacity to be flexible if in consultation with the *kahui kaumatua* (Māori leaders). For example, I was in the Auckland University *wharenui* (focal point of a *marae*) and a man walked in wearing his shoes. We were all aghast because this is seen to bring in the *dust of Tūmatauenga* (God of War) into the *domain of Rongomatāne* (God of food and offspring). However, the man stood as a speaker for a *manuhiri (*non-Māori person) and explained that he had spoken to King Tūheitia (actual Māori king) to excuse him [for] wearing his shoes in all *whare* in the Tainui region because the shoes are attached to two removable legs. The removal of them meant timing was an issue as was the *whakamā* (a Māori construct for shame and inadequacy) having to shuffle into an important gathering potentially in front of hundreds of people, the latter of which is a most important element Māori seek to avoid. So, I think it's really important not to imply that the *marae* or Te Ao Māori are the creators of obstacles.

Open Science Index, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol:14, No:9, 2020 publications.waset.org/10011462/pdf

## II. Methods and Data Collection

Research is commonly based on some underlying assumptions related to what constitutes as acceptable and which research method(s) and methodology(ies) are appropriate, for the development of new knowledge in a particular field. For this project, a *human-centred* design approach for problem solving has been considered a suitable approach as it is traditionally considered a pragmatic methodology that builds a deeper connection and empathy with the people designing for. The following qualitative and quantitative research methods have been presented as phases of enquire and data collection in which students engaged with in studio practices where "practice is used as a vehicle for reforming, critiquing and advancing the research question" [15]

### *A. Interviews and Focus Groups*

Survey is a quantitative research method conventionally used to gather specific data or information from an audience. This method was used during the research journey to measure the current perception and effectiveness of TRW's brand. Questions were designed to gauge the audience's level of interest in the organisation, based on people's ability to perceive the values and traits of competence, modernity, independence and professionalism, on TRW's logo (symbolic representation) and other visual designs, such brochure and website.

To collect open-answered responses about the brand, we also facilitated a specialised focus-group feedback session with five professional designers. In order to consider a redesign or adaptation of the current logo, we asked participants to review TRW's original logo so to gain an understanding (from a designer's perspective) of which design elements reflected the organisation's purpose as such as the care for *whānau hauā* and the Kaupapa Māori cultural and community values.

### *B. Empathy Map and Personas*

The use of empathy maps allowed us to generate two fictionalised personas as the main audiences for the brand: the *whānau hauā* and TRW's prospective business clients. This method intended to employ mapping techniques in which to engage with the audience through their imagining thoughts, feelings, actions and words. These visualization techniques encompassed different stages of the user experience for the design outcomes, in order to simulate personal experiences. This process of *immersion* gave an overview of how the users would interact with the design outcomes and to rationalise the design decisions.

### *C. SWOT Analysis*

A SWOT analysis serves as a strategic technique used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the planning of a project or in relation to a competitor. For TRW, this analysis mapped both the strengths and weaknesses of organisation and explored how it could provide effective services. External factors identified during analysis (and areas that require development) were that TRW's competitors are well-established experts in their areas of disability. Because of this, it can be assumed that funding will likely continue to be allocated to these existing organisations. The opportunity for TRW is to fill a potential gap in the disability support. Underlining themselves as a social enterprise and the only Kaupapa Māori organisation to serve all types of disability differentiates their work from the competitors.

### *D. Journey Map*

The journey map was used a step-by-step visualisation process of a customer with the website. It provided fundamental insight into how the general audience might use the design outcomes by mapping considerations of their thoughts, emotions, and purposes. When paired with the two established personas, this method gave an overview of how the audiences may interact with the design outcomes for their specific goals, the type of information each outcome should possess, and what role each outcome should play when being interacted with.

### *E. Wireframes*

Wireframes served as another primary tool in conjunction with personas. Where journey maps reveal the types of information required, wireframes explore how this content should be best navigated and displayed. Using the journey map as a journey of interaction, the wireframes focused on user experience and usability.

Bradd Sanders' persona (a hypothetical person) was considered an example journey of a potential business partners or sponsor for TRW. His journey was considered from his initial discovery of TRW, until signing up as a client base, booking upskilling sessions for his employees. Observing Bradd's interactions with the interface allowed an overview of his behaviour and also giving insights about the overall readability and functionality of the website and other outcomes.

### *F. Ideation, Symbolism and Design Elements*

In the old days before written language, Māori used many symbols to tell stories. There are six main Māori symbols used today, and each of them has representations, and meanings.

TRW's original brand included the use of Māori design elements, specifically the *koru*, and therefore the symbolic meaning behind it provided in-depth understanding of TRW's values and their identity.

The *koru* (Fig. 1) is often used by Māori as a symbol of creation and based on the shape of a fern frond as it unfurls. Its circular shape gives the idea of perpetual movement, with the inward coil suggesting a return to one's point of origin. The combination of these ideas also symbolizes how life both changes and stays the same [16].



Fig. 1 An example of the *koru* symbol [17]

As the research progressed, other graphic elements also emerged, in specific to the concept of *raranga*, a traditional Māori practice of flax weaving. Aligned with TRW's has four core values (Āta, He Wā, Hihiri, and Hāora), the concept of weaving or intertwining seemed to be an appropriate graphic complement, due to its representation of connection [18]. Pettit [18] presents the concept of *tāniko*: a unique Māori way of weaving with a number of original patterns with various meanings. Two patterns drawn from *tāniko* that guide and inspire the TRW design element are *waharua kopito* and *aronui.* In a very simplistic view, *waharua kopito* creates a diamond shape and translates to a point of connection and represents a place where change can occur. *Aronui* refers to the knowledge people seek about the natural world and is also a triangular pattern.

It was decided green would be the primary colour in homage to the original colour palette of TRW. Green is inspired by *pounamu* (a precious stone also known as greenstone) valued for its practical strength, durability and beauty. Furthermore, its value to Māori runs much deeper with its symbolic link to chieftains and peace-making, and considered to have *mana* (status) and is *tapu* (sacred). *Pounamu* artefacts serve as a physical connection, through *whakapapa* (genealogy), to venerated ancestors and the battles and events that they have lived through [19]. In colour psychology, green also represents the natural world, health, growth and opportunity [20].

## III. Design Outcomes

TRW's original proposal was to update its website and brochure envisioning the transition of the organization to the social enterprise sector. Nevertheless, intensive research was carried out through qualitative and quantitative data into brand perception and contextual cultural understanding to identify suitable design strategies to achieve this goal.

Using the SWOT analysis, design outcomes have been developed turning weakness into strengths, to fulfil the needs of TRW. Each design outcome has been well thought-out, intending to keep the integrity of Kaupapa Māori, *tikanga* and *kawa* values, aligned with the needs and the future of TRW. The dual sense of professionalism and approachability was conveyed through minimalist shapes and rounded edges, referring to the concepts of the *koru* and *weaving*. TRW brand extensions were produced to bring a sense of personality to their workplace and design materials that integrate colours (green and orange) along with the patterns representing the four main TRW's values. Following the brand vision, the following has been designed and briefly rationalized:

- The *logo* used the *koru* as a reference to the cultural heritage of TRW. The design expanded the original logo and symbol and embodied the unifying act of the community, whereas expansion symbolizing the spreading of knowledge about Māori disability. Typography that adapts the clean and the interweaving with patterns and shapes.
- The *associated collaterals* designed in the brand guideline uses the weaving concepts of *waharua kopito* and *aronu* in a number of patterns and icons that extends its applications to a number of outcomes. Four patterns have been created for each of the four TRW's values of *Āta* (with care), *He Wā* (in rhythm), *Hihiri* (with energy) and *Hāora* (breathing life). The weaving patterns intended to emphasise connection and to establish graphic element as creative platform of reframing disability outcomes for Māori. *Icons* for each of disabilities were designed for *whānau hauā*; for example, a Deaf employee's lanyard would have the 'turi' (Deaf) icon.
- The *website* displays community projects and characterises TRW as a social enterprise. It was developed as the main information hub to attract and connect New Zealand businesses with Māori disability experts. The main designed features that the website offers businesses are the ability create individual profiles and to book online meetings or training workshops.
- The *brochure* has been designed to demonstrate TRW's journey as a social enterprise. The idea is that TRW would give these brochures to prospective clients to inform and promote the organization and their projects. The panels include information about the location and contact details and make use of the contemporary weaving graphic elements of the brand identity.
- *Secondary design outcomes* (collection of posters and branding extensions including t-shirts, lanyards, stationery, mugs and handicap-sign hangers) were designed for community and health workshops. *Posters* aimed to promote disability training workshops and recruit businesses wanting to develop their skills in partnership with TRW. They used a modern and minimalist layout with information about the website where they can book a meeting. *T-shirts* were designed for *whānau* members who host disability training workshops.

## IV. Conclusion

This communication design project (employed as an educational design brief) comprised a rebrand strategy exercise of a Māori NGO shifting to social enterprise. The brief employed a *human*-centred design framework using a mixed-methods approach to problem solving, ensuring that user's worldview was central to the design process. Studio-driven activities demanded a range of skills that went beyond aesthetics and sought new forms of problem-solving and interdisciplinary knowledge in strategy, planning, prototyping

Open Science Index, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol:14, No:9, 2020 publications.waset.org/10011462/pdf

and testing. The student–designer–researchers required to immerse themselves into a non-Western cultural framework, while considering aspects of entrepreneurship and social responsibility.

As a result, the design artefacts produced for this project indicated the potential to improve the positioning of the organization as they increased the sense of professionalism, independence and belonging through an integrated design system using Māori identity values. Participants from the surveys evaluated the new brand identity as more appealing than the original and emphasises the core values of TRW. This new communication strategy positions TRW as a social enterprise constructed under the employability model, providing an innovative solution to the inequitable statistics of unemployment for Māori with disabilities. This solution would allow TRW to utilise the resources and knowledge they already possess and provide more sustainable employment and funding opportunities for *whānau hauā*. Also, this design journey has brought a better understanding of the importance of the appreciation and acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity from *Kaupapa* Māori, while also providing a platform for understanding process and the importance of social design and design for disability under *whānau hauā* community framework.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Te Roopu Waiora, and express our respect for the extraordinary service and professionalism they provide to *whānau hauā* and community in Auckland, Aoteaora/New Zealand.

We would also like to acknowledge the support offered by the Communication Design Department from AUT–Auckland University of Technology. We would like to acknowledge and thank Dr Jani Wilson, from AUT's Te Ara Poutama (Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development) who kindly made a carefully cultural review of this article. Finally, we would to include our special acknowledgement of Nina Geng for her contribution to this project.

## REFERENCES

[1] H. Hickey, & D. Wilson, "Whānau hauā: Reframing disability from an Indigenous perspective," *MAI Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 82-94, 2017.

[2] J. A. King, M. Brough, & M. Knox, "Negotiating disability and colonisation: The lived experience of Indigenous Australians with a disability," *Disability & Society*, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 738–750, 2014.

[3] D. Stienstra, & L. Nyerere, "Race, ethnicity and disability: Charting complex and intersectional terrains," in *Disability in the global south: The critical handbook,* S. Grech & K. Soldatic, Ed., Springer, 2016, pp. 255–268.

[4] D. Hollinsworth, (2013). "Decolonizing Indigenous disability in Australia," *Disability & Society*, vol. 28, no. 5, pp. 601–615, 2013.

[5] Stats NZ, "Disability survey: 2013," June, 2014, http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey_HOTP2013.aspx (Accessed August 2020)

[6] Ministry of Health, "Disability," Aug. 2018, https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/tatau-kahukura-maori-health-statistics/nga-mana-hauora-tutohu-health-status-indicators/disability (Accessed August 2020)

[7] J. Bevan-Brown, "Including people with disabilities: An indigenous perspective," *Int. J. of Inc. Edu.*, vol. 17, no. 6, pp. 571–583, 2013.

[8] J. K. T. Wilson, Te Ara Poutama, AUT, Auckland, private communication, August 2020.

[9] M. L. Besharov & W. K. Smith, "Multiple institutional logics in organizations: Explaining their varied nature and implications," *Academy of Manage. Rev.*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 364–381, 2014.

[10] A. M. Peredo & M. McLean, "Social entrepreneurship: A critical review of the concept," *J. of World Bus.*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 56–65, 2006.

[11] H. E. Aldrich & C. M. Fiol, "Fools rush in? The institutional context of industry creation," *Academy of Manage. Rev.*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 645–670, 1994.

[12] K. S. Coulter, J. Gummerus, V. Liljander, E. Weman & M. Pihlström, "Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community," *Manage. Res. Rev*., 2012.

[13] A. Lundqvist, V. Liljander, J. Gummerus & A. Van Riel, "The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story," *J. of Brand Manage.*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 283–297, 2013

[14] T. Tavares & W. Ings, "Navigating artistic inquiry in a creative production thesis," *DAT Journal*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 9-42, 2018.

[15] M. Mortensen Steagall & W. Ings, "Practice-led doctoral research and the nature of immersive methods," *DAT Journal*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 392-423, 2018.

[16] T. A. C. Royal, "Māori creation traditions – Common threads in creation stories," *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand,* Feb. 2005, http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/2422/the-koru (Accessed August 2020)

[17] New Zealand Intellectual Property Office, "Koru*"* [Image], n.d., https://www.iponz.govt.nz/about-ip/maori-ip/concepts-to-understand/ (Accessed August 2020)

[18] C. Pettit, "Episode 3, Fact 2 – Taniko," *He Ao Kotahi: The one world project,* July 2017, https://www.heaokotahi.co.nz/blog-1/2017/7/5/episode-3-fact-2-taniko (Accessed June 2020)

[19] B. Keane, "Pounamu – jade or greenstone," *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, June 2006, https://teara.govt.nz/en/pounamu-jade-or-greenstone (Accessed August 2020)

[20] K. Cherry, (2020, January 24). "The colour psychology of green," *Verywell Mind*, Jan. 2020, https://www.verywellmind.com/color-psychology-green-2795817 (Accessed May 2020)

Open Science Index, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol:14, No:9, 2020 publications.waset.org/10011462/pdf